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Transcript for file: District10Debate.mp3

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Good

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evening. My name is Royce Van Tassel. I apologize for some of the technical difficulties we had in getting a sign up and making my mic work. My name - I'm the executive director of the Utah Association of Public Charter Schools. We are a member of the 2016 Utah Education Debate Coalition. As the signs indicate, we have a wonderful team on the Utah Education Debate Coalition: United Way of Salt Lake, KSL - We actually don't have a sign up here, but the Deseret News is another member of the debate coalition - Hinckley Institute of Politics, The Sutherland Institute are all

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partners in putting this on. This is the 14th debate that we have put on this year. We did seven during the primary and we are - this is the seventh debate that we are doing for the general election. It's been a wonderful opportunity for us to hear candidates, to hear from the public about what is important in education policy. We're thrilled to have two wonderful candidates this evening. Our moderator this evening will be even Jay Evensen who is a good friend of mine and one of the opinion editors and columnists at the Deseret News. In a

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moment I'm going to turn, really more or less, total control over to Jay. He'll explain some of the rules and things will proceed. Before that, we do want to thank Channing Hall for hosting us. This is the second time they've hosted us so if we could get a quick round of applause for them I would appreciate it. Thank you. We really do appreciate Channing Hall and all of the other schools that have helped us in putting these on. It's been wonderful. We are, of course, thrilled that all of you are joining us. We will have audio and transcripts of this

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available on the KSL.com website as well as, frankly, all of the other debates that we have done. You can find those today, I think if you go to the Utah Education Debate Coalition website, you can find a link to

that. Yeah. It's actually on a lot of different sites, whether it's Utah Charters or United Way of Salt Lake or Sutherland Institute, we all have links to this. So we want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to understand what is happening in education. And the last thing before we start, a good friend of mine and frequent opponent, Sarah Jones who is the director of government relations for the UEA will lead us in the

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Pledge of Allegiance.

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Will you please stand?

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I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

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I actually haven't tested this mic. Does it work okay? Testing, can you hear? OK. That's better.

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Thank you. It's a pleasure for me to be here this evening. Before

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we started I met with the candidates and we went over some quick ground rules that I'd like to just pass on to you right now. I will - each candidate will have a two minute opening statement and when I pose a question they will have two minutes to answer that question and if they wish, one minute for rebuttal. As far as the audience is concerned, I think polite applause is OK on occasion if you like but please no demonstrations beyond that. We flipped the coin before the start. And Kathleen Riebe was the winner. And so if you would like to begin with a two minute opening statement.

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Okay. My name is Kathleen Riebe. Thank you so much for having us here and giving us this opportunity to meet our fellow constituents. I have been teaching for 15 years. I started my career at Pleasant Green Elementary as a as a fourth grade teacher and then I became a fifth/sixth split teacher.

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And then I did proofing for about five to six years. I received a master's from Utah State University. I have a technology endorsement from SUU and an administrative endorsement from Utah State University. I became a technology specialist about nine years ago. I work in two schools. One school is Robert Frost, which is right in the middle of

the valley and the other school I work with is Fox Hills which is also a Magna school. I

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worked all the way across the valley in every demographic. I have worked with leadership in my district to negotiate contracts and buy technology for our schools using RFPs and a committee. We get together to discuss which qualities we want in our technology and what kind of quality if we wanted, you know, programs. With my negotiating committee, I worked to try to increase the starting wages for teachers and to have them receive a sign-on bonus. So I've worked on various committees in my school district.

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Thank you. Thank you. Now Gary Thompson. My name's Gary.

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Been a resident of Utah and this town on and off for about 30 years. My wife and I were bless you start a Educational Psychology and Pediatrics Psychology and Trauma Psychology Clinic and we are set up in South Jordan. We've had the opportunity to work with about 5,000 children primarily from this district and in South Jordan. I'm not a politician. As we all saw the other night with the current debate, it's kind of a game. But

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with the largest and most comprehensive and fastest changes in public school education ever to come in the history of our nation and in Utah, this is definitely not a game. I hope tonight that I can I can show some contrasting – show a contrast between myself and Miss Riebe. Miss Riebe is a wonderful teacher. I love hearing her

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experiences and I would love to even put my child into her classroom. I think tonight, what you're going to hear is a lot of hope and change – hope that this largest experiment ever to happen in the history of our state will work and change via common core. The contrasts tonight – I'm just going to address you as a father and as a local clinical community scientist and I'm going to refer to three guiding principles tonight: One, the Hippocratic Oath, which means above all else do

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no harm. Two, transparency in everything that we do in

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education. And three: the slogan in our clinic. Parents are, and must always be, the resident experts of their own children. education. And three: the slogan in our clinic. Parents are, and must always be, the resident experts of their own children. Thank you for this opportunity. Thank you. As we get started with the questions, I failed

to mention my plan to be asking questions for the

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first half of this debate this evening. And then I'm going to be turning the time over to you. It will be a roving microphone and so hopefully you have some questions prepared that you would

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like to ask our candidates. This first question will be for Gary Thompson.

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Before I came here this afternoon, I read a fresh report from the Utah Foundation on the attitudes of Utahns toward education. It found that more Utahns are concerned about teacher quality than about class sizes or test scores. Question for you is, how do you ensure teachers are of the highest possible quality? Well I'm not a teacher but I do have five children and on

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a daily basis, I do teach them as well as I can in conjunction with my wife. In terms of highest quality, it's very important that we hire and have the highest quality teachers the Canyon District can produce. And we do that, number one, by ensuring - this Saturday night and Saturday night and a lot of Saturday nights before, I got a knock on my door.

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My daughter's ordered pizza. And oftentimes, you know, I talked with these gentlemen, and ladies sometimes, and I ask them, you know, I get their names and what they do but 90 percent of the times, the person delivering these pizzas are Canyon School District K - 6 teachers, and think about that. These teachers are working hard all day, sometimes throughout the night, and in order to make them - in order to keep a roof over their heads they have to get a part time job delivering pizzas. We've got to pay our teachers

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very well and show them the respect that they deserve. So teacher pay and respect, I believe, are components. Thank you. Miss Riebe?

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The teacher quality is essential throughout schools.

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I have worked in classrooms where I've gotten brand new teachers from the university programs and they struggle. They struggle a lot. It's really hard your first year, second year, third year, even your fourth year. The first year you learn so much. You learn exactly what you don't want to do and you learn what works better. I think that we need

to have training in our schools that help our teachers progress quicker through the process.

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We need mentoring programs but we also need to hire certified teachers. When I went to college I had a lot of classes that helped me with everything that you could expect in a classroom and then a couple of things you couldn't expect in a classroom. It's really unbelievable to me to think that you could take somebody who just received a Bachelor's and put them in a classroom and think that they can deal with all the ancillary items that are thrown at you. Our classrooms are really diverse. We have lots of learning needs. We have lots of socioeconomic needs. We have emotional needs. And I'm just thankful that I had good training before I got into the classroom.

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When I was working with the Granite School District's Negotiation Committee, we worked really hard to make sure that our first year of teachers received a bonus for signing on. And then we also took the steps and we convinced them so that they had a higher pay scale. We do need to pay teachers better to attract the teachers. But the teachers that are here, to retain them, we need to respect them. We need to give them what they need. We need to lower class sizes and we need to in support them in any way that they need support. Thank you. And any rebuttal?

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I agree with my esteemed colleague that teachers need to be paid well and

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respected as well. But one problem that we're having in Utah, we are losing mastery level teachers and new level teachers at a tremendous rate. And I've had many many discussions with certified teachers in our clinic, also employees. Several teachers. They're not staying because they are frustrated with the top down mandates coming down via Common Core. They're extremely frustrated often with scripted teaching. They are extremely frustrated with

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the insane level of testing starting in Kindergarten and ending in 12th grade. These teachers aren't able to teach and that's why they're leaving the system.

