

UEA Action

August 2007 Edition

Front Page

[November 6, 2007 election will determine fate of two voucher bills](#)

UEA members will play a huge role in voucher defeat

On November 6, 2007, Utah voters will go to the polls to decide one of the most important public education issues of our time – whether to implement a taxpayer-funded private school tuition voucher plan. Utah Education Association members will play a huge role in the campaign to defeat this ill-conceived legislation.

Thanks to a decision by the Utah Supreme Court, a vote against House Bill 148 – Education Vouchers – will also mean the end of a second voucher bill (House Bill 174) passed by the Utah Legislature in the waning hours of their 2007 session.

Supporters and opponents of the controversial voucher bill are gearing up for a campaign expected to cost millions before the final vote in November.

Recent polls by local and national research organizations show Utahns leaning toward a “no” vote. On July 9, the *Deseret Morning News* reported that 57 percent of the Utahns surveyed in a Dan Jones & Associates poll “said they would most likely vote against a voucher program. Thirty-six percent said they would vote for vouchers while 6 percent were undecided,” the Salt Lake newspaper reported.

Harstad Strategic Research, a Washington, D.C.-based firm, polled 703 Utah voters from June 26-29, 2007 and found 48 percent of the survey group would vote against vouchers, 37 percent would vote for vouchers, and 14 percent said they don’t know or “it depends.”

According to the Harstad data, three issues seem to concern voters most – per pupil spending, class size, and numerous accountability questions tied to House Bill 148.

Of all the states, Utah spends the least amount per pupil. Instead of spending hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on private schools, 60 percent of those polled by Harstad said the money should be invested in public schools. Even with a voucher, most Utah families would be unable to afford expensive private school tuition.

Utah has the largest class sizes in the nation. Rather than spending one-half billion dollars on a separate school system for the wealthy, 57 percent of those polled by Harstad said the money should be used to reduce class sizes in the public schools.

The voucher bills passed by the Legislature have been fraught with problems. While the Utah Supreme Court clarified the two-bill question, 57 percent of those polled by Harstad see problems with accountability and private school oversight in House Bill 148. Many are concerned that private school educators can be hired without a college degree or even if they fail a criminal background check.

The Utah Education Association is asking its members to begin preparing now for the November 6 election. Here’s a list of what you can do to help:

Five things YOU can do to defeat vouchers:

1. Generate a list of influential people in your community – people who are against taxpayer-funded private school vouchers. Contact them. Ask them if they would be willing to lend their name to an endorsement list. If they say yes, write down their mailing address and phone number and send it to: lisa@utahnsforpublicschools.org with the subject line: **Endorsement List**.
2. Stay informed. Visit the Utahns For Public Schools (utahnsforpublicschools.org) or UEA websites (www.utea.org) on a regular basis for updates and information about vouchers. Have conversations and share voucher facts with friends, neighbors, and relatives. Ask them to contribute to Utahns For Public Schools. Remember that you are the most credible messenger when public education issues are being discussed.
3. Post a “Vote No On Vouchers” lawn sign (distribution dates to be announced).
4. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Clearly state your reasons for opposing vouchers.
5. **MOST IMPORTANT: Register to vote and set a goal to take 5-10 anti-voucher voters with you to the polls on November 6, 2007.**

NEA president calls on Congress to invest in education by closing corporate tax loopholes and creating economic development centers

National Education Association President Reg Weaver is calling for a new, national education initiative to develop the nation’s human capital and keep America competitive in the 21st century. The proposal would involve closing tax loopholes to strengthen the nation’s investment in education at all levels. The project is called the Extension Service for Knowledge, Information and Development, or KIDs.

“Most states are trying to adapt to a changing economy by offering tax cuts to industries that promise to create jobs — promises that often go unfilled,” Weaver said. “We are placing our economic future not in the hands of our children, but in big corporations.”

Weaver detailed his plan before more than 9,000 delegates during the Neal’s Representative Assembly in Philadelphia. The plan would provide grassroots support to local schools and businesses by creating economic development centers at major universities. The centers would conduct research and develop innovations in businesses. That knowledge and expertise would be

available at local schools and through local extension agents. The proposal is modeled after the successful Agriculture Extension Program, which provided farmers with advice and assistance to produce more goods in less time, with less land.

