

**UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
CANDIDATE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

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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.*

**Career:**

Considerable experience in

- Investment finance (Worked as Portfolio Manager for over ten years)
- Business & entrepreneurship (Obtained an MBA and founded own company in 2007)
- Technology (Studied computer science and worked as a programmer)

Expertise in these areas are extremely pertinent to today's education and in board business it would help me in assessing financial reports, audits, and technology recommendations.

**Board Experience:**

Service on board member and committee chair at

- The Road Home (largest homeless shelter in Utah servicing ~7,000 individuals annually)
- The CFA Society of Salt Lake (international, professional organization with 166 members in the local chapter)

I know how board and committees function and accomplish their work.

**Volunteer Experience:**

I instituted the local Investment Research Challenge in 2010 allowing undergrad and graduate students to compete nationally in generating industry level research reports and presentations. The contest involves joining students with faculty and professional mentors from Weber State University, Westminster College, The University of Utah, Utah Valley University, Brigham Young University, and Dixie State College (1) to provide real-life experiences and (2) to improve the job-recruitment of the students.

Since 2011 I have worked weekly with a small group of Spanish-speaking teenage girls to provide them with leadership and skill building lecture and activities.

**Practical Experience:** I know how to learn and I know how to listen and observe.

*LEARN:* I learned Spanish during two 7-week immersion programs at Middlebury College in Vermont, being awarded the best student at the advanced level in 2007.

*LISTEN:* I spend time listening to those around me on issues of education. I have visited Salt Lake District's charter school. I seek out and listen to educators and legislators about their concerns and ideas.

Being able to learn and observe is more critical for addressing the needs of public education in Utah than any one person's experience can afford.

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

1. Find ways and means of putting more technology in each classroom – rather than just one computer lab.
2. Promote further the continuing professional development of educators & administrators
3. Achieve greater post-secondary enrollment and graduation statewide

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

1. There is a problem too many graduating **seniors not being ready for success** at work or in post-secondary education. The problem sources from such things as
  - Insufficient mastery of the core curriculum
  - A lack of hands-on experience or application of learning
  - No mentoring relationships (formal or informal)
  - An inability to problem-solve or to implement solutions
  - Undiagnosed mental illness
  - Substance abuse

There are myriad reasons for these problems and some very good solutions to some of them are already in process, but the overall reason is a lack of coordination and agreement on resource allocation and direction between all stakeholders (students, parents, educators, legislators, employers) in the important goal of workforce readiness.

2. The other problem is a constant one and that is **funding for education**. This includes everything from the total amount to transparency and efficiency of use. This will always be a critical problem for Utah public education because of the unique demographics in Utah leading the lower funds per pupil in comparison to the rest of the nation. Having a tight budget is not necessarily a problem that precludes success, but it does mean that the funds must be used as effectively and as transparently as necessary so that the most important parts of education are funded. This topic comprises such “hot” issues as
  - Student-teacher ratios
  - Technology expenditures
  - Voucher-debate
  - Teacher pay and benefits
  - Policies on mainstreaming special needs children

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 make an effort to communicate with my constituents through

- Email
- Town hall meetings (in-person and virtual)
- Observation time at schools
- Visiting local board meetings

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?*

HELP STUDENTS AND PARENTS **PLAN** FOR POST-SECONDARY TRAINING/EDUCATION:

Some of the main contributing factors for high school graduates to choose higher education or other post-secondary training include the following:

- Education level of family members, especially parents
- Self-confidence problems
- Understanding of self interests and strengths
- Financial barriers
- Performance on college entrance exams
- Awareness of options for post-secondary education and training and understanding of the application process for entrance and financial aid

The following can help with these problems:

- Regularly engage parents in conversation about institutions and savings programs
- Universally offer personality tests and skill/interest inventories with reports sent to both students and parents
- Begin annual seminars with students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade (before grades count towards college enrollment)
- Encourage/require 16 hours of job shadowing between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- Increase enrollment in ACT/SAT tests

ORIENT THE CURRICULUM TOWARDS **PREPARATION**:

Increase focus on job critical areas such as

- Communication (written and spoken)
- Math and engineering
- Science and technology
- History
- English proficiency
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving