

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 19, 2017

Public Hearing on R277-700
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY SCHOOL GENERAL CORE

STATEMENT BY UTAH PTA:

Utah PTA works under the direction of resolutions passed by its membership during the general meetings of our annual conferences. EDU 2006-1 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS states:

Utah PTA encourages rigor in student academic pursuits, but also values each student's diverse needs and post high school plans by encouraging statewide practices and requirements that achieve balance and flexibility in student curriculum; and

Utah PTA supports school rigor in a wide variety of subjects and opposes efforts that too narrowly define academic rigor solely as language arts, math, and science;

IND 2014-1 ARTS EDUCATION states:

Utah PTA supports Fine Arts as an essential part of each child's educational experience. Utah PTA research shows that the Arts encourage self-directed learning and promote complexity in the learning experience. It also raises the self-esteem of a child.

Americans for the Arts states: Arts institutions add value to our communities. Regardless of whether people engage with the arts or not, 87 percent believe they are important to quality of life, and 82 percent believe they are important to local businesses and the economy.

HEA 2007-2 DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY states;

The proportion of overweight children has increased over 50 percent during the past 10 years, 17 percent of children ages 2 to 19 are overweight, and the number of at-risk children in Utah is continually on the rise; and Physical education helps improve a child's mental alertness, academic performance, and readiness to learn in addition to physical health benefits.

Using data from the CDC National Youth Risk Behavior Survey of secondary students found that being physically active four or more days per week resulted in a 23 percent reduction in suicidal ideation and attempts in bullied students.

Utah PTA is mindful of the discussion that will occur today regarding the middle school course offerings. As currently amended the new requirements will allow for more flexibility in choosing electives for middle school students, however we fear that in

removing the specific requirements of PE, Health and the Arts we may in fact be limiting future opportunities for our students.

We are concerned that there are children whose only exposure to these important subjects will be through school classes. There are also students who may not receive the necessary guidance to help them into these classes that could be valuable.

Requiring a general and varied education at the middle school level allows students to be exposed to experiences that may refine their choices in the future. We ask that you reconsider this rule and simply allow flexibility for students who are already fulfilling requirements for these important subjects outside of the school day.

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