Weaver said that tax breaks to attract industry cost states more than \$50 billion a year. Federal tax loopholes for businesses cost our nation another \$50 billion. Weaver noted that the KIDS program provides a better approach. “A program like this would empower millions of entrepreneurs across the U.S. to start businesses and create jobs,” Weaver added. “It would fuel new research, strengthen our universities and improve our public schools. This is the kind of commitment our nation needs and our children and grandchildren deserve.”

Weaver’s keynote address kicked off the Representative Assembly, the NEA’s highest decision-making body. During the annual event, delegates vote on critical issues facing public education. This year’s RA is especially significant because NEA is celebrating its 150th anniversary. The Association was founded in Philadelphia.

Weaver urged the Association, as it returned to the place of its founding and the cradle of American liberty, to push for an Education Bill of Rights that would fulfill students’ basic rights to necessities like universal pre-school, full-day kindergarten, adequate and equitable funding for resources, small class sizes and multiple measures to determine student learning instead of a high-stakes test.

Thoughts & Opinions

For all of America’s public schoolchildren

**By Kim Campbell
UEA President**

[Editor’s Note: On July 6, 2007, the following speech by UEA President Kim Campbell was delivered to more than 9,000 delegates attending the NEA Representative Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.]

Thank you, President Weaver, for the opportunity to speak to the delegation.

Margaret Meade once said, “Never doubt that a small group of highly committed individuals can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

A small group of people right here in Philadelphia many years ago changed history with these words:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The very foundation of a just society, an involved citizenry and an economically sound future, depends on education and opportunity for all – in order to secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity.

We, the members of NEA, know there are some who are willing to risk everything we hold dear – and for what – a grandiose corporate experiment. Vouchers, tuition tax credits, and opportunity scholarships – whatever you choose to call them – they are wrong. Vouchers are not about choice; they are not about political parties; they are about money. Vouchers erode the very system that has made this country great, our public schools, in order to divert

money into for-profit enterprise. The free market system has an important place in our society, but that place is not in our public schools. Utah's children, America's children, are not for sale.

We, the members of UEA, are on the front lines of this fight for all America's public schools. In the state with the lowest per-pupil spending and the largest class sizes, our legislature has passed the most expansive voucher law in the nation. Voucher amounts range from \$3,000 to \$500 for even the wealthiest families. As soon as the session ended, we joined with other friends of public education and filed a petition for a referendum. Now, there hasn't been a referendum in Utah for over 30 years and for very good reason. It is almost impossible – I said – almost.

Because of the incredible efforts of educators – many of them here with me in the Utah delegation – and parents and concerned citizens who were willing to get out into neighborhoods, parking lots, and even dog parks, we did the impossible – gathering over 133,000 signatures in less than 40 days.

We know the fight has just begun and it will not be easy. It will be ugly, mean, and expensive and we need help and support from you, the members of the NEA, particularly because – unlike our neighbors in Nevada, what happens in Utah doesn't necessarily stay in Utah. Voucher proponents may have a few donors giving millions of dollars of support; we want millions of donors giving a few dollars and support.

In closing, President Weaver, I want to thank all of the NEA – the NEA Board, staff, other state affiliates – everyone – for your support so far. You are incredible.

Our members in Utah are also incredible and we have many friends of public education. We are the group of highly committed individuals who can help change the world.

We know this won't be easy, but we can do it. We have already done the impossible. And besides – here in the home of Rocky Balboa – doesn't everyone love it when the underdog wins? With your help and support, the UEA will win this one for all of America's public schoolchildren!

Generous RA delegates are an inspiration

By Ellen Thompson

UEA Vice President

When you think of the Fourth of July you think of backyard family parties and fireworks, not generosity. However, for the majority of the 91 Utah delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly, the week of the Fourth was spent away from families doing the work of the Association. Their generosity, along with that of educators from across the nation, is what I would like to share with you.

The Representative Assembly (RA) is a marathon of work and fun. Every morning starts at 7 a.m. with a two-hour Utah caucus meeting. The work then moves to the RA floor where the delegates conduct the business of the Association for six to 10 hours. In the evening, there are many events scheduled that you can choose to attend or plan your own evening knowing that you have to be up early the next morning to attend the caucus. Even educators with bad knees, bad backs, metal plates, and laryngitis were on the floor every day. They gave generously of their time to represent the teachers back home and to further the work of the Association and public education.

