

**Davis Education Association
2010 Utah State School Board of Education
Candidate Questionnaire**

1. Please tell us a little about yourself and why you have filed to run for the Utah State School Board of Education.

- a. I am a native of Bountiful, Utah, a product of the public schools, and deeply committed to providing a superior public education for all children.
- b. I believe that my perspective as a student, educator, legislator and current school board member has prepared me to continue to serve students well.

2. What kinds of experiences have you had with the public schools? (children in school, volunteering, etc.)

- a. I am a graduate of the public schools in Davis County
- b. 27 years, teacher at Bountiful High School
- c. 15 years, Utah State Legislator, frequent advocate for public education
- d. 11 years, member of the Utah State Board of Education, and for 7 of those years chair of the State School Board
- e. 2 children attended the public school K-12
- f. For the past two years, my wife and I have done volunteer tutoring at Washington Elementary School in Bountiful

3. What, in your opinion, is the main mission of public education?

- a. To prepare all students for their future life as citizens, community members, family participants, and the workforce.

4. Do you believe that public schools are adequately funded? If you do not believe they are adequately funded, what changes should be made to provide appropriate financial support for quality public schools?

- a. Absolutely not.
- b. I am particularly appalled that during the recent year we did not fund “growth” in public education. I realize that economic realities are creating serious challenges, but we never should have failed to provide funding for new students. The precedent thus established is dangerous, and those that say we “held public education harmless” are playing games with semantics!
- c. We should continue to work to gain fair compensation for the extensive public lands in Utah that do not provide taxable income. This is a process that many have worked on for many years, and we should continue to do so.
- d. Judicious tax revisions need to be employed to increase available revenue. I am particularly chagrined by the large number of industrial exemptions which exist and which should be carefully re-evaluated.
- e. Are we adequately using a severance tax? Our neighboring state Wyoming has considerably better financial support for education largely because of their broad support coming from the severance tax. We should not put our own industry at a

financial disadvantage, but I am not convinced that we are appropriately taxing in this way.

5. What do you see as the three most critical need/issues facing the State School Board and Utah public schools in the next five years?

How would you begin to address these issues?

a. Inadequate funding. (see detail above.)
b. Failure to fund student growth. (See detail above.)
c. The need for superior teachers. Although I have not always agreed with my colleagues on this issue, I believe that some fair system of performance based pay makes sense. All teachers are not equal. I believe that we need to pursue a system that would reward and encourage superior teaching. This issue must be addressed carefully, and I am supportive of the current investigations being conducted by the State Board of Education, in which we are seeking to find a broad-based system for effectively evaluating superior teaching. Anyone who says that a simple use of student test scores is an appropriate method is in error in my opinion. An appropriate system will include multiple avenues for measurement: student evaluation, administrator evaluation, student performance, observation, perhaps even parent evaluation, and more. Pilot programs should carefully investigate these options.

6. What would you do to retain quality educators in Utah?

a. Continue to fight for adequate compensation while seeking manageable class size.

7. What would you do to attract new teachers in Utah, considering the fact that the legislature this year significantly reduced the retirement benefit for future teachers?

a. Good question. The only answer which I see would be to increase salaries. Senator Liljenquist when he advanced the retirement changes said he favored increased compensation as a way to make it up to teachers. He and the other legislators must be held to that goal. Otherwise the damage done to retirement may well be devastating in our struggle to recruit teachers.

8. If another voucher or tuition tax credit bill is introduced in the legislature, would you support another such effort, or would you oppose it? Why?

a. The record speaks for itself. I have been and continue to be adamantly opposed to vouchers or tuition tax credits. As chair of the State School Board I led the opposition to imposing a voucher system in the State.

9. In 2010 Sen. Margaret Dayton sponsored a bill (S.B. 77) that would prevent school districts from providing Association leave (paid substitutes) for teachers who serve during the school day on district committees such as negotiations. It would also prevent the school district from paying 50% of the DEA President's salary. Would you

favor the continuation of the current Association leave policy between the school district and the DEA, or would you oppose it?

a. This decision should remain the decision of the local school board. Some of these options are vital to effectively conducting the business of a school district.

10. In your opinion, is there anything the State Board of Education or State Office of Education could do better?

a. I have been extremely interested in seeing better coordination between local school districts and the state school board. The relationship between these two should be a cooperative one. Some view the relationship in a condescending fashion rather than cooperation. I am pleased to currently work in support of the effort for increased cooperation as the USBE representative to the Utah School Boards Association where I meet with district board leaders regularly. I also successfully advocated for the inclusion of a local school board representative as a part of the State Board of Education.

b. Some groups are clearly advocating to make the school board lean to the "right." They want the Board to become more partisan. Using the current system of school board nomination, they have succeeded to some degree in this effort. I am adamantly supportive of retaining the State School Board as a non-partisan agency, more concerned with students than political philosophies.

11. What changes, if any, would you make to the way the State School Board is elected?

a. My previous answer speaks to this issue. I believe our current system removes State School Board selection from the people and puts most of the decision with a highly politicized system.

b. Some suggest making the selection of the State School Board partisan. I am firmly opposed to this.

c. Either returning to the system where local districts made nominations or a direct election by the public through a primary system is preferable.

12. Is there anything else you would like to say that we haven't asked?

a. Only to emphasize the importance of balance in our educational program. I believe that the increased emphasis on the basics (reading and math) is highly appropriate. However, in pushing that emphasis we need to make sure that opportunities for adequate career preparation, fine arts appreciation, life skills, and civic involvement and commitment are adequately retained. I fear that the balance may be moving off center.