

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

Fees

Teacher, Jordan S.D. - After viewing the mandates, I have the strongest feelings about the one stating that there shall be no fees charged for k-6 grade. As a teacher I am to supply all materials including crayons, pencils, erasers, paper, scissors etc. If we were allowed to ask or supplies like all the other states it would really help our budgets. Buying all these supplies cost a great deal and I have found that most of my students want to have their own things anyway and eventually bring their own supplies further wasting what I have already supplied. I have lived in two other states and we always brought our own supplies and could hardly wait to go school shopping for them. I really don't feel this would cause a hardship on anyone and it would be a lot less costly to order a few supplies for those that could not afford them as opposed to ordering for the whole class. One year a school I taught at sent a list home of supplies needed for the year and we received more than enough for everyone. Many parents contributed more than what was asked for and I don't think one person complained but we were told by the district that we could never do that again. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Teacher, Jordan S. D. - As a parent I was very surprised when I sent my oldest daughter to school and discovered I did not have to supply anything. I fully expected to supply pencils, glue, crayons, scissors etc. I know that as a child I supplied my own things for school in Idaho. Why in Utah do the schools supply these types of items? I feel that families should be able to send these items to school.

Teacher, Davis S.D. - I would challenge you to ask any student or parent in a high school in Davis School District and see if they agree with school fees. There are so many fee's for so many things. It costs a fortune to start a school year out with a secondary student. Not only are there the posted fee's on the regular registration publication, but then the first week of school student bring home a list of additional fee's for their classes. It is not uncommon for a student to have over \$150 class fee's especially for ATE classes. I don't feel this is being regulated and it again is a cash cow with the student and parents being taken advantage of. Shouldn't schools be providing some of the classroom costs instead of requiring every student a fee to take the class. I am a hypocrite because my Multimedia class has a \$10. ATE fee which I love and provides me about \$2,000 to use for supplies, but I really feel that it should come from ATE supply budget-not the students. And I have been following status quo in this area, but I do not agree with it.

Principal, Uintah S.D. - We continually get students from out of state that are very surprised that they don't have to buy their own supplies (I work in a 5th grade center). Allowing parents to have so little responsibility for their student's education often backfires and creates a welfare mentality. In my opinion we should require more involvement of parents, including funding for supplies K-12. (Fee waivers should of course stay in place for those who are destitute.)

Teacher, Alpine - The area I would like to see more flexibility in is Supplies. Our district (Alpine) and others (as having talked to other teachers) is very prohibitive on requiring any student to bring supplies for school use. It would be very beneficial to have a required supply list given before the school year begins. Most all parents want to donate supplies, but they must wait until school begins to find out what teachers need and want their students to work with for the school year. I have spoken with many parents for whom this is a frustration. When they have the time to shop and when school supplies are on

sale, they don't know what is yet needed. Most all other states have a required supply list that they must bring to school. We must ask for all supplies to be "donated". The cost would be minimal for each student but a great deal of help to me as a classroom teacher. Possibly reduction in lunch requirements could be used for determining if families could be waived purchasing these supplies, I could then spend some of my teacher supply money on more classroom supplies instead of always spending money out of my own pocket.

Principal, Ogden S.D. - I have strong feelings about fees. I am principal at Ogden High School where this year we have lost over \$55,000 to fee waivers, plus we are encountering stiff resistance from parents who are not eligible but who simply refuse to pay fees for a child. This refusal to pay group is nearly \$50,000 at present, and our alternative is to "suck it up" or to take our parents to court. Neither alternative is good. The current imposition of fees by schools is a tax, imposed by school districts on families who are not eligible for free or reduced lunches, to cover inadequate school funding. Utah needs to take the example of surrounding states and ban fees outright and then to fund schools sufficiently to cover the expenses that fees currently attempt to address. If Idaho can do it, so can Utah. Ogden High School has 55% of its students eligible for free and reduced lunches. That means 45% of the students and their parents are paying, through fees, the support of vital school programs. The problem is only worsening, year by year, and we must have relief, immediately, or we will simply not be able to function as a school that provides curricular and co-curricular programs.

Teacher, Salt Lake S. D. - The law and UT Attorney General decision against not allowing schools to withhold diplomas or transcripts for students who owe fines to schools for lost and/or destroyed school uniforms, equipment, curriculum materials, etc. should be changed to put some 'teeth' in collecting these items and/or fines for same. When "push comes to shove," all we have now are empty threats. Why should we reinforce irresponsibility as a learned behavior, and why should taxpayers be stuck with the bill?

Fee Waivers

Teacher, Duchesne S.D. - This thing is a real boondoggle, especially in low income areas. We already have less money for our activities and athletics than the larger places, it is harder to get sponsorship due to the lack of money in our local economy, and then we get penalized again, because we can't require the kids who are playing or participating to pay for these voluntary activities? They aren't required to play, or go, or participate. All we ask is that those who want to be a part of the program pay a fee to help offset the cost of equipment, uniforms, and travel, which are not fully covered by the budget in our district. Yet our programs are required to pay for those on fee waivers if they want to be involved, even though everyone else is paying their way? What if they decide to go on a trip to Europe, do we waive the \$1,800.00 fee? Technically, I think they could force us to do it. What if the district isn't requiring the fee, do fee waivers apply if only my volleyball program in my school is requiring a fee?

We need better information at the local levels so that we can apply this rule fairly (if possible), and we need to see what effect fee waivers are having on our systems.

Impact Fees

Teacher, Granite S.D. - With the recent turmoil concerning education funding and the future outlook for funding, I believe the funding of education should be of first priority. This year has demonstrated that the amount of monies available for education is at the mercy of the economy and the whims of the legislature. This is the case with all publically funded services. The amount of police and fire protection ebb and flow with the economic tide too. But not to the degree the tightly funded school system is subjected to. I believe the greatest single accomplishment that anyone could do would be to seek out, find, and develop new ways to add too and increase unwavering funding to the educational system. This is no small task but it is the requisite first step. Consequential education improvement can only begin by getting serious about the changing the current constricted sources of funding. Look to other States for ideas and directions. Repeal the prohibition on impact fees. Do whatever is necessary to demonstrate your serious-mindedness.

Teacher, Granite S.D. - The problem with the unfunded mandates that the state puts on school districts is not the standards, it is the fact that they are unfunded. I would suggest that the first restrictions removed be the restrictions the state puts on school districts' fund-raising ability. One useful change would be to allow school districts to charge impact fees to new developments.

Teacher, Jordan S.D. - Right now they [impact fees] are prohibited. I feel they need to be allowed. I live in an area of very high growth (Herriman). I see many new houses going in and the need for schools to be built in this area will come very soon. Right now the only way the Jordan School District has to raise money to build new schools is from bonding. Allowing school districts impact fees would help this matter.

Teacher, Washington S.D. - Why are impact fees prohibited? Why isn't this also considered as an alternative to state income and property taxes? Impact fees could provide needed money for new school buildings.

Reporting

District Administrator, Nebo S.D. - I have looked at your attachment and have just one simple suggestion. I think you'll notice very quickly as you go down the list that the schools and districts are paper worked to death. That is, either the federal or state governments want mounds and mounds of paperwork on virtually every aspect of education. Most recently, money was block-granted, then of course, additional paperwork was needed to get the grant money! Another recent example is that the county would like us to do 15,000 individual computer entries on students as we work with them. All for a somewhat small amount of money. The list goes on and on...

I guess there are two ways to look at all the paperwork. Job security for someone or money wasted that could have gone to the students. To make a long story short, too much money is wasted on bureaucracy (paperwork)when it could be going to students. A person spent doing reports all day is also a person that could be spending some time with a student.

School Trust Land Monies

Principal, Nebo S.D. - Trust lands has been very beneficial to our school. Although the amount of paper work, in applications and reports is amazing for the few thousands dollars that is received.

Principal, Ogden S.D. - I deeply appreciate the flexibility that Trust lands moneys have given us. This year we have used Trust land moneys to support three vital programs: Technology acquisition, professional development, and developing an at-risk program targeting inner city children. The Trust land moneys are really the only significant moneys at our disposal that we can direct where sense needs. Please continue support of this program.

Teacher, Washington S.D. - Hopefully this money cannot be touched by anyone, at any time for any reason other than the benefit of Utah's school children. My understanding is that this resource was mismanaged for many, many years. Had it been managed correctly from the beginning [1896] imagine the base fund we would have today and the interest we could draw from to help supplement education in Utah. Individual schools should have more freedom to use this money as they see fit with a minimum of reports detailing how the money was used. I served on our school's trust land committee and we spent hours and hours detailing how we would use the money and then after how we did spend the money. This whole process should be simplified.

Principal, Murray S.D. - The requirement for reporting the use of the [School Trust LAND] funds is a little overboard. We spent thousands of dollars on other programs with no reporting requirement - why report on this small piece? We are accountable for every dollar we spend. The requirement to set up plans and report on results is redundant. We do that in everything we do.

Teacher, Alpine S.D. - All dividends should be put into the critical school building fund. The trust lands were originally set up to build new schools and then let the local people fund the maintenance. Don't let them be frittered away as is happening now. We need new schools in fast growing areas much more than a few \$ to supplement.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Obviously, the progress the Trust Lands Administration has made is laudable. However, in small schools, meeting items 2 & 3 wastes a significant amount of the money received. For example, if you attach an hourly value to the time spent on committees and reports, it's not the most efficient way to use this money.

Restricted Funds

Principal, Uintah - There are a couple of issues we discussed recently as principals of our district as possible solutions to the continued cuts in programs and services to our students. One issue of concern is the categorical funding of capitol outlay, maintenance/operation and travel budgets. Since there are fairly strict rules as to how these funds can be spent, we often in local districts find ourselves trying to explain why we can cut teachers and put 35-40 student in a class, but can't cut athletic travel or buying new carpet. It would seem that if the lines were less ridged in the different accounts that districts could truly choose to fund those educational programs that are of most need to that particular community. It may not change how we spent the money, but it would no longer look as if our hands were tied by the legislature and that it was of no use to save in one area to better serve another.

Block Granting

Principal, Ogden S.D. - Block granting has strengths and weaknesses: If the level of funding is sufficient to cover the various programs included in the block, fine; but if the level of funding is reduced and then the remaining moneys are pooled into a block, with the local district/schools left to decide which arm or leg to amputate, then the process needs to be examined. I sense too often the state moves to create programs, get them started with seed money, but then cut the funding once the personnel, training, and programs are in place, with no means of sustaining the program/staffing. I don't like that approach.

Teacher, Alpine S.D. - I wish to express some of my concerns for several of the education mandates you have included in your letter. I have been a teacher in the Alpine School District for 28 years. For the past 13 years I have also served as a career ladder committee member, secretary, and mentor teacher coordinator. My duties have included the tracking of all teacher development plans for career teachers as well as maintaining the records for requirements of our program. I am sure that our program under the career ladder statute was a model above most in the state.

I am very much in favor of local control of money being given to the schools. However, I know first hand that money which comes without direct requirements to a district as large as Alpine is quickly lost in the top-heavy administrative office that we have. Our school board members have met in closed session to discuss the block grant monies . . . in discussing the transition with district leadership I have been told that maybe they won't have a plan until December . . . and when asked about getting mentees assigned a mentor for the first of school the answer was that maybe a "retreat" would be the best thing for mentors. I can assure you that a "retreat" is not a "treat" for teachers as they prepare lesson plans to leave their classrooms and return to clean up the mess. I do not understand, given the current national emphasis on teacher improvement and accountability, why school districts would be backing away from demonstrably effective programs toward the formless frittering away of public school funds, unless Alpine is opting to absorb career ladder monies into other projects. The only way the dismantling of career ladder makes any sense is if the district wishes to discourage longevity and self-improvement in their teaching staff. Perhaps greater legislative oversight would be in order.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - It's too early to make a final judgement but some aspects of the Career Ladder program have been less than effective. It's not likely that the Quality Teaching Block will be much better. If you're going to send Districts the money, let them use it for whatever meets local needs. What if a district wanted to extend the school year, have an after school. Program, implement an intensive reading program, hire math tutors, etc? This money could go toward such needs if the strings were truly cut.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Rather than transferring this to the Quality Teaching Block, it would be better spent simply adding it to the WPU. We have desperate needs in class sizes, curriculum offerings, etc., which could be addressed through improved funding of the WPU.

Instructional Supplies

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Does a specific percentage meet the needs of both Granite District and Rich County district? There is tremendous variation between schools and districts around the state. Local decision making is usually best.

Nuclear Waste Fees

Teacher, Washington S.D. - As an option for ed. funding, why not consider raising fees attached to storage of low grade [class A] nuclear waste as suggested in the Radioactive Waste Reduction Act, an initiative that will appear on the ballots in November [hopefully] that will allow voters to decide whether to increase fees [from around \$.10 per square foot, the lowest in the country] and use the added money to support education. It seems to me that this might ease the pressure from the public having to pay such a high percentage of their state taxes to education.

EMPLOYEE REQUIREMENTS

Ethical Conduct

Teacher, Duchesne S.D. - Teachers are professionals, and deserve the right to set and administer our own ethical standards, just as lawyers, engineers and plumbers do. There should be a committee of working teachers making these determinations, not just the SBOE.

Health Insurance

Principal, Ogden S.D. - A major challenge schools face each year is meeting health care cost increases. Is it not time for the state to consolidate health care provisions for public ed employees under the same umbrella as that of state employees. It seems to me that a single health care program for all state employees and school employees would provide a large enough pool of members to do some serious leveraging with medical costs. How can we explain 20-25% health care increases annually when the cost of living is 1-3%? Individual districts are incapable of leveraging insurance companies.

License Retention

Principal, Ogden S.D. - I encourage more rigorous certification requirements. I remember the "good old days" when to recertify, a teacher had to enroll in X number of university courses. That was a financial burden, but the quality of instruction was improved. We still have teachers who are in the bachelors lane on the salary schedule after thirty years of teaching; that is wrong. I know the legislature faces attack from UEA on stricter requirements, but nothing is more basic to quality teaching than to continuous learning in the craft.

Principal, Murray S.D. - The requirement that teachers amass 100 points in inservice and other activities in a 5 year period is totally unnecessary. I have 3 years to go before I need to relicense, and I already have over 200 points. My teachers who have already relicensed only used a fraction of the points they had earned. We conduct professional development in the school on a continual basis. Teachers are given ample opportunities to attend inservice and workshops on their own. This is a meaningless, unnecessary program.

Nebo S.D. - I certainly believe there should be continued education and training for educators. I believe the current 100 point system does not provide a means to "prove" educators are actually improving their skills, outside of actual enrollment in college courses, and burdens educators with the out of pocket expense and personal time commitment in order to satisfy the point system. Excellent educators will continue their education on their own and instead of rewarding them for their discipline they are dealt with as equals with mediocre educators who will attempt to find the easiest and least demanding way to earn points.

Teacher, Alpine S.D. - SBOE should not be making rules requiring continuing education. We have done it before and dropped it. Teachers who don't want to will take easy classes to meet the requirement.

Teachers who would, get directed into things they don't want. This increases revenues(costing the state budget) to higher ed. It also forces all teachers into higher pay brackets which increases the cost. Some are just happy with a B.S. and nothing else and do a fine job.

Career Ladders

Principal, Ogden S.D. - I would prefer a block of money given to district/school (preferably schools) that could be used to support university classes helping teachers improve their abilities.

Professional Development

Principal, Alpine S.D. - We spend too much time and money on professional development and not enough on teacher selection. The really good teachers take care of their own professional development without the state or district leading them by the hand.