Every year, the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education holds a major fundraiser at the RA. The theme this year was "\$1.5 [Million] To Keep the Dream Alive." The dream is public education as a basic right for every child. The delegates at the RA donated over \$1.5 million dollars to the fund to be used across the nation to support education-friendly candidates in congressional races. After last year's legislative session and working with NCLB, Utah delegates understand exactly how important those education-friendly candidates can be and set a UEA record by appearing in the top three spots for per-delegate average contributions three out of the four days.

But the generosity didn't stop there. As we shared with our colleagues the voucher battle we are facing here in Utah, the donations started pouring in. We returned from Philadelphia with over \$10,000 and pledges for many thousands more to help with the fight. Individual teachers donated everything from the change in their pockets to several hundred dollars. States that have faced similar battles understand and sent their support and best wishes along with the money. One local even volunteered to send a teacher who has family in Utah if we need another volunteer. Our own Utah delegates donated, yet again, to the voucher auctions that were held every day and to purchase voucher t-shirts. They were amazing. Their generosity and dedication was humbling. I can't say often enough how proud I am to be part of an organization of such wonderful educators who understand what it takes to keep public education alive.

Thoughts from NEA Directors Jesse DeHay & Ryan Anderson

Hope springs eternal ...” One hundred fifty years after Thomas Valentine’s call to assemble in Philadelphia on August 26, 1857 and organize a National Teachers Association, this year’s NEA Representative Assembly (RA) infused us with renewed hope, sense of purpose, and a call to action through unified individual commitment to fulfill our Mission and reach our Vision.

In 1857, “The Call” went out to those teachers “who are willing to unite in a general effort to promote the general welfare of our country by concentrating the wisdom and power of numerous minds, and distributing among all the accumulated experiences of all; who are ready to devote their energies and their means to advance the dignity, respectability, and usefulness of their calling ...”

We, the 3.2 million members of the NEA, are the hope fulfilled of those 43 educators, and their vision of a great public education available to every child is a dream realized. At our RA this year in Philadelphia, more than 9,000 delegates gathered to celebrate our 150th year. Beyond the regular business of the RA, under the theme “Fighting for Public Schools: Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow,” we had the opportunity to see the Magna Carta, the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, six members of “The Little Rock Nine,” eight candidates for President, and actor Richard Dreyfuss.

Imagine the hope the English barons felt on July 15, 1215 in Runnymede, when, after King John’s series of stunning failures, they were able to place checks and balances on the King’s power, grant civil liberties and the right of Habeas Corpus by forcing his seal on the Magna Carta.

Working from those ideas and more, in Philadelphia, our Nation’s “Founding Fathers” declared independence from King George’s tyranny. They continued their work by framing our Constitution in 1787, and later in 1791 added our “Bill of Rights,” further limiting the federal government against potential abuses.

On September 24, 1957, amidst violent threats and intimidation, nine high school students walked into Little Rock Central High School under the protection of the U.S. Army. Subjected to physical and verbal abuse by many of the white students, the Little Rock Nine helped open the public school door to all children.

Eight presidential candidates responded to Reg Weaver’s invitation and, for the first time at the RA, we heard about their views on education issues (their speeches are available www.nea.org).

From *ra today*: “Richard Dreyfuss, a passionate advocate for civics education, reminded delegates that ‘the idea of America does not happen by itself.’ The nation’s purpose and principles ‘will perish unless you do your duty.’”

Last year, RA delegates adopted the NEA’s Vision, Mission, and Core Values. This year, we adopted New Business Item A, whereby the NEA will publicize our Vision, Mission, and Values Statement. We also resolved that a National Education Bill of Rights be ratified and publicly proclaimed to guarantee that every child in America has access to a great public school. Our Vision is a “Great Public School for Every Student”; we believe it is a basic right.

NEA RA 2007

[*Washington elementary music teacher Andrea Peterson*](#)

National Teacher of the Year addresses over 9,000 of ‘her own’

To rousing applause and a standing ovation, 2007 National Teacher of the Year Andrea Peterson delivered the Fourth of July keynote to over 9,000 educators gathered in Philadelphia for the National Education Association’s annual Representative Assembly.

Passionate and inspirational, the address was full of examples — including a spontaneous tribute — of the difference the Granite Falls, Washington music teacher has made in the lives of her students.

Peterson has been recognized for her ability to use music to increase the achievement of her students. She’s credited with revitalizing the music programs at both the elementary and high school levels in the Granite Falls School District to the extent that additional faculty needed to be hired. Among other benefits, students have been motivated to participate in music competitions, and create choirs, a high school chorus, and a jazz and marching band.

