

Candidate Name: Chris L. Dallin  
District #: 4



To help candidates provide information to potential constituents and to help voters make educated decisions, Utahns for Public Schools has created this survey about issues facing members of the Utah State Board of Education. We encourage candidates for positions on that board to complete this questionnaire and return it by September 15<sup>th</sup>. The survey responses will be published in their entirety on our website at [www.utahnsforpublicschools.org](http://www.utahnsforpublicschools.org). (If a candidate chooses not to return the survey, that will be noted on the website as well.)

Return survey to: [lisa@utahnsforpublicschools.org](mailto:lisa@utahnsforpublicschools.org).

### 2008 UTPS Candidate Questionnaire Utah State School Board

- 1) How do you feel about public tax dollars being used to support private schools, whether religious or secular, through funding mechanisms such as vouchers and tuition tax credits?

I support the decision of the recent vote to oppose vouchers.

- 2) How do you feel about the role charter schools play in the public school system? What are your views about the Utah State Board of Education's role in regulating and/or establishing accountability standards or requirements for charter schools? How do you feel about the current system for funding charter schools?

I am for parental choice. If a charter school works for a parent and their children - I think it is a great. Charter schools do not work for everyone nor do mainstream schools. There are bad charter schools and great charter schools - there certainly should be some metrics to measure the success of those schools and transparency issues for parents to make an appropriate choice. Further, several aspects should be explored in charter schools and the ability for charter

schools to fulfill their respective charters under the direction of their respective boards with specific metrics and goals as a measurement of success. If those measurements are not successful the school should be held accountable by the state school board. Simply put, charter schools and "mainstream" schools can co-exist and charter schools do have the ability to explore different ways to educate and possibly integrate those ideas into the system. I do believe that accountability in every aspect of education is important. Charter school funding is not perfect and the discussion should continue.

- 3) The Utah Foundation recently released a report comparing Utah's public education funding and services to those of several "peer states." The research shows that Utah's current funding effort has led to larger classes, lower teacher salaries, and lower levels of pupil and staff support than what is found in states with similar demographics. How do you feel about the state's current investment in public schools and the services that school districts currently provide to Utah students?

I believe that schools in Utah will always need more funding. We need to pay our teachers more to keep them here rather than leaving to go to "peer states". I have been impressed with the momentum and progress that the legislature has had in the last few years. Clearly we have a lot more to do but the trend has been good.

I am impressed with local school district's do with the funding. For example, in Davis County there has been tremendous growth in population. Even with this growth the school district has decreased class room size by 1%. Not a lot but it is impressive based upon the situation.

- 4) In the 2008 legislative session, a bill was passed directing school districts to provide "differentiated" or higher pay for certain math and science teachers. How do you feel about this program and about "differentiated pay" in general?

I believe that each class is just as important as the previous and so on... It is clear that when compared to other areas Utah seems to be falling behind in math and science scores. I don't know if differentiated pay is the answer - it may create more challenges than solve issues. However, the point is that we need teachers to help to create solutions and then sell them to the school board and the legislature...

- 5) As a condition of receiving a share of the \$20 million appropriated for “performance pay” incentives, school districts have developed plans for the distribution of this one-time money. What is your opinion of this program, and how do you feel about “performance pay” (or “merit pay”) in general?

Performance pay works in a manufacturing setting. It works in business when you want to accomplish a specific task. However, children are not widgets. Also, we know a lot about behaviorism and I want to ensure that our teachers are preparing our children to be responsible citizens, not achieving performance pay, etc. I am concerned that challenging students and issues may be sluffed off in an attempt to get higher pay. I do believe in paying great teachers more and I believe that poor teachers should leave the system. The question is assessment, how do you know who is great and who is poor? I am aware of one teacher (received the teacher of the year) she had an awesome year with kids and got great results on tests, etc. The next year was very difficult for her because of the children in the class.

I think we can learn a lot from healthcare. A hospital and doctor is now rated on outcomes. A heart patient may be more than a heart patient, he/she may have pneumonia and other complications. That patient is rated as a more difficult case in consideration of the transparency movement. I believe discussions should be similar in education.

- 6) Please comment on Utah’s “achievement gap” and what the Utah State Board of Education can do to provide access to educational opportunities to all of the state’s diverse populations.

I think the answer comes at several levels - class room size, teacher pay, budget for materials and text books, etc. etc.

- 7) The legislature recently changed the nominating process for State School Board candidates from a more “regional” approach to one which utilizes a single, central committee. Additionally, some in the legislature have proposed legislation which would increase the number of school board members while at the same time changing the seats from non-partisan to partisan. How do you feel about the current

process and the proposed changes?

I believe that the voters should have more say as to who goes on the ballot.

- 8) Recent legislation has led to the splitting of the Jordan School District. How do you feel about the current law, and about the splitting of school districts in general?

Economies of scale provides a lot savings to a school district and to tax payers.

- 9) In the 2008 legislative session, most of the new funding for our public schools was contained in SB 2, the so-called, "Omnibus Bill," that also contained numerous other education bills, including some that had failed to pass on their own. How do you feel about this particular bill, and about omnibus bills in general?

I am opposed to omnibus bills - should be clear cut bills where the public knows exactly the topic and issue at hand.

- 10) What do you see as the USBE's role in working with the Utah State Legislature?

It is clear that the board and the legislature should work as a partnership to achieve educational goals.

- 11) What do you see as the USBE's role in promoting responsible state tax policy? Do you think the board and its members should actively oppose tax breaks for corporate interests that come at the expense of public education funding? Why or why not?

I would prefer a specific example to this question. The real question is what is responsible tax policy? What kind of corporate tax breaks? Do those tax breaks help education in the long-term or not? There is not enough information to answer the question.

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- 12) Utah students study in some of the largest classes in the nation. What are your views about class size and instruction, and how do you think class size should be addressed in Utah?

We should reduce class size.