



STATE OF UTAH

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GOVERNOR

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Putting the best interest of our students first

Governor Herbert takes actions to resolve divisive issues in education

SALT LAKE CITY - (July 17, 2014) Gov. Gary R. Herbert has taken action to resolve divisive issues in education. Today, he reaffirmed his commitment to Utah students by calling for expert and public review of education standards while addressing other issues of growing concern in education.

“As I listen to these concerns, it seems we are too often talking past one another, using different terms to describe shared frustrations,” said Gov. Herbert. “The term ‘Common Core’ has become so contentious that it is dividing us on things we all actually agree on, like the need for local control, setting high standards and preparing our students to succeed. It is time for us to stop talking past one another and to start talking to one another.”

The governor outlined three principles to guide our actions as we work to continually improve academic standards for Utah schools:

1. Maintain high academic standards in all subjects, and for all students.
2. Monitor and limit the federal government’s role in education.
3. Preserve our state and local school district control of our education system, including curriculum, materials, testing and instructional practices.

“More than ever, we must raise the skill level of our students,” said Gov. Herbert. “We must not shy away from high standards or challenging exams, but work to give our students the best education possible, preparing them to lead successful lives and compete in the global marketplace.”

Gov. Herbert outlined immediate steps to move forward in resolving growing concerns:

- A legal review and report from the Attorney General’s Office in regards to Utah’s adoption of the Common Core Standards in mathematics and English language arts. In this review, the Attorney General will clarify Utah’s level of

control of academic standards, and local districts' and charters' control of the curriculum.

- Utah experts in mathematics and English language arts, led by Dr. Rich Kendell, will evaluate education standards in mathematics and English language arts from a higher ed perspective to ensure they will prepare students for postsecondary success.
- Parents, teachers, community members and organizations across the state are invited to review current standards and give feedback starting today by visiting utah.gov/governor/standards.

SAGE testing

The governor also reiterated his support for the state's computer-based testing system, discussing his support for improvements based on a review of the statewide rollout this spring.

“Some schools report a lack of technology, which required students to begin testing well before the school year had ended. Other concerns were in regard to the length of time students were spending on individual test questions,” said the governor. “There are bound to be bumps in the road during the rollout of any new program, but where there are problems, we will fix them.”

Data collection

The governor asked for legislative leadership to work with his administration and the State Board of Education to address privacy issues and testing in order to ensure that necessary protections are in place while appropriately using both testing and data to improve educational outcomes for students.

“I share the concerns of many about the types of data being collected, the use of that data and, critically, the security of that data,” said Gov. Herbert. “That’s why I am asking legislative leadership to work with my Office and the State Board of Education to address these issues of privacy and testing to ensure that we have the necessary protections in place while appropriately using testing and information to improve educational outcomes for our students.”

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