And it was her interaction with Travis, a third grader with low self-esteem — resulting from the reading and writing skills of a pre-first grade level — that showed the then second-year teacher that all children can learn — but not in the same way or at the same rate. “Children need adults to validate their unique and individual gifts,” said Peterson. “We need to celebrate what is special about each child and use those abilities to help them learn.”

Upon realizing the 2007 Teacher of the Year happened to have been one of her favorite teachers, Washington Education Association delegate Beth Hammerberg made her way to the podium. Once there, NEA President Reg Weaver called the agriscience teacher-to-be onstage to deliver an impromptu declaration of appreciation to a surprised Peterson — and one of the most touching moments of the action-packed Representative Assembly.

Noting that presidential candidates addressing delegates to date had mentioned the cuts to school arts programs as a result of No Child Left Behind, Weaver praised Peterson’s skill and ability to use music to address the achievement issues of some of her students. “Not only is Philadelphia the ‘City of Brotherly Love,’ it’s also known as the home of the ‘Philly Sound,’ a testament to the city’s stellar history of producing some of the best musicians and the best music of yesterday and today,” Weaver said. “Thanks to music educators like Andrea, this nation will continue to have a pipeline of music and great musicians just like the ones hailing from Philadelphia.”

Richard Dreyfuss: Civics education is important

Actor and education advocate Richard Dreyfuss is passionate about civics – and for good reason.

“If you bought stock in a company, let’s say a pharmaceutical company, and you found out that the CEO of that company didn’t know about pharmaceuticals or care about what they were made of or how

they were distributed or how they were publicized or how they competed in the marketplace, you could buy stock in that company again and bring suit for malfeasance and stupidity, and that is what we are doing,” Dreyfuss told NEA RA delegates. “We do not teach civics in this country. Civics is the prepartisan tools of civic expertise that teach us how to run a republican democracy. There are in this country a dwindling amount of schools that can even say, well, we teach civics. We have a semester of civics before the 8th grade. That’s not civics.”

Dreyfuss told the audience of more than 9,000 educators that he has been studying how to teach a 3,500-year-old curriculum that covers reason, logic, clarity of thought, and raising up of the values of dissent, civility, and the talent to ask questions of the information industry.

“Rupert Murdoch and two other guys own everything you hear and see, and their interests may not be your interests.” Dreyfuss said. “We are responsible for this country. We may live in Alexander Hamilton’s nation, but we live in Thomas Jefferson’s paradigm, and that paradigm is that men and women are sovereign, and men and women are the authority.

“Who tutors — who tutors the sovereign? Who tutors the son king? You do. You are on the front line. You may not have started out as heroes. You may not have ended up as heroes, but g-----it, during the time you have been teachers, you are heroes,” he said.

Dreyfuss encouraged educators to “revise the nature of teaching so that people know that it is not the subject of civics that is boring. It is the word ‘civics’ that is boring.

“Civics itself is about as entertaining as a Cirque du Soleil. And I could tell you versions of that story that could make your hair stand on end, and you have to teach that now. You have to because we’re not as lucky as our parents.

“We do not teach civics. It is either evidence of neurosis or evidence of suicide, but we don’t teach it, and you must teach it. You must teach it from the fifth grade up. You must teach reason and logic and clarity and dissent. You must applaud debate. You must applaud the process,” Dreyfuss said. “You must remember that America is at its basis a risk, that this museum must be a risk. And that if all we do at this museum is pat ourselves on the back for something we did 200 years ago and aren’t we great, we have accomplished nothing but become another museum.”

[Candidates pledge to make quality public schools, and NCLB reform, key election issues](#)

Obama, Huckabee, Biden say children are more than test scores

If lawmakers demand accountability from public schools, they need to provide educators with the resources and respect they need to get the job done. Three presidential candidates, Democrat and Republican, pledged to more than 9,000 educators that they would reform No Child Left Behind and make quality public education a national priority if elected.

“We’ve heard from eight presidential candidates, of different backgrounds and political parties, and our 3.2 million members are pleased to hear that they’re all on the same page on critical public education issues,” said Reg Weaver, NEA president. “Quality public schools must be a national priority, regardless of party politics.”

Barack Obama, Mike Huckabee, and Joe Biden addressed more than 9,000 school employees at the National Education Association’s Representative Assembly, one of the largest democratic decision-

making bodies in the world. The delegates represent NEA members around the country. A major topic at the Representative Assembly has been No Child Left Behind, the Bush administration's controversial education reform program up for congressional reauthorization this year.