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Miss Riebe? And I do want – my next question will concern Common Core so I don't know if you

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want to rebut now or we can get right into that. We can get right onto

that. OK. Because this would be directed toward you and I want you to please tell me – and I read your position on Common Core that you favor it. I want you to please tell us why. It's a very controversial thing here in Utah, and explain why you think that it's good. I started teaching 15 years ago and the court changed every year. Every year

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one day we're teaching circles, the next yeah we're teaching surface area of a rectangular prism, then you're teaching inference and one day we're teaching circles, the next yeah we're teaching surface area of a rectangular prism, then you're teaching inference and you know, I mean it changed because they were changing it. So when they came out with the Utah Core, most teachers – actually, I have not met a teacher yet that doesn't like it. They are glad that it's consistent. They're glad that it's a living document and that if you have a problem with it or you see something that you don't like, you can call the state office and you can appeal it. You can talk to any department and say, I have a problem with t his. We saw a

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term for the Tiltometer and I called the state office science department and I said, tilotmeter is not in my core. You can't ask me at the end of the year on a test to talk about the Tiltometer if it's not in my core. And they said, we'll look into that for you and it got back to them. The core does not involve the test. The core does not involve the programs. People are mistaking our Core for the programs that are a school district's purchase. The Core is not the SAGE test. The SAGE test was purchased by the state and it is not – it's based on the Core, but it's not the Core. I think the standards that are in the core are

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consistent. In Utah, we have open boundaries. We have home school. We have charter schools. And as our kids move from place to place the place, they have the same standards in each place they show up at. And it's nice for the students to not have to miss things, to not have to repeat things because they're teaching the same exact standard whether you're living in Magna or Oak Ridge or anywhere in between, any demographic every standard is the same for every child. So I think it's a good thing. All the teachers that I've spoken to like it.

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Thank you. Dr. Thompson, your position on the Common Core.

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Well Miss Riebe just stated that she has never met a teacher who did not like Common Core. In

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the last four years, I have never met one teacher in the entire state of Utah that was thrilled to have this top-down mandate in their classroom. Common Core is an educational malpractice on so many levels. Miss Riebe mentioned the standards. Some of the standards, especially in the K - 3 are extremely developmentally appropriate. And how did they get that way? Because Common Core is an agenda-based belief system. There is

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no imperial, independent, peer-reviewed research ever done on any aspect of Common Core which shows one thing: that it works. Common Core is a theory. Like it or not, it's never been done before. And since it's never been done before, in our clinic, we call that an experiment. And when you experiment on children without the consent and knowledge of parents, harm happens. Every day we have children coming in who have been victimized by being taught through developmentally

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inappropriate standards. They are suffering from extreme anxiety, depression. This is an ethical issue. And again, it comes down with parents being the resident experts of their own children and local control. These standards did not come from our local teachers. That is a myth. Common Core is educational malpractice hands down and if I'm elected, I will ensure that any aspects of this philosophy are not put on our children to cause them harm. Thank you. Miss Riebe? Further

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on our children to cause them harm. Thank you. Miss Riebe? Further thoughts? Yes. We, in Utah, don't use the Common Core, we use the Utah Core. Utah Core was invented by parents. It was voted by

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thoughts? Yes. We, in Utah, don't use the Common Core, we use the Utah Core. Utah Core was invented by parents. It was voted by teachers. It's a living document. If you have, if you look at it and you have a problem with it I will fight to change that also. It's a living document. Anything that you find in our Utah Core which has been vetted by parents, teachers, administrators can be changed and I think that because it's a living document and it is worth looking at, that it's a good thing for our teachers and our students.

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I will resign prior to this election if Miss Riebe

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delivers to this community and our clinic documented proof that it was designed by teachers. When you compare the Utah Core to the National Common core standards, you will find at the very least a 90 percent similarity. Once again, like it or hate it Common Core is a belief

system. There is no empirical evidence to show that it works. It is a theory. It may, it may not work.

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And that is the very definition of an experiment. Stop experimenting on our children and our kids. Thank you. While we're on the subject of testing, Dr. Thompson. Should Utah students be allowed to opt out of a statewide assessment test and the longitudinal database system?

