

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
CANDIDATE QUESTIONS
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.

I come to this position with a very unique perspective. I have a college degree. I teach in higher education. I attended Catholic parochial school. I have had my children in private school, and I currently have children in both public charter and regular public schools. Because of this vast background, I have the ability to see the benefits and hindrances to many of the different practices and programs instituted in various school systems. With over 13 years of teaching in higher education, I can clearly see places where the general public school system is failing our children.

2. Name three key things you would like to accomplish as a member of the State Board of Education.

First, I would like to see the members of the Board work together to see that the education opportunities for students in Utah are the best they possibly can be. I am a firm believer in striving to always do everything to my utmost potential. There are great things happening in our schools, but they can be better. Thomas Edison said, "There's a better way to do it. Find it."

Second, I would want to not only bring my expertise in education to the Board, but also bring the needs, desires, and concerns of those families in my district to light. Being a member of the Board is not just about making important decisions, but it is also about representing the people in your district.

Third, I really believe that the school system has areas where it can be run more efficiently. There is an old saying: "Creativity is the mother of invention." I truly believe this to be true. As with business, cuts need to be made to improve the bottom line. I don't think that education is immune to this principle.

3. What do you think are the two biggest issues or challenges facing public education in the state of Utah? Why?

There are many issues facing public education. Local control of schools and classroom management is where I believe the biggest differences can be made. The people most interested in the education of students are their parents and their teachers. These are the ones who know the students the best and should be able to make education decisions that best serve each student. This places a lot of responsibility on the principal to tailor the education to the students in his or her school. Just like every child does not wear the same shirt size, each child does not learn in the same way or

benefit from the same teaching methods. With control at the local level, principals and teachers can work together to more effectively meet the needs of those at their schools.

Teachers in our schools do a terrific job with the parameters afforded to them. While every child has a right to be educated, each child does not have the right to disrupt that opportunity for other children. In other words, teachers need the ability to enforce rules and have consequences for those who don't. Too often teachers are not permitted to deal with their discipline issues in the classroom. Teachers and administrators can create incentives which will aid in this process.

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.

I have been very active in my community for quite some time. I am currently serving as a county delegate in my precinct, and I have served as a state delegate in past years. This shows that my community has confidence in me to represent them and their views. I stay informed about what is going on in our community and our state. I make every attempt to be educated about current events and issues. One of the best ways to do this is to talk with others about their views in order to get a more well rounded perspective. My communication skills are superb. I am able to discuss sensitive issues with people of all ages without being offensive. I am also great at listening—a skill that is key to effective and successful communication.

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?

I would increase the expectations that we have for students in our schools. It is amazing how capable children are. They are great at performing when great things are expected of them. Sometimes, students deliver a minimal standard because that is all that we ask them to do. Education should not be about meeting a certain standard, but about inspiring students to reach for the stars. In my line of work, I deal with students that are looking for an easy way to satisfy the requirements. They are wanting everything handed to them. We need to give students the skills to solve problems on their own. This starts when education is no longer about regurgitating data, but about applying the principles that were learned, and even developing new techniques to deal with what is currently challenging our students.