

**Davis Education Association
2010 Davis School District Board of Education
Candidate Questionnaire**

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

I am a resident of Farmington having lived here for 30 years. My wife of 50 years and I are the parents of 6 children four of whom completed their schooling in the Davis schools. Currently 6 grandchildren are attending Davis schools.

I served as a public school educator for 32 years before retiring.

*I am a veteran classroom teacher having taught biology and chemistry to high school students for 10 years,

*I am a veteran school administrator having served as a high school principal, middle school principal and high school asst. principal totaling 18 years.

*I was appointed Superintendent of Schools in the Cache County School District and served 4 years until my retirement.

Educationally I have the following qualifications:

*I was educated in the public schools in Salt Lake City graduating from West High School.

*I earned my B.S. in Biology and Chemistry at the Uof U, '66.

*My M.S. in Secondary Education was earned at the UofU, '71.

*My Doctorate was earned at the UofU, Ed.D.'78.

Community service includes the following:

*I am retired from the United States Air Force having served 20 years with the Utah Air National Guard.

*I served on the Farmington Planning Commission, 3 years.

* I volunteered with America First Credit Union serving on the Supervisory Committee.

My hobbies include keeping my greenhouse, gardening, woodworking and raising a few chickens and bees in my backyard. Writing is another passion of mine, occasionally having something printed.

Why serve a School Board position? I have a lifelong vested interest in the quality of public schools. I am proud of my profession and consider myself lucky to have been so engaged. By way of education and experience I believe I can continue to contribute to this noblest of human endeavors; a well educated and prepared student population in Davis County who are willing and able to take on the important issues of the future.

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

My experiences with the Davis Schools are varied. As a parent I had the opportunity to interact with teachers in student conferences and during activities my students were involved in. As an Asst. Principal at West High School, I helped to supervise athletic contests between West and schools in Davis County. Davis administrators of a similar strip and I developed a working camaraderie as we worked crowd control (whew). Finally, as a Superintendent I enjoyed a working relationship with former Davis Superintendents; Superintendent Richard Kendall and Superintendent Darrel White. Their wisdom helped me as a working Superintendent.

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

In 1918, compulsory education was enacted nationwide. The point was literacy; reading, writing, and arithmetic. This cultural shift, once implemented, caused class lines to blur, a large middle class to emerge, American style democracy to mature and the world's highest standard of living to be enjoyed by Americans. Public education did that! Today's mission for public schools is not all that different. The public education system in Davis County should aim to educate all its students, sufficient to take their place in the middle class of America, with the aim of preserving American Democracy and our way of life.

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?

We have in Utah the most under funded schools in the nation. Excuses, mostly given by politicians, are our large Utah families and a tax base that can't do more to fund schools. The cry, 'Stack 'um deep, school 'um cheap' offends. Citizens of conscience know better. No short way around the problem exists. A substantial and long lasting income tax needs to be enacted. My belief is a majority of our Utah and Davis County citizens would approve of a tax increase dedicated to improving our public schools but it seems the political will is lacking. My voice will seek to bolster the spine of our legislators and Governor, urging the moral probity of a well educated electorate over the political ideology of lower taxes no matter the outcome. Our kids deserve no less than an ongoing effort to find

adequate funding for our schools. Mine will be voice in Utah's political wilderness for more funding for our public schools.

5. What do you see as the three most critical need/issues facing the Davis School District in the next five years? How would you begin to address these issues?

The three most critical issues from my point of view are:

1. I have a six year old granddaughter attending Muir Elementary School in the Davis Schools. We were talking and she said "We have 27 kids in my class". My daughter says the teacher is doing fine but I wonder how much better she would do with less than 20 in class. In my opinion class size is the most critical issue facing the Davis Schools. I would work to find and support the means of reducing class sizes in grades K-3 to no more than 20 district-wide as a start to addressing overall class size issues in our Davis schools.

2. This year the legislature failed to fund student growth in school districts state wide. Davis District will be impacted more than most since we are expecting several thousand more students next year than this. The costs of educating these new students will have to be found in present district funds. No crystal ball needed here to predict the outcome. Student loads will increase next year; problem 2 affects problem 1. A two part solution will require my lobbying our legislators to fully fund growth as an ongoing policy, and second supporting district efforts to build new schools to house our growing student numbers.

3. Charter Schools are here to stay. They exist as an alternative to neighborhood public schools. The kids across the street pile into a car each morning for the 5 mile ride to their charter school while the neighborhood elementary school is 3 blocks away. Why? My neighbor feels the education is better. She says flexibility is the key; more flexible curriculum, staffing, and response to parent concerns. She also says her commitment to spending time helping at the school make her feel she belongs there. To her our Davis public schools seem inflexible and unresponsive to parents and kids. She says if our neighborhood school could be more like her charter school she would send her students 3 blocks rather than 5 miles to school. I believe charter schools and the voucher movement are a wake up call to our way of doing business. I would support efforts at improving our image in the eyes of our constituents with real changes in the delivery of our curriculum, staffing and sharing in the governance of schools with parents such that vouchers will become a dusty distant memory and charter schools will appear as oddities on the fringes of an excellent public school experience for all its students and their parents.

