

**UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

Dixie Allen

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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 have served 26 plus years in the Public School System, as a teacher, principal, curriculum director and student service director. I have also served the past 9 years as the Utah State Board Representative for District 14, which serves the 14 counties and districts of rural Eastern Utah. My last election to the State Board was to run for four years, but because of realignment of School Board Districts, my district was changed, thus requiring I run for a new district. As a member of the Utah State Board of Education, I have served on many different committees, including three national task force committees, the Utah College of Applied Technology Board for six years and the Utah School Board's Association. I have also served the last three years as Vice-Chair of the State Board of Education.

I also have two daughters that teach - one in a private Montessori School in Salt Lake City and one runs the On-line Home School Program for Uintah District. As part of their assignments, my grandchildren have had access to different choices for their educational services. I have over the past several years taught at least one and often two of my grandchildren in an online home-school program through Uintah School District and the K-12 online education program.

Ultimately, I believe I have a view of education from a multitude of experiences and options. As a non-traditional student who never graduated from high school, but found my way to acquire a Master's Degree in Educational Administration, I believe there are many different routes to a quality education; however, public education is the one option that must meet the needs of the majority of our children with quality teachers, curriculum and outcomes. Thus the work of protecting the rights and responsibilities of a Public Education System is paramount to the quality of life for each and every citizen of our state.

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

As a member of the Utah State Board of Education, I have spent considerable effort on several issues, but the three that I now hope to accomplish before I leave the State Board are:

Quality Teachers *in every classroom of the state: Teachers are the most important component of a quality educational system. Providing for their training, in-service, support and accountability is of paramount importance as we move forward to provide an upgraded educational system that prepares our students for a worldwide competition for job and careers.*

Over the past couple of years, we have been working on defining an evaluation system that supports teaching standards that will be used state wide. During the current legislative session funding was appropriated to move forward to address both the assessment and training pieces of upgrading our curriculum standards. The definition of teaching standards, paired with funding and support from this year's legislature, will allow us to not only evaluate all teachers, each year, but to help remediate, support, fund and reward quality teachers. The work is not yet

complete and my hope is to finish this work, along with the same type of standards and accountability for administrators in the school system.

During our April Utah State Board Meeting, my name will be forwarded to the Board for approval to serve on the PEER (Public Educator Evaluation Requirement Advisory Committee), who will meet twice yearly to oversee district support to evaluate, align policies, and document teachers and administrators in accordance with the newly adopted educator standards. I look forward to serving on this committee to help insure our movement to both retaining quality educators in our system and identifying those who need remediation or removal from the system.

High Quality Standards: *As an educator, I found having a Core Curriculum very helpful in deciding the timing of instructional objectives; however, I and fellow educators were perplexed by the need to decide what the learning outcomes should look like for students. This has been addressed so well with the new Utah Common Core. Instead of learning objectives, the Common Core has stated expected outcomes as Desired Student Learning Outcomes. Such definitions will help teachers define what curriculum and teaching strategies to use to obtain the desired outcomes. However, our work at the State level is far from over. We desperately need to focus on our Social Studies, Science, Art and other curriculum areas, which are still stated in objective style. The expectations of what is necessary for students to be Career and College Ready will also need to be addressed for the 21st Century. This work will greatly support parents, teachers, administrators and district personal as they work to increase graduation rates and help move students on to higher education and/or careers.*

Effective Assessment: *Several years ago, I served on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee for Assessment. The outcomes of the committee, under the direction of Governor Huntsman, were to move to Computer Adaptive Assessment for our students, with the ACT Cadre of assessment for high school students. Over the past few years we have piloted both assessment programs in various districts, with outstanding results. Using these assessment programs in the pilot districts have informed students, parents and teachers as to where students are in regard to the expected learning outcomes and what is necessary for them to be successful at the next level.*

During this legislative session we moved closer to funding these same assessments for all students of the state. We are in the process of sending out RFP's to find a vendor to fill the expectations of the computer adaptive assessment and a hope that in the interim session the ACT Cadre of Assessments will be also approved by the legislature. This assessment upgrade has been years in the process and my great hope is to see the fruition of this project while I am still on the Board. We truly believe this type of assessment will better inform students, parents and teachers with immediate results, including specific areas not mastered.