Educator Evaluation/Assessment

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Probably should be a local issue. The current procedures are a joke. Empower principals THEN hold us accountable.

REQUIREMENTS ON STUDENTS OR REGARDING SCHOOL/STUDENT RELATIONS

Private/home Schooled Students Eligible for Extra-curricular Activities

Teacher, Duchesne S.D. - This is a problem. Due to eligibility rules in the schools, students are required to maintain certain GPA and attendance and citizenship standards. How do we know if a Home-schooled student is matching or meeting those standards? Also, what about boundaries, can the student play for any school in the district?

Teacher, Nebo S.D. - Local education should have greater flexibility.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Eliminate or revise

SEPs/SEOPs

Teacher, Murray S.D. - All SEP/SEOP documents should be translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other languages for the parents of our growing number of ESL students.

Principal, Nebo S.D. - SEOP's don't work. Parents still need time with teachers one on one, to report student progress. If the SEOP forms are used conferences are not productive. This is an area that our school has really tried to revamp, but we are concerned now about not meeting the requirements of the law.

Teacher, Alpine S.D. - If they are so important let the locals require it. The state shouldn't mandate it.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - SEOP's are a good idea on paper, but speaking as a parent rather an educator, they are mostly insignificant in affecting student achievement.

School Choice

Principal, Alpine S.D. - For every problem this has solved, it has created one or two.

School Uniforms

Teacher, Nebo S.D. - Local education should have greater flexibility.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Eliminate or revise

Attendance

Principal, Ogden S.D. - We have a deep need for a state-wide attendance requirement, something akin to Texas which simply says a student must be class X% of the time or else credit will be withheld. Industry standard is typically 1 day of leave per month of work performed. Why not a state requirement that is stated similarly--95% attendance or no credit. That one ruling would do more to correct the nonsense I deal with daily with parents and students who think three week vacations, a six-week December to February pilgrimage for Hispanic students and families to Mexico, and similar nonsense. Reality is if the student is not in school, s/he is heading for trouble and taking someone else with him/her.

Nebo S.D. - I have long been in favor of a minimum number of days of attendance being required in order for a student to earn credit for any particular term. The belief that missing almost all class periods, but requiring teachers to provide "makeup" work so the student can still earn credit is ludicrous especially to students who actually attend school. Having taught in Texas schools and experienced mandatory minimum attendance requirements I have been convinced that if we expect education to be valued we cannot keep giving it away.

Teacher, Salt Lake S.D. - While the ideals and goals of compulsory ed are great, either we need to enforce the law OR accept the fact that times and populations have changed, and, except in the most extreme cases, the enforcement authorities and courts are too busy and unwilling or unable to enforce this. Consistently and rigorously enforce the law for 14 year old and younger students, but parents/guardians of students over the age of 15 who have repeatedly shown disinterest in public education should be "cut loose." Either enforce it or drop it!

Youth in Custody

Principal, Ogden S.D. - We inherit the students; their needs are beyond those of regular students, and there is no provision for fees not collected. In other words, we are required to provide additional services beyond that required by normal students, with no resources to support those services. Perhaps some kind of "Add-on" funding similar to ATE programs???

Comprehensive Guidance

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Generally a good idea but these kind of mandates stifle local creativity and increase bureaucracy.

Discipline/Control

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Expulsion periods. Local Boards and Administrators can handle these situations. This is a classic case of micro-management.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

Adoption

Teacher, Duchesne S.D. - Oh, come on, now we are responsible for teaching this too? My best friend was adopted, I have colleagues who have adopted; but none of them want this to be a school issue. And what are the intervals? Once every twelve years?

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Totally ineffective and superfluous. A waste of legislative and school time.

Remediation Programs in Secondary Schools

Principal, Nebo S.D. - The law on remediation for students that are failing or behind seems redundant. Do you not think that we are trying to meet the needs of these students and provide extra support and teaching for them. Again this is one area that could use a lot more funding. More importantly, funding for more early intervention programs would be a better way to catch them before there are too many problems.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Should be handled locally.

Concurrent Enrollment

Teacher, Davis S.D. - I have taught concurrent credit Multimedia classes through UVSC for the past 5 years and it was UVSC that told us that some of the money was suppose to come back to the school or the program. After causing a stink looking into it at the district level- for the past 3 years, they finally gave us- a small percentage last year. I would love to see this law enforced or have some accountability from the districts where the money goes.

When I talk to my fellow Multimedia colleagues, the money that they (meaning their school or program) receive from teaching concurrent varies so from district to district. With all the budget cuts coming next year, I've already been told that my school's percentage of the concurrent credit has been cut? How can that be when the funding is generated by this years enrollment.

I feel so strongly on this matter because it is a lot of work to teach the concurrent classes- I work hard teaching the college curriculum and doing all the grading and registering and paperwork and it seems to me that it is a cash cow for the district for some unknown dept. that does absolutely nothing. I would like it mandated clearly the formula how much money should go to the program that generated these dollars.

You wouldn't believe all the things I have heard concerning this program. I've read the actual law and have copied it for people in my district and the state office. Many claim still that the district has the authority to take the full amount- giving none back to the school.

I just go crazy when us teachers and students in the classroom never see the benefit from so many programs that the funding was intended to reach.