6. What would you do to retain quality educators in the Davis District?

The term 'quality educators' is in the question. Who judges? All teachers are certified by the state after graduating from University. Veteran teachers have to pass a 3 year probationary period. Salary schedules reward teachers for

professional development through continuing education. School Principals evaluate teachers yearly and make recommendations for improvement. District policies exist to challenge teachers whose work appears to be sub-standard. These and other measures speak to the quality of our professional staff.

George Orwell wrote 'Animal Farm' where some animals were more equal than others. If the question asks, 'Are some teachers more equal than others (quality educators)' and deserve merit pay I have to ask again, who judges? Without being on site in every school every day, I am not qualified to judge. I believe that each teacher in the district has the honor of being a quality educator by definition and process. The question then becomes how to retain teachers as teachers in the Davis Schools.

1. Salary and benefits tops my list of how's. These must be on a par or higher than surrounding districts.

2. Quality educators shine when they work in quality schools. The district must constantly be on the lookout for quality principals who do exceptional work.

3. I believe school administrators who share decision making with teachers and other employees concerning the delivery of their services and the resolution of conflicts are happier places to work.

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

The reduction of the retirement benefit is a blow to recruitment of new teachers and other employees in districts statewide. Davis is in competition for new teachers entering service with all districts and a retirement benefit affects them all equally. So, what is, is and the district must focus on those benefits it can offer new teachers that out compete neighboring districts for new talent.

1. In many respects Davis County is a bedroom community and schools are located in those neighborhoods. If recruitment of a teacher could offer a choice of schools close to their home it might be a positive incentive.

2. Administrators should reach out to the Colleges of Education seeking ways to partner in training students. With more education students in our Davis schools, principals would be a good position to evaluate the best of them, offering contracts before other districts grab them up.

3. I have felt for some time that shorting the salary schedule as to the years needed to work from the bottom to the top would be a positive recruitment tool for a district. Of course this is a negotiation issue but I would look favorably on a plan of this sort.

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?

I fought the voucher bill, gathered signatures and voted to repeal the law. I would do it again. Utah has the most under funded schools in the nation and the voucher

movement was excuse making for not improving the situation politically. The rich and politically powerful wanted to sidestep the problem of adequate funding of public schools by taking a share of state funding for their student(s), adding money to it and buying a private education that is more adequately funded. Shame on them! All students deserve an adequately funded education and I will only support laws that do that.

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?

Sound bites; Dayton making political hay. In the guise of cost saving it was a poor crop. The amount of money budgeted to provide association leave for teachers and 50% of the DEA's Presidents salary is very small considering to size of the Davis Schools overall M&O budget. It buys a good working relationship with the district. In my experience I have seen this work for the benefit of the school board, administration and teachers together and I would support the status quo as it now exists.

10. In your opinion, is there anything the Davis School Board and District Administration could do better?

From what I have been told, the School Board members and the Administration have a congenial and effective working relationship. Nothing at present jumps out at me as problem. School Boards are legislative in function setting policy for the district and wisely leave administration of the district to administrators. I will not micro-manage the district from my seat on the school board nor do I have a hidden agenda to pursue. I am a good listener, a moderate thinker, a decision maker and when called upon, a judge. I value opinions different from my own. With these attributes, as a school board member, I hope to contribute to the continued effective governance of the Davis Schools.

11. Is the Davis School District too large to be responsive to its patrons and the community? Would you support splitting the school district? Why or why not?

This question puts me in mind of the Jordan School District and its split. It has been ugly from start to now, and it is not over yet. The original argument that smaller districts can be more responsive to its patrons may be true but the hidden agenda was taxes. The east side was no longer growing and the west was exploding. Eastside patrons saw increases in property taxes going to build schools on the Westside and they rebelled. Once split, the Eastside was richer and seemed to snub their collective noses at the Westside as they began laying off teachers and others to make ends meet. I-15 is now a line in the sand with real

animosity on both sides of it. Both districts have been negatively impacted and it will be years before either is back to where they were before the split. As to the original purpose, reponsivity, it has become lost in all the rancor and animosity. What may have started out as well meaning has ended up a complete disaster. Davis County Schools do not need anything of that kind. I hope we can learn from this failure and work instead to share governance more at the school level away from the district level where patrons can see real responses to their concerns. I would not support splitting the Davis Schools into smaller districts as I believe other solutions to our large district governance issues are possible.