

**UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

Chris Williams - 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.

With nearly 20 years experience in the technology industry, I have enjoyed tremendous professional success as an IBM certified engineer, and recently as a 'green' technology specialist and a customer advocate. However it was the experiences with my wife who was a 5th grade teacher at Pioneer Elementary in South Salt Lake, working with some of the most difficult challenges a student can face, that has given me a unique perspective that I would bring to the Board. Her task was to teach children who were besieged by gang, drug, poverty, violence and family issues. She inspired me to volunteer at Jackson Elementary, using my Spanish skills to teach literacy to Hispanic children. My proficiency with technology and its applicability in the classroom, along with my advocacy for science, technology, engineering and mathematics would be an asset to the Board, but I believe it is my passion to serve those who are especially at risk that most qualifies me to be considered as a candidate for the State Board of Education.

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

1. Ensure the success of all students in their preparation for work in the new economy,
2. Support and promote legislative initiatives around science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
3. Recommend ways to incorporate advances in technology that enhance education.

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

1. Changes in teaching methods; as more personalized ways of educating become available (driven chiefly by technology which can disrupt established ways of doing things) the public education system needs to be able to filter the promised hype from actual reality, not necessarily being on the 'bleeding edge' of adoption, but current enough to ensure relevancy in what is adopted.

2. Parental engagement in the education process; Lack of parental involvement hampers the efficacy of the provided education. The proliferation of devices that are capable of 'texting' are increasingly prevalent even among some of the poorer families and could be used to disseminate information, but parents need to be more engaged in the 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 would use work with the community councils, local boards, educators and parents, contributing to the web presences already established by those organizations and groups. I would additionally use social media (including blogging) as appropriate. Additionally, I would actively lobby and work with the legislature.

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?

Along with supporting STEM initiatives, I would work to promote creativity through the arts and languages.