Principal, Ogden S.D. - I strongly support concurrent enrollment programs. They are tremendously advantageous to our students and to the state system of higher education. I have discovered, however, that not all departments at universities are equally as enthusiastic. Some departments, for whatever reasons, are unwilling to work with public schools in offering a range of concurrent enrollment courses, and any pressure the legislature could exert to coax some departments at universities to identify courses that will be offered via concurrent enrollment would help.

Teacher, Nebo S.D. - I am in favor of concurrent enrollment but have been increasingly concerned by the lack of "quality control" in the classes taught and instructors teaching. There does not appear to be uniformity in terms of content or rigor, especially if these courses should be equivalent to a college experience. Also, initially all high school instructors were to have a masters degree, but that is no longer a requirement in all fields and that again is a less rigorous standard than our state universities require.

Graduation Requirements

Teacher, Duchesne S.D. - I am from Oregon, and the idea that we can teach a kid enough that in three years of high school they are ready to graduate is ridiculous. There are many classes required of seniors in Oregon, including citizenship; in addition they are required to do service hours and a senior project. All of these are things people in Utah value, yet none of them are required of our students. In fact, we reward them for taking the bare minimum required classes and getting the heck out of our system, by giving them a scholarship! I would love to see the stats on the use of that money, and on the continued progress of those early grads over the next 5 years. How many actually go to college? How many stay? How many graduate? I bet we are doing them a disservice.

Teacher, Salt Lake S. D. - Either enforce State-wide standards across-the-board which are real and possible for UT in the 21st Century, or drop "graduation requirements" altogether and let the student transcript and end-of-course/end-of-process "tests" remain as the record of academic and technical achievement. As it is, with all of the seriously watered-down methods of making up graduation credits (have you ever dropped in on summer or "make-up" school or looked at the "packets?") "The diploma" is a meaningless piece of paper—as business, higher ed, and the military already know! Either make the diploma truly meaningful again, w/hard, standardized, across-the-State benchmarks, OR forget it and get on with life... Let's lead the nation into the (surely coming sooner or later) change, where, because of inability to set AND enforce hard standards for "mastery" and high school "graduation," all students get "free" public K-12/age 6-18 to do the best they can, and then let the "transcript and tests" chips fall where they may!

Teacher, Nebo S.D. - Local education should have more flexibility.

Nebo S.D. - I believe we have too lax graduation requirements in the state of Utah. Nebo School District has additional requirements, but these are not enough. Except for Senior English, and soon the half year government requirement, Seniors have no need to continue being in the schools for their senior year. Despite the governor's feelings to the contrary, I don't feel we need more immature, unskilled and unmotivated 17 year olds running around without direction. The truly academically motivated students, by choice, take a full load of academic classes as seniors, yet the students who really need more, and continued, education are the ones who will try any means to "escape" school. As a side note, the new government class requirement is long overdue. However, many districts will cut World Civilizations

from a year course to a half year, in order to accommodate the new government requirement. This is unfortunate and wrong. Not only is it impossible to teach world history in a year, it is obviously impossible to teach it in a semester. In addition, if money was allocated for additional educators to teach the new class, many districts would not be forced into this kind of action.

Principal, Ogden S.D. - I have been an educator when we had a six-period day, 55 minutes long. Every year a student took math, English, science, and social studies plus a smattering of electives. Then came Nation at Risk and a call for stricter standards. Out of that came a confusion of schedules-- trimester, 7-period, 8-period roll over, etc. Less time to instruct and greater expectation for success. It is insane. Why doesn't the state establish a two-tier standard: "Students' graduating from high school must demonstrate reading level at the (fill in the grade-level expertise desired). They must also demonstrate numerical literacy at the (fill in the lowest level of math to be allowed)." As a second tier, establish some sort of expectation that in addition to the math and literacy requirement, students will have had course work in PE, Health, Science, Technology, etc. In other words, set a minimum demonstrable set of standards in reading and math, then lots of latitude in all the rest. I remember years ago when a national study revealed an embarrassing lack of knowledge about geography; out of that came a mandatory geography requirement. Then there was a "free enterprise/economics" embarrassment and a corresponding knee-jerk reaction from the legislature and State Office of Education. Now we have a similar push to impose a Civics course on future graduates. What no one seems to recognize is in demanding more without lengthening the school day or school year, what the legislature actually does is create less (less time on task in any particular area of study). There is no school system out there in Utah that will pride itself on low ACT scores, low AP test scores, low SAT scores. High scores on those tests result from rigor in course work, not artificial course requirements imposed by the state without the additional time provided to address those additional requirements. Either support and fund the time needed to add things to the curriculum, or simplify the whole approach as I note above.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Again, let local Board of Education do their job.

Reading Remediation

Principal, Murray S.D. - The idea of having a reading plan in a school is good. However, the current law requires schools to put in place remediation programs for students reading below grade level without any funding to pay for that remediation. Perhaps the only remediation that will work, that will really bring those students up to grade level, is one on one tutoring. There are other programs, but they don't show much promise. So one on one tutoring, done at least three times a week for ½ hour at a time. Daily would be better. That kind of program requires an increase in personnel. You can try to do it with volunteers. The reality, though, is that volunteers are not likely to devote the kind of time that is necessary. Three to five times a week, ½ hour daily with each student is a big commitment for any volunteer. I realize that Utah Reads has a that its promise is negated if the volunteers can't and don't follow through. There is also a cross age tutoring program. That program, however, takes older students who serve as tutors away from their own instruction 3 to 5 times a week, and puts them at jeopardy to not pass their own tests. We will be using our Title 1 teaching assistants almost exclusively this next year to work with struggling readers in first and second grades. That means that students struggling on other grade levels in reading and math will not have as much help. Please, if you must legislate student reading success give us the resources to accomplish that task.