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Parents are a must always be the resident experts of their children. If Utah can

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come together and find a valid test - I'm all for assessment and testing. That's why I paid for all these boatloads of children that I have. That's what I do for a living. I am not anti-testing. What I am against is that anti-experimentation on these children. The SAGE test, again, is an experimentation. They are utilizing technology that we were taught in graduate school that has never ever been used on a mass level basis on our children on the ground level. It needs to go, not just for 11 graders, SAGE

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needs to go yesterday for every kid. It's an experiment. There are absolutely no independent validity studies showing that SAGE measures what it claims to measure which is apparently career and college readiness or whatever they claim that it measures. There are no independent studies that show that it is a valid test. In terms of the longitudinal database, they're gathering so much information about our children. They're developing a

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psychological profile just like what we do in our clinic but the difference is theoretical. We tell parents what we're doing with that data. We keep that data safe. If that data gets out, we're sued, we will go to jail. Our practice is gone. This is the most intimate information on our children is their - what they're housing on this database is just beyond intimate and there's no proof whatsoever that we can keep these - keep

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this intimate data safe. Thank you. Miss Riebe, the question is should parents be allowed to opt their children out of. question is should parents be allowed to opt their children out of. Sage testing and the longitudinal data bases. Yes. I do believe parents should be able to opt their students

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out of testing. The first year age came out, I opted my son out

because I'm the person that administered the test to my school. I recognized that it was the first year of the baseline and there was going to be some trouble with it so I opted my student out. I

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do question all the data that is being collected about our children.

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The reason why we have moved to testing is so that we can have some kind of measurement and accountability for our teachers. The problem I have with that is that we have a one size fits

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all test. I have gone to the national level and I've also been at the state level asking that we have assessments that measure the growth of our students from where they start to where they finish. I think it's unfortunate that we have ELL kids in our communities that cannot take that test in their native language. This creates a false representation of our schools and a false grade for their school. As a parent, when I have my kids take that test and then they come and they

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pass or they fail or they're somewhere on the spectrum, I have an understanding of where they're at. I have an understanding if they grew. And, you know, unfortunately for the rest of our lives, we're asked to take assessments. ACTs, SATs, I mean anything you do, you're going to have to take a test. Do we assess a little too often? Yeah. I think that our districts have gone a little crazy with different types of benchmarks and dibles and I think that it can be decreased tremendously. I think we maybe can decrease the number of years we take the end-of-year test, but I'd rather see that test be a test

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that shows growth, an assessment that shows growth in the native languages at the level of their IEP so that we can see the growth and have a better accountability of where our students are. Dr. Thompson, do you have any rebuttal? Again,

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I love testing but what I would like to know. Where was my esteemed

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colleague and the union three years ago when this test came out when our clinicians were having children herded in by the dozens who were being harmed by this experimentation. I have testified in multiple state legislatures all over the country. I testified and talked to, in town hall meetings, to thousands of people. From the moment it came out in the first town hall meeting, I turned to my colleagues and I said, this test is garbage. It's not going to work. It's going to bring a lot of children

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into our clinic and we're going to see a flood of depression and anxiety and mood disorders coming in from this. From day one, three years ago, I advocated and protected your children and as a member of the board for the 10th District, I promise you I will take care of your

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kids from day one. I will not wait three years. Thank you. Any final thoughts on this subject? kids from day one. I will not wait three years. Thank you. Any final thoughts on this subject? Yeah. I think that the ability for parents to opt their kids now out has worked really well

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for most people who have children who have a lot of anxiety. When we see kids stressing out and having trouble. We talk to them we tell them. You know, as parents we're allowed to talk about that with their friends and my friends come up to me as a parent and say, My kids are really nervous and I say, you can opt them out. And I think that's a legitimate thing for any parent to opt their kids out and we've given parents that option. Lots of parents don't want to opt their kids out because they like, you know, that their kid is on par with their peers. Thank you. This will be my

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last planned question so if you want to get ready, that would be great.

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And this one has to do with taxpayer money. I can't remember who we're on now. Is it Miss Riebe? I think so. OK. This is for you then. It's no secret that Utah was last in the nation per pupil expenditure and we are a state with a lot of large families and there are a lot of complications involved. How do you feel the state should address this and particularly, what can the State Board of Education do and what should be done in terms of funding,

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reallocation of resources or tax increases or what are your thoughts on that? A

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few years ago we moved from a tax

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system to a flat tax. This was detrimental to our schools. It created a big drain on the amount of resources we have. So I would like to see that looked at again. We also have changed the way that we have

allocated to our education resources and they are starting

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to go to college-level stipends and I think that this has created a drain on our K-12 students. As we look at our legislation, we have line items that cost a lot of money that are legislative driven and I think we should look at those a little bit more closely. There are things that our constituents don't agree with and they would like to see some of our schools staying in place instead of knocked down and rebuilt. That might be something you might want to take some money out of our MNO fund and start

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putting it towards teacher salaries, aids in the classroom. I think there is a large pool of money that can be moved around. But I think that we need to stop getting - giving tax breaks to businesses. We need to look at that a little bit more carefully. And we also need to look at how we're using our taxes that we already have. Thank you. Gary Thompson. We

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do need more money for our children. That's a given.