Politicians often "praise educators in speeches and photo ops, but abandon them when it comes to providing the resources they need to do the job," Obama said. "There's no better example of this than the law that has become one of the emptiest slogans in the history of politics: No Child Left Behind."

Congress has "left the money behind," Obama said. If lawmakers don't provide necessary funds, and use the reauthorization process to move the law away from heavy-handed penalties and an overwhelming emphasis on testing, Obama pledged to make those changes as president. He also promised to invest in early childhood education, support programs to bring qualified teachers to high-need urban and rural schools, and advocate for across-the-board pay increases for educators.

Mike Huckabee, the first Republican presidential candidate to accept the NEA's invitation to address the Representative Assembly, said he might look "as out of place as Michael Moore at the NRA convention," but education is an issue that must cut across party lines. The presidential debates have focused heavily on national security, he said, but "there is another issue of national security, and it is the education of our children."

Heavy emphasis on testing has led to a narrowing of school curriculums, and Huckabee said this contributes to the national dropout crisis: students need access to subjects that excite them. "Every student in the United States of America should not be denied the opportunity and the obligation to study music and art as part of his or her education," he said. "We're leaving a lot of kids' talents behind by denying them the opportunity to experience their creative self."

Joe Biden said the United States must attract 100,000 new teachers into America's classrooms, and provide them with the competitive salaries and respect needed to keep them there. He emphasized the importance of early childhood education, reduced class sizes and ensuring that all students have access to an affordable college education.

Biden said lawmakers could provide money for his top domestic priority — public education — by ending the war in Iraq, which costs about \$100 billion a year, and rolling back the Bush administration's tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, which costs about \$85 billion. "We know what we need to do, and it's not No Child Left Behind," Biden said. "We have to stop focusing on just test scores."

Senator Hillary Clinton (*D-New York*) told delegates that schools and children cannot be judged on the basis of one-size-fits-all testing. "We need a new approach," she said, "one that is balanced — that puts learning, not memorizing, front and center in American education again."

Candidates John Edwards, Sen. Christopher Dodd, Congressman Dennis Kucinich, and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson also spoke at the RA.

Issues & Action

The truth about vouchers

[Paving the Way to a Two-Tiered Public School System](#)

School vouchers are any form of public payment to help parents send their children to private school. They may take the form of direct payments to parents, tax credits, or “scholarships” from organizations designated as beneficiaries for tax credit contributions.

Terminology matters, because voucher supporters know that the very word “voucher” costs them public support. Instead, they use terms with marketing appeal, like “opportunity scholarships” and “parental choice.”

Voucher proposals may differ in eligibility, funding levels, and regulation, but ultimately each paves the way to a two-tiered school system, funded by public tax dollars, but lacking public oversight. Utah’s House Bill 148 is a perfect example of this.

Vouchers are bad public policy and bad educational policy, for five basic reasons:

- Vouchers hurt public schools by robbing them of resources.
- Vouchers do not improve student achievement.
- Private schools getting vouchers are not held accountable to the public.
- Under vouchers, private schools—not parents—do the choosing.
- Every time vouchers have appeared on the ballot, the American public has rejected them by an overwhelming majority.

The Illusion of “Choice”

Voucher proponents like to use the word “choice” because they know it has great power and appeal.

But voucher proponents mislead the vast majority of parents when they suggest that vouchers amount to parental choice. Private schools are not required to participate in voucher programs, and those that do choose to participate retain the right to limit their enrollment. Some voucher programs even allow participating schools to maintain exclusive admissions policies and/or charge tuition and fees in excess of the sum provided by the voucher.

When using a voucher, a parent’s choice begins—and ends—with choosing the schools to which they will send enrollment applications. But in many areas of the country, this kind of “school choice” is meaningless because there are no private schools nearby. In rural Utah, for example, there are very few private schools. And even if a student is admitted to a particular school, there is no guarantee that the student will remain there. The annual attrition rate in the Milwaukee voucher program is as high as 33 percent. In the end, private schools do all the choosing.