Teacher, Salt Lake S.D. - Either enforce this statute or drop it. Otherwise, why does Utah's largest ESL high school have NO teacher or position to teach non-English readers how to read – which should NOT be confused with "ESL/Bilingual/immersion/etc." programs?

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Should be handled locally.

Reading Plans

Teacher, Alpine S.D. - This is very redundant. They already have to have an education plan. Why another one for reading only? Will another legislator come up with one for math and etc.?

Principal, Alpine S.D. - This requirement isn't teaching a single child to read.

Character Education

Teacher, Alpine S.D. - While teachers should teach character, none of the programs out there are very good. Leave this up to the teachers and principals.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - I'm all for Character Education but state law is not the place to handle this.

American History

Principal, Alpine S.D. - This can be handled through Core curriculum and local Board and teacher action.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Should be handled locally.

Health Education

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Alcohol, Tobacco, etc. This is effective only in elementary grades. Should probably be handled locally anyway.

REQUIREMENTS PERTAINING TO PARENTS

School Community Councils

Principal, Ogden S.D. - I appreciate my community council; they are vital to the operation of the school and a powerful, effective political force. But there is an inherent problem with parent involvement at the high school, and that is too few parents are willing to be involved. Elementary students are cute and cuddly; there is little cute or cuddly about a 16 year old adolescent with a straggly beard, sagging pants, and a wild hairdo. I would appreciate the ability to combine Trust land parent committee, School Improvement Plan parent committee, and Professional Development parent committees, allowing a single parent group to deal with the various programs, rather than requiring multiple groups of parents, when the reality is not amount of pressure, bribery, or cajoling will entice them to join parent committees. I like the idea, but please some flexibility.

Principal, Murray S.D. - We have had functioning councils for years. The election requirements in the current law actually inhibit putting together a working council. Having more parents than educators on the council shows a distrust of education professionals. Professional development and academic plans should be constructed by professionals, not by a council dominated by lay people. Approval of the plans by an elected school board should be sufficient.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - This is redundant for most schools and simply creates an additional committee.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Local School Boards are elected. Parents and the public have ultimate control with their vote.

Parental Involvement

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Not a school day goes by without significant parental involvement at many levels in every school in Utah. Codifying this is redundant and wasteful.

GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

School Districts

Principal, Ogden S.D. - I worked 29 years in Cache District and experienced first hand the inequities of a county school district which surrounds a city school district (Logan). The city had the tax base, and the county had the children. It was not a good mix. I am now in Ogden District where the city has all the poverty/racial issues and challenges and inner-city blight reducing its tax base. Consolidation of city/county districts makes sense to me, and I speak as a tax payer affected and as an administrator caught. This is not a politically friendly issue, but there are few advantages to continuing city/county school districts when the size is no larger than we are dealing with.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

U-PASS

Salt Lake City S.D. - The U-PASS tests pit at-risk, poverty and English language learners against their affluent Caucasian counterparts with the same norm referenced tests and standards. I realize this law parallels federal legislation, which is also unfair. Those schools with Title I status (a poverty and other high-risk factors federal designation) must be afforded alternative accountability measures, instead of the one-size-fits-all performance measures.

Teacher, Jordan S.D. - There are many mandates that the legislature and the state board have placed on education that have hurt education, but none more than the timing of the CRT tests. Please understand I am not complaining about the test itself or the philosophy behind the "accountability" idea. The problem is that, though the motivation is good, the implementation is hurting education.

This year, in Jordan school district, we had to give the CRT test two and a half weeks BEFORE school got out. I am and Math Chair at Jordan High School and I have worked extensively on the writing of the test and the new core curriculums. It is my feeling and that of my departments that the test is, for the most part, valid, and should be given AT THE END of the course. Further, our students here take it fairly seriously as an END OF COURSE test. The problem is that we are forced (the district blames the legislature and the legislature (I ask Mr. Stephenson) says it is a district decision) to give the test long before the end of the year. Apparently we will have to give the test more than a month before the end of the year next year.

The problem with giving the test so early is two fold. One, if the test is to cover the entire year of curriculum, then it is a perfect final--there is nothing left in the core to teach after the CRT. A teacher then must resort to "filler learning activities." The student then view the end of the year as unimportant because they are no longer learning the "subject." In other words, suppose I have a Geometry class. I teach everything in the core and then give the CRT when it is mandated to be given, several weeks BEFORE the end of the school year. The weeks after the test I do learning activities for Algebra II or I do Geometry enrichment activities. These learning activities are happening after their final, so although they count on the grade, students view them as less important than the material that was completed before the final. This, of course, is the second problem. Students start to shut down as soon as a final is given, regardless of how wonderful the enrichment activity is. The message the student hears before the test is "this covers the whole year" "this is the state final" "this will be on your grade" "this is important because it shows the state and your parents what you have learned in the class." After the test, the students are emotionally finished with the class. It is VERY difficult to get them to care about the class afterwards.