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But there are some realities we have to face. We have the highest number of children per

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capita in the United States. We also have the lowest number of earners in the age of 45 to 65 which can fund our tax base. We can't get water from a stone. We need to find creative ways to meet the needs of our teachers and children on the ground. And one thing that we can do first off before we even discuss any ways of increasing taxes or having my business taxes increase, we're missing 50 Million

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my business taxes increase, we're missing 50 Million Dollars. We don't know where it is.

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We need to get our finances in order. A bill was

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passed this past legislative session which had to give the Board all passed this past legislative session which had to give the Board all that power because we're missing

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millions of dollars, grant money coming in. Federal money coming in. JIF money coming in coming through all

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these programs and we don't know where it's at. So once we find this money, sure our auditing system, and sure up our accounting system then we can take stock of what's needed and then we can be very creative in finding ways to fund our children. But make no mistake. I agree with my esteemed colleague here. What we're doing to the children is an abomination to our state. They need that money,

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but we need to be better stewards before we get that money. Thank you. Miss Riebe? Have any rebuttal? I like my school. I love going to school every day. I love working with kids. I love my job. I wouldn't consider it an

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abomination. I think that it can be run better. I agree with that lost money from the board. I think, actually, they did take steps to have a better financial reckoning of all that. But I think we do need more transparency in all of our schools. Our taxpayers are frustrated and they really don't understand where our money is going. So I think transparency is essential in every one of our schools. one of our schools. Thank you.

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Thank you both. Royce Van Tassell has a roving microphone. If we could have a show of hands

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who would like to ask a question. Hi, this question for both of you. I am a technology professional that's been in the

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technology industry for 25 years and as a parent I am very alarmed to see the data mining and the stealth assessments that are coming and we have no strict student privacy laws in place right now. What do you plan to do about protecting your children's privacy and are you even aware that when you called the State Office of Education that they can't even provide you with a data warehouse document to tell you what information that they're collecting on your child and they can't tell you how to expunge their records or request what's been

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happening? They have no clue or they won't tell you. I don't want to assume. Let's start with Dr. Thompson. What was your question?

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Let's start with Dr. Thompson. What was your question? What's your goal to protect kid's privacy and to allow more parental rights

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to expunge that data or lock it down so it can't be sent to third parties? They can't do this stealth assessments through technology on our children. In regards to the stealth testing, as I stated

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earlier, that is an experiment and we don't know what they're assessing. I have a doctorate in this field and that technology is so advanced that it would blow your mind. It blows my mind away. There is not one person in this room or in entire the state of Utah who knows what is being assessed - what psychological constructs are being assessed - through

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stealth testing. Now again, we do self testing in our

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clinic all the time every day. But the difference is, our data is locked down and if it's not locked down, we're going to jail. And so in order to stop that - I know that there were several bills that was passed here trying to stop this flood of data

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going out being sold to third party vendors and none of them passed. At least, some of them passed but

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they were watered down because it took away the penalties for the people who violated my children's intimate data. We don't have that option in the private field.

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We need to get serious immediately

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and give those same - they need

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to have the exact same penalties that we have in the private field with our data that it just has to stop and it has to stop

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immediately. And from day one that I am on the Board, I will counsel parents, do not take these tests until we can pull our act together

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not take these tests until we can pull our act together And we can protect them. Riebe?

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I have the same concerns as you do. I am the technology

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specialist at two schools. I was on an RFP to buy local assessment tool.

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We have an SSID number which is the state-given number and that state number is linked to your child. We also have an LEA number which is a local number. We call it our 9 number which is linked to your child. We, as teachers, are legislated to show for our advancement, our growth, and that is a problem. We are caught between two situations: keeping our student private and understanding that we need to have accountability.

