

Sponsors: Rep. Mike Winder, Sen. Keith Grover

Co-sponsors: Reps. Ballard, Johnson, Perry, Pulsipher, Watkins, Eliason, Last, Poulson, Waldrip

## INCENTIVES FOR STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE, HB 118

### THE PROBLEM:

Nearly 60,000 Utah students opt out of taking standardized tests each year, about 5% of the state. Some areas are extremely high, for example Park City High had 45% opt out last year and some charter school are even higher. Not only does this create enormous noise in the data, but as we get below 95% participation rates there are risks of losing federal funding.

Perhaps even more concerning is that students have no incentive to do their best on these tests and many view the hours taking them as a simple waste of time. After all, in the eyes of the student: "These tests don't even count." There are reports of students even sabotaging their test results just to make a teacher they don't like look bad.

*"State law prohibits schools from encouraging participation in year-end tests, or using test scores in the calculation of a student's semester grades. But the scores are used in the allocation of state and federal resources to support and improve struggling schools."*

*--Salt Lake Tribune, 1/29/19*

*"Without a change to education law, the requirement to attribute a score of zero to opt-out tests could lead to contradictions between state and federal accountability programs."*

*--Tiffany Stanley,  
Chief of Staff to  
the Utah State  
Board of Education  
Superintendent*

### THE SOLUTION:

Still allow families to opt out their students from taking the tests, and keep it illegal to punish a student who does poorly on the tests. Yet, let us empower a teacher to provide academic rewards to students who do well on the tests and demonstrate proficiency in their respective subject. Let's legalize the carrots, while still prohibiting the sticks!



***This strikes a delicate balance between supporting parental rights and having the best data possible to manage our statewide school system.***

If we can't measure, we can't manage, and the statewide standardized test is the only metric we have to compare apples to apples statewide, district to district, school to school.