According to the district, the reason we are having to give the test so early is because of the logistics of getting that many tests scored and back to the schools in time for grades 4th quarter. This is a very poor excuse, in my opinion. Logistics should be secondary to excellence in education.

The test should be given THE LAST FEW DAYS OF SCHOOL. Students who miss the test should be given a 0 on the test and a make-up day should be given in the summer where they are charged unless they have a doctors note. Test should be graded at the individual schools. We have scantrons here, as do

all, I believe, schools. Students could be required to fill out two scantrons, one for the state and one for the school. The state ones could be forwarded to the state for their data collection and the school ones could be used for grading purposes. Because it takes less than five minutes to scan a class set of tests, there would be no problem getting the tests graded for 4th term grades. If the state is worried about test security, they could send master key scantrons with the test so that teachers are not making the keys themselves, then each year they can rearrange the multiple choice answers, or have multiple versions of the test and send a different version to a school the following year.

Please consider this issue, it will really improve the last several weeks of school for everyone.

Principal, Nebo S.D. - I have great concerns. Not that I don't believe in evaluation or in a need for assessment, but when we spend the amount of time, effort and money that it takes to complete all of the requirements, it just seems too much. One of my teachers counted up how many days it takes to do the core testing, writing assessments, individual reading assessments (at least 3 times a year), standardized testing and then even the teachers' own assessments, she feels that she has used over 20 days of school instruction time for assessment. It is fine to know where the kids are and what the teachers need to work on but more importantly, we need time for instruction. If more tests are added or other requirements put on, we need to add funded days to the school calendar for teachers to work with students in the area of assessments and not take so many classroom teaching days away.

Principal, Murray S.D. - Perhaps the most onerous part of U-PASS is the individual reading tests required in grades 1 and 2. Those tests take up a great deal of instructional time, with not much benefit to the student. The tests themselves are good, if used instructionally and not just for determining a reading level. My teachers were struggling to get all the testing done. They felt that education came to a standstill in their classrooms for the week to 2 weeks the testing took.

We don't mind accountability - in fact, we welcome it. We have nothing to hide in our students' achievement, and much to celebrate. The current U-PASS system, however, puts a great deal of pressure on teachers to prepare students for tests at the expense of other parts of the curriculum. Teachers report that student creativity is threatened, that the arts are suffering. They even feel they don't have time to run a PE program. It is sad that the best part of schooling - creativity, thinking, music, art, student health - has to suffer because teachers feel so threatened by a series of tests. Especially tests that are purported to show their effectiveness as an educator. They all know that if their students perform badly they will be the ones blamed. Not the parents, not the student, not the preparation students received before they came to school, not the economic conditions the student lives in (which do have an effect on student achievement.) Just the teacher and, by extension, the school. The penalties mandated by No Child Left Behind on the federal level for title 1 schools are onerous in the extreme. I would hate to see our state move in the same direction.

Nebo S.D. - I am in favor of UPASS requirements but feel the tests, as they appear currently, are not a good measure of the competency we should expect from graduating students. If we are satisfied with Middle school level questioning and reasoning of our graduates, then we need to re-evaluate our education system. Students will achieve at the level of expectation we set. If we have low expectations our students will gladly meet them.

Teacher, Alpine S.D. - UPASS #2,3,& 5: Eliminate these. [#2, criterion-referenced tests, #3 writing assessments, #5 student behavior indicators to assess performance] They don't really tell us much. They cost a lot. They steal time away from teaching. They were not crafted very well. It is an example of the

fox building the hen house. The SOE can make them show whatever they want them to show. The public can't decipher them in the newspaper.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - In our case, implementation of UPASS required us to reduce the use of the testing system we already had in place, which system was more useful in impacting students than UPASS.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - A parent visiting a school will know far more than a written report will ever tell. This is a waste of money.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Fire Drills

Principal, Nebo S.D. - The only change I would like you to consider at this time is on the required fire drills for elementary schools. Evacuation drills are important for young people, however one a month is a little overkill for sensitive students. Many pupils, especially in the younger grades, are truly frightened by the fire drills. Fewer drills, such as five per year, may be adequate.

Teacher, Washington S.D. - As an educator I am frustrated by the monthly fire drills. I have had presentations with parents present, that were totally ruined because of an unannounced fire drill that so destroyed the continuity of the learning activity that I was forced to cancel the activity and have the parent go home. If the number of drills cannot be reduced then educators should at least be given a schedule of times when they will be presented. With such an increase in emphasis on test scores and accountability, we need every spare minute to be put to effective instructional use. The time spent in excessive fire drill activities can be wasteful.

School Nurses

School Nurse, Weber S.D. - As a school nurse I feel the school districts need to have a voice in mandated screenings prescribed by the health dept. In my school district the nurse is employed by the school district. If a new health screening objective is mandated the district may not have the FTE's to implement such a mandate. A task force should be established to see if prescribed health screenings suggested by the health dept. are feasible. Or what would be best is the health dept should not be able to set the mandates. It should first go through a task force with input from the public and the school districts. This as it stands gives the health dept. too much power. Please continue to give exemptions available to the public as written in mandate 53A-11-301.

Emergency Preparedness

Principal, Alpine S.D. - More top down bureaucracy.