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At our school level, we have - our district has a penetration

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committee to see how you can penetrate into our system. It was explained to me as kind of an egg and the outside, kind of hard but the inside is not as secure. Sometimes I would like to know the answers to that question you asked and I think that we are trying to streamline all of the processes that our kids are doing and trying to link them together so we can see trends, which is beneficial to our students sometimes. But, as everyone has a concern, it's also

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a detriment to have all that data out there floating around. I don't know the

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answer to some of those questions, but I do have those same concerns myself and as I move forward in technology I always try to keep separate things separate - Not to use the same numbers if they're not supposed to use those numbers. So that will have some autonomy on the Internet and in the things we get. Thank you. Dr.Thompson, any rebuttal? We can keep that data in the state and districts. There's no

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such thing as data privacy in this world anymore. We need to be transparent about what data is being gathered on our children, who has it, how can it be corrupted. And what do we need to realize, too: a lot of this data is not being utilized for accountability purposes. It is being sold to private vendors. It is being used to make most millionaires out of a lot of people.

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That needs to stop. We need to protect our data. We need to be transparent about it and it needs to stop and it needs to stop

yesterday. Any final

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thoughts, Miss Riebe? Yeah. I'll work hard to keep that data secure if I'm elected. I also neglected, when you ask the question, if you could please state your name and the

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city in which you live. Next question? OK. city in which you live. Next question? OK.

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Hello, my name is Bronwyn Brown and I live in Lehi and

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I have a child with dyslexia. I'm wondering what you know about dyslexia. It's one of the most common causes of reading failure. It's estimated anywhere from 10 to 20 percent of students have some form of dyslexia. Yet our teachers – and I have a bachelor's in elementary education and knew nothing about dyslexia – get very little instruction regarding dyslexia in their preservices, teacher training programs. How would you address this problem? Let's start with Miss Riebe. Thank

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you for asking that question! Somebody just e-mailed me that question so I have an answer for you.

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We had legislation passed last year by Senator Ogden and there are some grants available to try to help teachers get some extra training. When I spoke to this teacher, parent, and then I also reached out from my district, they said that the grant was overwhelmingly cumbersome and too hard to get through to get the training that they needed for this year. I'd like to look at that legislation again and insist those senators are legislators in rewriting that so that it is more obtainable for the teachers that need it. I think that we should have – when she asked me she said, well maybe we should train every teacher in it.

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And in Granite School District, to train every teacher costs a million dollars. So I think that maybe to start we should get at least one

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person in every school and one person on every grade level – give them some serious training on dyslexia and how we can mitigate. all of the learning challenges that

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come from that. come from that.

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that it had text to speech. It had highlighters. It highlights a line and we that it had text to speech. It had highlighters. It highlights a line and we tried really hard to appeal to every locality of every learning and every specialty that have worked really hard in Granite School District to have overdrive so have worked really hard in Granite School District to have overdrive so that kids can read books online. They can listen to them online. We have tried really hard to make sure that any kind of learning need, we can adapt anything we're doing so that each child can hear it, look at it, see it, have it read faster, slower, so training a teacher at

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every level and trying to make legislation more penable is what I would do. Thank you. Thank you. Dr. Thompson. Thank you, Miss, Brown for that question. I know a little bit about

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dyslexia so I can tell you. Trying hard and working hard is not enough for this population. First

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and foremost we need to stop testing things kids right now until these children are provided valid, peer-reviewed accommodations. What is being put in place right now, again, is an experimentation. When you have a child with dyslexia or any other type of learning disorder, and I call them - the clinic calls them divergent-learning children and you put them in learning situations, testing situations and you're making accommodations as they go along. As a mother,

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I know you see the frustration that happens from these programs. As they get older, that frustration level increases to sometimes where it goes beyond anxiety and depression. It moves on to serious mood disorders and then serious attempts in suicide. Utah has the highest rate of suicides between the ages of 10 and 17 in the nation. Now I'm not saying at all that - that Common Core or any programs that that

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we have in our public schools have a direct correlation to it. But it has some. But we don't know how much because we haven't done any studies, but the dyslexic population is extremely vulnerable. Let's stop experimenting with them. Work one-on-one with them. Protect these

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babies. Miss Riebe?