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

The biggest issues facing public education in Utah are respecting and empowering teachers to do the very hard work of guiding instruction for the individual student and gaining the support of parents, taxpayers and the legislature to invest more in time and financial support for public education, at least enough to bring our state into a closer proximity of funding and support offered by some of our neighboring states.

As Utah for the past decade has languished as the state with the lowest per pupil expenditures in the nation, we have, as a state, struggled to create standards, curriculum, assessment and

support to insure for quality instruction. Each of these issues is paramount to providing an effective World Class Education for all our students, but without funding to support the creation and oversight needed, we are forced to do more with less and thus must often do without financing for support that is greatly needed to move forward.

Ultimately, we believe that Utah is probably the state that most effectively uses its financial support for schools. However, there are many issues, such as quality teachers, technology and support systems that are not as effective because we have less money to offer. As we enter the 21st Century, our students, teachers and parents expect and need enhancements to our age-old system of public education. Funding and support for quality instruction will be paramount to help our state education system be on the cutting edge for the issues, advancements and jobs of the future.

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.

Over the past nine years on the State Board of Education, I have found that being a State Board Member means having an open system of availability, which in my case means being available via email, telephone, or whatever method meets the needs of those with whom I need to communicate. Although I try to be available for informational meetings both for the state board, local boards, the legislators or other groups, I find that most of my “on-target” communication is done one-to-one via email or phone.

Serving such a large area of the state, I have relied on sharing information with my local superintendents and those local board members who wish to be part of the information “pipeline” via email. At least monthly, but whenever there is news, information or other issues that need to be shared with local districts, I try to be sure they are informed. If they need more information or request a face to face meeting, I am always willing to meet with any stakeholder in the educational process.

When working to keep an open line of communication with legislators and/or the Governor’s office, we are diligent to schedule meetings with legislative leadership, the Governor, or Lt. Governor to insure we understand where we are in relationship to our assignments and to create a working relationship with each and every perspective support group.

Over the past few years, I have found it also very helpful to meet regularly with UEA Leadership and to have meetings with school based teachers and administrators whenever they see a need. Often when I receive a parent concern, which usually comes via email or telephone, I try to direct them back to the lowest level possible at their district, but if that does not work and they wish, I volunteer to meet with them and the district personnel (usually the Superintendent) that can direct us to the proper avenue to solve the problem.

When attempting to share a message with my constituents and/or parents, I also use the local newspapers to share information and ask for feedback or clarifications. I wish there were better ways to insure that parents felt they had a direct voice to the State Board, but the best I have been able to do is invite them to share their concerns and allow me to help them find the right avenue to address their issues.

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 thing I would do to improve the academic preparation for students is to be sure we had universal support for Pre-K programs where needed and/or All-Day Kindergarten to help be sure our students start on an even platform of readiness as they enter the system of elementary education.

Secondly, I would be sure that we build our curriculum on the needs of the students we serve. If we can effectively group students at their learning level, rather than just their specific age level, we can help bolster the necessary skills and prior knowledge necessary to move students progressively through the system. Also, with the use of computer assisted instruction, many students can be paced through remediation or extension lessons in a timely manner, without disrupting the classroom setting.

Third, I believe it is necessary to clearly share with parents and students the expected levels of progress in order to be ready for the next level of instruction. This type of information has been very effectively shared with the use of the Computer Adaptive Assessments, which immediately informs students, teachers and parents of key skills necessary to move forward.

Fourth, I believe we must move to better track students in the Middle Grades of School, by either granting credit for those subjects necessary to help them move into the higher level high school programs, or assess them to inform their placement at high school, insuring that they receive the classes necessary to move them toward a track that would allow them to enter college.

Finally, as we have worked diligently this year to restore funding for the Utah College of Applied Technology and protect the Concurrent Enrollment funding, I believe we must continue to offer experience in the trade and technical education programs, as well as some experience in the realm of higher education. Without the option to allow students to experience such opportunities without taking the step to enroll full time, we will lose many students who do not see such options in their future. Public Education, I believe at the present time, must be not only the dissemination of knowledge, but the exposure to what is possible for each individual student. Quality teachers, counselors and informed parents can help in this regard, but nothing informs us better than experience.