

AEA Recommended Candidates

All candidates for each of the following races were invited to an interview with the AEA Political Action Committee. The same exact questions were asked of each candidate for their position. Here is a basic summary of the responses given to the PAC election committee from the candidates.

Utah State Board of Education

Seat 10 - Eagle Mountain, Saratoga Springs Area

Deborah Gatrell - RECOMMENDED by the AEA Board of Directors

- <https://vote4deborah.com/>
- Currently teaching at Hunter high school- Social Studies.
- Is very passionate about all Public Education Issues.
- Served in the Utah National Guard as a Blackhawk pilot for 25 years.
- Does not believe education should be a political issue and wants to give a voice back to educators in the schools and move away from politicians dictating policy.
- Decided to run for office due to a few State School Board members promoting personal agendas which attack educators and students.
- She wants to “Bring calm to the Chaos.” Wants to get back to what matters in schools and stop having the USBE fight social media issues of the day battles.
- She uses facts and not emotions to make decisions in her classroom and as a Captain in the National Guard. She is skilled at using facts to calm emotions in conversations.
- Does NOT support the Utah Voucher program and wants education money to stay in schools where the students need it most.
- She is connected to many Utah politicians in both parties and works well with them.
- She wants to be in touch with UEA and local teacher associations in order to make sure that educators have a voice as the USBE makes decisions.

Matt Hymas - NOT recommended

Seat 12 - Vineyard, Orem Area

Jason Allen - RECOMMENDED by the AEA Board of Directors

- <https://www.allen4schoolboard.com/>
- Is a registered Republican but is running as an Independent candidate.
- Has lived in Orem his life except while attending Utah State University where he began his education in the Education Program to become a teacher.
- After student teaching and to make ends meet for a young family, he became a National Park Ranger in their law enforcement department for the past 19 ½ years.
- In the Spring of 2025, he plans on going back to school to get his Teaching License and become a teacher like he planned 20 years ago.
- He strongly values Public Education and has a family who are teachers.
- Feels he will be a great fit on the USBE because he has learned how to listen to all sides due to his career in Law Enforcement.
- He is running as an Independent political candidate to include everyone and not only represent one political party.
- He will take legislation and use it to create policy which helps students and educators. He wants to receive constant feedback from students and educators about how policy is working or not.
- Does NOT support the Utah Voucher program, due to a lack of oversight and funding which could be used to help Public Schools.
- Is a Union member in his Police Union and supports the Rights of Collective Bargaining of Educator Associations.

Cole Kelley- NOT recommended

Alpine School Board of Education

Seat 3 - Lehi Area

Stay Bateman - RECOMMENDED by the AEA Board of Directors

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2929772413750132/>
- Is the current incumbent on the ASD School Board.
- She has Institutional Knowledge about how ASD is run and what is going on in schools.
- Wants to reduce class size but understands the reality of the budget. To help in the future, she wants better prediction target ratios to help determine where FTEs are needed most.
- Wants to continue to see innovation in ASD. A Tech School with job training skills for employment in the tech world is a goal of hers.
- Stated that “AEA is the glue which brings ASD together.” AEA is the balance between classroom needs and District office requests.
- Wants to help make sure all educators have a better work/life balance.

Brian Bird - RECOMMENDED by the AEA Board of Directors

- <https://sites.google.com/view/birdforschoolboard/>
- Grew up in Utah County.
- Has family members who have been long time employees in education.
- Went to BYU and University of Michigan.
- Is a Lawyer and owns a construction business.
- Family is very active on the PTA, and Fundraising for youth teams.
- Understands the costs and difficulties of building and repairing schools- his business has built many schools.
- Wants to focus on quality education for students by attracting and retaining the best educators.
- Wants to make sure taxes are being used responsibly and equitably.
- Trusts the Superintendent to hire the best people to run the district so the ASD School Board can focus on the Big Picture issues.

Seat 5

Dr. Mark Clement - RECOMMENDED by the AEA Board of Directors

- <https://markclementasd.org/>
- Current ASD Board member.
- Professor of Computer Science at BYU.
- Has experience to help ASD work through the conversations and vote around a possible. split. Wants to ensure students and employees are not harmed whether the district splits or not.
- Is currently President of the Utah School Board Association.
- Wants to support our Superintendent and help educators move forward to meet the needs of students.
- Wants to reduce class size by chipping away at it as the budget allows.
- Wants to continue to increase Certified salaries to reach at least a \$60,000 starting salary.
- He is very supportive of AEA and has reached out for the views of AEA on many issues over his time as a board member.

John Gadd - NOT recommended

Seat 6 - Orem area

Sara Hacken - RECOMMENDED by the AEA Board of Directors

- <https://sarahacken.wixsite.com/schoolboard>
- Current ASD School Board President.
- Retired teacher and AEA member for 30 years in the classroom.
- Passionate about making sure students all get a high-quality education.
- Wants to make sure teachers have the resources needed to provide the education students need.

- Uses problem solving skills to help the board address many issues which are interlaced with each other.
- Wants to compensate employees as much as possible for what they do.
- Increase programs which are being successful in schools and help other schools develop more successful programs to help students.

Emily Peterson - NOT recommended