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Any rebuttal? No, I

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think we need to increase our wraparound services for all of our students with special needs and I would like to do that as well, or support. All right. Quickly, yeah.

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I just want to say as a parent, if the school can't teach my child to read then the rest of it is garbage.

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Her ability to read affects every other subject.

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The reason why so much of the prison population can read it because they're forced to go to school and it chewed them up and spit them out because if can't read at school you're treated like trash.

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Thank you. Next question. I'd like to respond to that a little bit, and you are so right and I think that's why our clinic and our doctors created one of the nation's most innovative reading programs in the nation. They want to see what happens. Let's move on. Let's move on to the next question if we can.

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I believe that with the hand over here that was next.

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Paul Shepherd, West Jordan. Proud father of six – two of them are teachers, proud grandfather of 14. Heavily invested in having a solid education system in Utah. And I'm also a retired educator – 28 years. And a couple of things. One is, I have been through a core curriculum core standards all of my career and adult life. I participated as a teacher on core committees both in district and in the state in elementary science and in elementary mathematics. I know

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that process well. Administrators, teachers, parents on those committees and then ou for public hearing and feedback as well. So we've had this system of skeletal curriculum developed at state level that districts can then take as a basic standard and then improve on as they choose. And that's the system that we currently have in place, which we call the Utah Core. And I know that that core stemmed from work that I did in the 80s in mathematics and I see much of that work still there. So we build and we

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improve on the core in regular cycles. That's what changes. My question

is what – if we're defining this as an experimentation and we're defining this as something that we need to have local control on, what are we talking about replacing it with? Because right now it appears to be the state does have control and that the local districts do have control and input. So I'd like some embellishment beyond that t's an experiment that needs to stop, as to what are you going to replace this kind of vetting and standard that is currently here? All right. Thank you Dr. Thompson. Your

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turn. Well,

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one size does fit all but it fits some. As a member of the board I'm not going to tell any school district what to teach. Not at all. If they are happy with what they have. that is the essence of local control. It's as simple as that. It does fit some kids. Other kids, it's a disaster for them psychologically, cognitively.

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They're developmentally inappropriate especially for our K-3 children. But I would pass the buck over to experts like you. You are the parent and you are the expert. And I'm sure you would work closely with our Canyon District teachers and administrators and ensure t hat our most vulnerable populations

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are protected. So

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to clarify you would not replace the Utah Core with a different State test. That's not my job to replace it. OK. Miss Riebe, your comment.

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As I said before, I think in Utah Core is a living document and

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I am willing to change and work with any parent would like to see something changed in the Utah Core. We have lots of options for all of our parents and I think that to have a basic standard to keep for our kids is a good thing. I think we discussed this particular issue enough. We can go on t o a different question. Yes sir. You

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know, first of all a statement. I'd like to concur with this young lady over here. I have two divergent children –divergent learners and like she mentioned, the school system chewed them up, spit them out. We could go on for another half hour about that experience. Suffice it to be it was a bad one, but that's not really my question. First, one other statement. I come from a family of educators, in-laws that are

both teachers. Brother-in-law, sister-in-law, two sisters-in-law that teach. And none of them – well what they'll say is they hate Common Core in private but they would never say that in public

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because they fear repercussions. So as potential board members, I hope you'll keep that in mind. But my question is more around transparency. One thing we've seen a lack of in this whole election process is transparency. I'm one that always like to know who's the man behind the curtain. Could you please tell us what special interests you may have received money from your campaign and in what amounts? I

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am supported by all the teachers in the state of Utah. UEA has helped me to send out mailers, to I t hink about seven – ten thousand dollars. I also have received \$2,000 in donations from fellow teachers, fellow neighbors.

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I received a grant from the Utah Art Works for Kids. I just received \$1,000 from them. And all the teachers that are a member of the association that I am also a member of.