OTHER OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

School Lunch

Teacher, Duchesne S.D. - Could you make a rule that they must be edible? Come try ours, and you would see why only 12% of the student body eats at the cafeteria.

Nutrition Education Coordinator, Alpine S.D. - I believe there is no need (theoretically or economically) for the SBOE to 'establish rules and minimum standards for the school lunch program, 53A-1-402, R277-720' as the requirements set forth in the National School Lunch Program are comprehensive.

Academic Year

Principal, Uintah S.D. - In rural districts, we could save a considerable amount of money and educational time for students if we could manipulate the number of days we held school. Four day weeks, one day to travel and hold sporting events and other solutions yet considered may save districts money, time and promote better educational systems.

School Libraries

Teacher, Nebo S.D. - Local education should have more flexibility.

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Eliminate or revise library standards.

School Building Official

Principal, Alpine S.D. - More bureaucracy.

Display of National Motto

Principal, Alpine S.D. - I know that an educator sponsored this bill, but when the legislature debates what should be displayed and the size of the display, it makes one wonder where you get the time and how you value how we spend our time.

OPTIONAL PROGRAMS WITH REQUIREMENTS

Gang Prevention and Intervention

Teacher, Duchesne S.D. - This is not a big priority in rural areas. And yes, I know, it could happen anywhere. But PLEASE don't make us match a big amount; \$20 or 30 for a poster and a movie or two ought to do it.

School Counselor, Weber S.D. - I feel that funding needs to go to the districts with guidelines as to what the money should be spent on and then good faith reports back to the USOE/Legislature that it was spent according to the guidelines. All funds such as Gang Prevention and Intervention Grants should be given to all districts using a Title I formula to send the most money where the biggest problems are likely to be found. Every district has at risk students and the present grant process ignores the need for prevention and intervention in every district in the state.

Driver Education

Principal, Alpine S.D. - Eliminate. Move driver education out of the public school system.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON MANDATES

School counselor, Cache S.D. - I am an educator expressing my concern about the educational mandates that are coming forth from the state. It simply doesn't make any sense for people who know very little about education to make decisions about how it should be run. I certainly wouldn't attempt to tell an attorney how to run his business. The people who really know what is going on inside of the schools is the school district itself. They should be making decisions on school policy. Even the state board, to a large extent, have been out of education so long they have an academic knowledge at best. People who are in the trenches should be making the decisions.

Teacher, Nebo S.D. - I find nothing obtrusive with any of the mandates as they stand. I think that the districts have great potential to become corrupt entities and some already give it a good try. It is pure fallacy that School Boards, which are elected, represent their constituencies. Most are ex-district employees or individuals with an axe to grind. Few represent the general public. I think it's great that the state is watching what is going on in the districts, which again is another fallacy. Usually the state makes mandates, but seldom gets involved in the watchdog part until trouble has already occurred. The state is more like a sleeping watchdog; but at least they are there in the background. Of course the state can become very political and corrupt too, neither which is good for education or our children. Usually a common sense approach to education is the best for everyone. Personal agendas need to be left at home, not become part of education politics. I do thank you for your concern and eliciting a request for responses to the subject at hand. I hope this is just not another case of trying to implement personal agendas and trying to see how many you can get on your side, if you have a side. Hopefully you are just gathering information to see if there really is a problem that exists.

Technology specialist, Jordan S.D. - It appears to me that the Board's mandates come from requirements imposed by the federal government and from the Utah Legislature. I don't think they are inventing them on their own. You would cause each district to have to increase its staff and legal representation and cause more headaches than you plan to solve.

Principal, Nebo S.D. - It seems that there are a number of items listed there that are not bad, but have no funding tied to them. Mandates should never be given to the schools without the funding supply to make them work. We see that these then have to be funded out of the general wpu funding.

Teacher, Washington S.D. - I feel strongly that state legislators should be required to regularly spend unannounced time in public school, especially at the elementary level. Twenty-five percent of the population of this state attends public school. Over half of the state budget is spent on education and yet we spend less than any other state. Legislators should spend time observing first hand the results of the legislation they themselves have put into motion.

Superintendent, Ogden S.D. - Unfortunately, none of us can mandate those things that really matter.

I would urge the State legislature to have the courage to get entirely out of the business of mandates as it relates to public education in Utah.

Decide what it is you want public education to produce with taxpayer investment. Decide how you think you want to measure it. Determine current status of every school district, using your measurements.

Declare all mandates null and void. Allow every district the flexibility to use resources including time and people to produce the results you want.

Insist that each school district provide evidence of improvement every year using your measures. Hold superintendents and boards accountable for results, not reports and compliance.

We can only get better if we own our work and the results it produces. Much of what we are doing is to be in compliance with what we think is law or mandate.

It will take time to get accurate measures that allow you to be sure all students are learning and taxpayers are getting value from their investment. You can't go two steps down the road of this kind of accountability and then mandate 'signs' be posted in every school. This kind of behavior negates your good work.

This strategy would require you to invest heavily in data creation, tracking and reporting technologies. It would require that you learn a great deal about this complex business of human learning and how schools are trying to enhance it. Most important it would require that each legislator let go of their pet projects and special interest group

Teacher, Granite S.D. - Quit passing inconsequential 'pesky flies' legislation. Repeal the non-consequential citations such as the 'National Motto' and 'Historical Document Instruction'. Do something substantial and lasting.