



## BOARD OF EDUCATION

440 East 100 South  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

January 26, 2015

p 801.578.8348  
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Susan McFarland, SLTA President  
5150 South 900 East  
Salt Lake City, UT 84117

Dear Susan,

Recently, Parents for Choice In Education published a report addressing collective bargaining in particular and teachers unions in general. In the context of the report, current board member, Michael Clara, was quoted. His statement about union negotiations has prompted us to reach out today: *"...the union negotiated bumping rights that give senior teachers preference when it comes to choice of jobs at the better schools. It probably also has something to do with union negotiated contract provisions that make it difficult to fire bad teachers. If they can't get rid of them, do they just dump them on the poor side of town?"* Mr. Clara's remarks are inflammatory and inaccurate both in their description of Salt Lake School District's practice in teacher placement and in his interpretation of our contract with the Salt Lake Teachers Association (SLTA).

As the immediate past president and current president of the Board of Education, we want to assure you Mr. Clara acted on his own, without the knowledge of board leadership, past or present. His charge that *"60 to 70% of our teachers are ineffective"* is untrue and based on his own deliberate twisting of our growth model. As you are aware, he has shared this view in multiple public meetings and media outlets.

Over the past eight years, we have worked to repair and strengthen our relationship with SLTA to create an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. Your leadership as president of the association allowed the board—and Dr. Withers—to work shoulder to shoulder with you, to strategize together on tough issues around student achievement, and to provide opportunities for our teachers to be successful and valued in our district.

Recognizing we have had our challenges, our progress certainly overshadows the negativity and reminds us that we need to continue to celebrate our successes and stay focused on the young people for whom we all seek success in the classroom and in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership, your commitment to advocate for our public school teachers, and for the great opportunities you have given us to work collaboratively.

Warm regards,

Kristi Swett  
Immediate Past Board President

Heather Bennett  
Board President