The Myth of “Competition”

While voucher supporters like to say that vouchers will improve learning, there is no real evidence that they do so. Voucher supporters also like to claim that vouchers will force public schools to compete for students, thereby forcing them to improve. There’s no evidence to support this claim either. For one thing, competition requires a level playing field, and private schools play by an entirely different set of rules than public schools. Unlike public schools, private schools can—and do:

- Limit their enrollments and class sizes;
- Discriminate in their admissions on the basis of gender, religion, family background, academic achievement, test scores, disciplinary history, athletic ability, and special needs;

- Expel students without due process;
- Decline to administer state tests and publicly report student achievement levels;
- Refuse admission to special needs students;
- Hold closed meetings and maintain private records;
- Hire teachers that are neither certified nor qualified. (Under HB 148, voucher school teachers do not need to be licensed, or even hold a college degree. They can be hired even if they

fail a criminal bac

When test scores are weighted to reflect socioeconomic level, race, and disability, public school students have actually been found to outperform private school students.

At a time when public schools are being held to ever higher standards of accountability, it is unconscionable and indefensible to provide public funds to private schools that must meet none of those same standards.

The True Cost of Vouchers

Vouchers aren't good economics either. They essentially force taxpayers to support two school systems—one public, the other private. Voucher supporters tend to minimize or dismiss the impact vouchers have on public school spending, but it's a fact that vouchers take badly needed money from public schools, leaving the vast majority of students with fewer resources.

According to the Utah Legislature's own research, HB 148 — if approved in November — will cost Utah taxpayers \$429 million over the next 13 years.

Voucher Talk: Rights of School Officials and Employees

By Michael T. McCoy
UEA General Counsel

The Utah Legislature passed bills authorizing the state to use taxpayer money to pay educational expenses for students attending private schools. A referendum drive supported by the Utah Education Association succeeded in having the issue of vouchers decided by the voters this November. Proponents claim vouchers will create competition, give low income people a choice, and reduce the costs of public schools. Others claim vouchers will: take much needed funding from public education, fracture rather than promote common values, be little more than a subsidy for rich people and the vast majority of the poor will not be able to take advantage of vouchers anyway. The UEA opposes vouchers. Other articles in this edition describe why we believe vouchers are not in the best interests of students, teachers, or the public. We believe it is important for members to understand their rights to participate in what we believe will be the seminal event of the decade regarding funding public education.

EDUCATORS MAY:

1. When not on school property or school time, participate in any lawful activity to oppose vouchers including (a) speaking out and writing articles opposing vouchers, (b) wearing buttons, (c) distributing campaign materials, (d) fund raising, and (e) encouraging others to oppose vouchers.
2. When on contract time, respond to questions from students and parents about vouchers and, if asked, direct them to individuals who have more information. The persons to whom they are directed may be a student.

Educators should try to be objective about the issues when discussing the referendum with their students while on school time.

3. Discuss the merits of vouchers in the faculty lounge and solicit support to oppose vouchers. If done only by school employees, outside groups have no equal access rights.
4. In appropriate classes such as a civics class, allow the merits of vouchers to be debated by students. (A math class is not an appropriate class.)
5. Use information contained in the school directory to communicate with the parents of students listed in the directory. (See don'ts below.)
6. Wear message buttons at school unless school or district policy prohibits wearing such buttons at school or on school time.

BOARDS OF EDUCATION:

1. May adopt positions favoring or opposing any public policy or law.
2. Individual members of school boards may represent themselves to be a member of the board and take a position for or against vouchers. While no law requires it, if the board has not taken an official position, the member is advised to point out s/he is speaking for him/herself and not the board.
3. Schools and districts may sponsor public meetings about vouchers. Boards of education must allow supporters of vouchers the same opportunities to use school facilities as it allows opponents, but that does not mean supporters have the right to speak in the same meeting as a meeting of opponents. Supporters may be given a different room or date for use of the facility. The conditions for use of school facilities should be substantially the same.
4. Districts, including district employees, may use district and school means of communication such as newsletters and websites to communicate positions on the referendum, but districts using such means should attempt to be objective and may be required to allow the opposition opinion equal use.
5. Districts may rent space to opponents of vouchers. Opponents renting space need not allow opponents the opportunity to speak, but the opponents would be entitled to rent space to present their position on terms equivalent to the proponents. If a District has a policy on renting space, it should be followed.