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I support the roles in special interest groups of all kinds to advocate for and to pay for there interests. I have no problem with that. But for me personally, I made a decision

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before I ran that I would not accept any – not one dime – from any special interest group. Not the technologies group, teachers groups, any group whatsoever except one constituency. My only constituency are the other ground-level children in this district. And their special interest group are the parents. And so I have received a boatload of small donations from ground-level parents throughout this District Ten. And

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it troubles me because I've been outspent fifteen to one. It tips the balance o f who you are able to reach with your message and I think that is a huge problem in not only local politics, but also state level politics and especially on the national level. Parents are the experts of their children. Their kids are my constituents.

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I only want money from them. Miss Riebe, should

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we be troubled by your funding? Excuse me, I didn't hear the whole question.

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Well just as a rebuttal, should we be troubled by how you - No, because every

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one of my teachers that have donated to my campaign is also a parent. I joined my association just like you were doing any other professional association. Right now, we don't have any teachers on the school board. We have lots of other people that are not in the classrooms every day and our teachers and the parents that are teachers feel they need to have a teacher on the school board.

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This is the first year that we had an election that we can actually run. So we thought it was important time to step up to the plate. So I

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think that's a great thing. Final comments?

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I've had many, many teachers come into my clinic, many administrators. In fact, several from Granite School District where they come to work. I have no problem, again, with the mission of unions, with the mission of the technology corporations. But with money comes influence. It's extremely hard to be objective if your constituency is the children and the children have a need, yet a special interest group of any kind,

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you're beholden to them because of the amount of money - massive amounts of money that you're receiving from special interest groups. I did not want that to be even a minor temptation when I am looking at many complex issues facing my constituents at the ground-level.

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We have time for one more question and we're just doing answers to those without rebuttals. There's a woman here with her hand up.

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My name's Laurene Simper from Murray and I have watched some education issues and been concerned at the role of the Board and I wondered what you saw as the role of the State Board. I've seen more of a rubber stamping from the state Office of Education. It seems more beholden to the Federal Department of Education and I've always seen the state board's role as being our representatives. So I was curious to see which direction you face whether you see your role as representing us

and keeping this state office more in-check or doing what the state office tells you to do and not

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listening to the parents. That's more what I've seen in the last five years as I've followed educational issues.

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Thank you. This actually is a very good question. What is the role of the State Board of Education? Dr. Thompson, I believe it's your turn. What was your name again? Good to me. Parents are, and must always be, the resident experts of their own children. I answer to you and you alone. It's that simple. Thank you. Miss Riebe? I agree. I think that we need to answer to our constituents. I've been up to the USOC board frequently and open hearings and I've watched many parents come and speak to the board and speak

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on behalf of their issues. And I think that you guys are the most important stakeholders including myself. I'm a parent, I'm a teacher. I think we should be - (Indecipherable) Thank you. Thank you for your questions.

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I'm going to allow each candidate a one minute closing statement. Before they do that I just want to thank The Debate Coalition and Channing Hall for sponsoring us this evening. I think this is very important and by coming out here this evening, you're showing your interest in making an informed choice this November and those of you listening from the internet as well, I hope this has been informative this evening. As we began with Miss Riebe, we'll start with Dr. Thompson in closing

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statements, and one minute, please. Thank you for moderating this debate, and our sponsors. As I mentioned when I started, we are about to launch the most expensive, largest, fastest reorganization in the history of our nation and in Utah upon our teachers and our children here. It is imperative that we have real local control and that parents have a direct voice in the direction of what is going on in their

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lives. I'll make one promise to you and one promise to you only and then I will close.

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I promise to this community that regardless of what comes down through the feds, through the states, through anywhere. I will keep this promise: I will protect each and every one of your children as if they

were my own. Thank you. Miss Riebe? Thank you so much for being here. I appreciate your time. I'm a school teacher. I love being in my schools. I thought I could do something else but I came back to teaching because I love it.

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I love being with your kids every day and as a State

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School Board member, potentially, I would like to do what works for you kids. I would like to listen to you. I would like to improve upon what's going on in our classrooms because every day I see great things. I see great kids, I see great teachers. I feel happy kids, I see happy teachers and I want to reach out and help the kids that are struggling. I have always had struggling learners in my classroom and our heart breaks for them every day when we are a teacher and we work so hard to meet the needs of all of our kids and I really would like to meet the needs of all of our kids. Thank you for your time. Please vote for me. Thank you. Thank you to both of our candidates.