

**UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

David Crandall

2012

1. Describe the qualifications and experiences you would bring to the State Board of Education and how they would be an asset to the work of the Board.

My primary qualification for serving on the State Board of Education is my commitment to public education and doing whatever it takes to fulfill the mission adopted by the board now known as “Promises to Keep.” In my professional capacity in the software industry I am able to see the lack of preparation of too many of our high school (and even college) graduates when they enter the workplace. This lack of or under preparation is not confined to the STEM fields, but is also evident in communication skills and in creative capacities that are often enhanced by education in the visual and performing arts. Education is a vital part of our way of life and essential for effective participation in our representative government.

I have also served as the governing board chair of Summit Academy, a charter school in Draper. In that capacity I have seen how the decisions and policies made at the state level trickle down and impact schools and their budgets. At Summit we have been able to try new programs and approaches to education and to keep and enhance those that work while improving or discarding those that don't. We have been involved with the state's pilot for computer adaptive testing and have seen the tremendous benefit that teachers, students and parents have received from that program. We have enjoyed working with and learning from the Sevier district as they have led the way in getting a statewide assessment adopted.

I have also been able to develop good working relationships with several members of the legislature by listening to their ideas and proposed legislation without being too hasty in casting judgment.

2. Name three key things you would like to accomplish as a member of the State Board of Education.
  - Develop and adopt higher state standards for science and social studies with related assessments (as we have done for math and English language arts with the adoption of the common core.)
  - Statewide computer adaptive testing and adoption of the Explore, Plan and ACT for high school students.
  - Change the delivery of secondary education to be competency based.
3. What do you think are the two biggest issues or challenges facing public education in the state of Utah? Why?

The real challenges for public education are embedded in the culture that has developed within the system. The two biggest are tendency toward mediocrity and the over emphasis on inputs like class size, seat-time graduation requirements, number of instructional days in a year and hours in a day, etc.

Successful organizations are not satisfied with being “a little better than average” and Utah shouldn’t be satisfied with anything less than the best system of public education in the nation. Our leaders in education at all levels should be committed to that goal.

We should also be focused on college and career readiness for our students when they graduate from high school. It is a goal that most people can support but something we currently don’t even measure.

4. Describe the efforts you would make to communicate with your constituents and bring all stakeholders (state board, local boards, legislature, educators, parents) together to enhance public education.

One of the most rewarding experiences as a member of the State Board of Education has been the numerous invitations to visit schools and witness the dedication of our teachers and the hope in the faces of our students. State Board districts are large with tens of thousands of constituents, but I have had several one-on-one conversations in person, through email and by phone as I’ve listened to concerns and explained my own position on issues.

I have also enjoyed meeting and working with legislators, local board members and superintendents, and other members of the state board as new laws, rules and policies are proposed. Without exception, every stakeholder I have met, across the political spectrum, has the same underlying goal: providing a quality education for our students. The key to enhancing public education is for each stakeholder to embrace his or her specific role and to give others the flexibility and support to succeed in theirs.

5. What would you do to improve the academic preparation of students as well as their transition to higher education or other post-high-school training?

The first step is to adopt standards that have college and career readiness as their goal. We have done that for math and language arts, but we still have science and social studies standards to develop using this same approach.

The next step is to develop, adopt and require assessments to determine how well districts and charter schools are measuring up to those standards with their students. At the same time, districts and charter schools should be afforded the flexibility and autonomy to accomplish this goal using whatever curricula, teaching methods, school day/year structure, etc. they chose to use.

Finally, parents and students should be able to choose the educational option that works best for them. In order to make informed decisions, they need to know how well individual schools are doing and should have open and transparent access to that information. By doing this, schools and districts are held accountable, not by the legislature or the state board, but by those who have ultimate responsibility for their education.