

Candidate Name: Shelly Locke
District #: 1



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 15th. The survey responses will be published in their entirety on our website at 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.

**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?

The issue of using tax dollars to support private schools is a complex one with many serious implications whether one supports or does not support the past voucher bill. The voters of Utah have spoken not in favor of a voucher system. I support the best public education system we can create based on the system we currently have to work with.

- 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?

Charter schools are public education. While the current system is not perfect, a professional balance needs to be struck considering their unique role in the

education community. Regarding funding, my honest opinion, is that the funding criteria in both the charter and the regular school system is inordinately complicated and merits simplification.

- 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?

In order to answer the beginning of this question responsibly, I would need to evaluate the cited research. The answer to the second part is that I know that the state's investment in education in recent sessions has been at all time record highs. I think under the current circumstances however, that changes should be made to reduce class size, raise teacher salaries and increase individual student help.

- 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?

Utah has a great need for more attention to math and science education. If additional training is required to bring our educators up to standards, then it should be recognized and compensated for.

- 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?

I am greatly concerned about the idea of merit pay for many reasons. While I believe in rewarding excellence in performance, I would be interested in how the

merit scale was determined and what implications this system would have on the students.

- 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.

Language immersion is one of the keys to success in education for these populations. Teaching them English first will significantly increase their success in school, as well as providing bilingual aids who can assist in the transitional process.

- 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?

Having participated in the current process, I found it to be extremely fair and unbiased. With the anonymity of the committee members, the selection process could be kept from influence by candidates. I would support the increase in the number of school board members, simply to meet the needs of so many families and their children. However, communication is the critical element no matter how many members there are. Regarding the partisan or non-partisan issue, I don't mind that the process is currently non-partisan, but I would really like to see a means by which candidates were allowed to share their views and hear the concerns of the parents in their district. There is no formal process in place by which this can be accomplished under the current format.

- 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?

I have not had time to sufficiently research this particular division, but splitting school districts becomes necessary as populations grow, to meet the rising needs

effectively.

- 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 believe so -called "omnibus" bills are ineffective on the whole and should be avoided whenever possible.

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

I hope to be something of a bridge between the two bodies. It is in great measure the reason I have been asked for so many years to run for this position. The parents in my area know me to be a bridge builder with a record of success.

- 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?

While the USBE's job is not to create tax policy per se, I do think the information generated by this body is critical in its formation. Corporate tax breaks are an entirely separate issue which require consideration individually as they arise.

- 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?

I hope we can find creative ways to reduce class size the way the legislature intended when they funded this measure. We are privileged to have so many students in school and this matter needs to be dealt with responsibly, insuring that the resources are allocated appropriately.