DON'TS:

1. School administrators should not allow outside speakers to oppose vouchers without affording a similar opportunity to the other side. This does not mean the district has to present both sides if nobody is available with an opposing perspective, but don't ignore the presence of possible opponents. Deliberately ignoring opposition speakers may result in the district having to make facilities available to the opposition. (On the other hand, districts don't have to expend great effort to recruit supporters.)
2. Educational employees (a) should minimize their discussion about vouchers during contract time with students, (b) should not fund raise while on contract time (except in the faculty lounge), (c) may wear message buttons on contract time if the school or district permits the activity, (d) may represent themselves to be "an employee of _____ school district" IF your district has adopted a policy prohibiting employees from representing the district's position. If you say you are a teacher working for the _____ school district and your district has a policy taking a position inconsistent with yours, you may say "I'm a teacher at _____. Speaking for myself and not the district ..."
3. Educational employees should not use their position to intimidate other employees or subordinates into adopting your position. Educators, while on contract time in discussions with each other, may say they favor this, that or another position and the reasons therefore, but educators should be careful to avoid forcing their opinion on another. Remember the equal access rule: if an educator in authority presents or allows another to present one side of an argument, the other side is entitled to equal time presenting the other side.

4. School districts may prohibit employees discussing vouchers while on contract time or at school activities if the district prohibits all discussion about issues of public concern. A district may not pick and choose which subjects are permitted for discussion while proscribing other issues.
5. Don't use school e-mail, the districts mail system, or other school resources to promote a political position if your district has a policy prohibiting such use.
6. *Don't use school money to promote a ballot issue or political party.*

State Farm agents give back to teachers

State Farm recognizes that there are children at risk in every classroom. The State Farm Good Neighbors for Good Schools (GNGS) program provides funding to teachers to assist with these special needs and is supported by the UEA Children At Risk Foundation.

Whether children have disabilities, live in difficult family situations, have behavioral problems or are gifted students with special challenges, the GNGS program is designed to assist with these needs by providing funding that can be used toward the purchase of much-needed classroom equipment or program materials, and, even in some cases, shoes or a coat for a needy child.

The program, now in its 14th year, was created in conjunction with State Farm's Utah Jazz sponsorship. For every 50 points the Jazz score in a game, a \$200 State Farm Good Neighbors for Good Schools award is given.

To date, more than \$301,500 has been awarded to deserving teachers for their classrooms. Applications for the 2007-08 school year will be available later this fall through the UEA Children At Risk Foundation.

'Excellence in Teaching' Award nominations due Sept. 21

William and Pat Child and the Utah Education Association are accepting nominations for the 2007 "Excellence in Teaching" Awards. Awards will be presented during this year's UEA Convention. The deadline for nominations is September 21, 2007.

The awards are presented to Utah public school educators whose efforts in the classroom have significantly impacted the life of an individual child or group of children.

Nominations will be accepted for licensed educators who are currently teaching in a Utah public school. Nominees and nominators must be current members of the UEA.

A \$1,500 cash award will be presented to ten Utah educators, courtesy of William and Pat Child. A selection committee, comprised of representatives of William and Pat Child and the UEA, will review nominations following the September 21st deadline. Winners will be notified by a UEA representative and honored during the 2007 UEA Convention in Salt Lake City. For a nomination form, visit the UEA website at www.utea.org.

[October 29-30, 2007](#)

Capture the joy of teaching at the UEA Convention

New events and exciting speakers highlight this year's UEA Convention on Monday and Tuesday, October 29 and 30. Educators across the state are invited to capture the joy of teaching with Lily Eskelsen, Erin Gruwell, and scores of presenters sharing their love of the profession.

Utah audiences delight in NEA Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelsen. Ever popular, Eskelsen's sharply-honed humor and wit perfectly assess the state of public schools today. Come enjoy a laugh and be inspired by Eskelsen's stories on Monday, October 29.

Featured at this year's opening session on Tuesday, October 30, is Erin Gruwell, author of *"The Freedom Writers Diary."* By fostering an educational philosophy that valued and promoted diversity, she transformed her students' lives. With Gruwell's steadfast support, her students shattered stereotypes to become critical thinkers, aspiring college students and citizens for change. They even dubbed themselves the "Freedom Writers" — in homage to civil rights activists "The Freedom Riders."

The UEA's Honor Roll Award, Charles Bennett Award, and *"Excellence in Teaching"* Awards will be presented at the Discovery Gateway on Monday, October 29. Award recipients and other guests will have the opportunity to discover all that this new children's learning playground has to offer. Look for UEA member discounts at the Discovery Gateway during the two-day conference.

As always, educators may attend the day-long New Educators' Workshop as well as choose from over 40 other professional presentations at the convention. Join us this year for another outstanding professional conference.

UEA/NEA Benefits

UEA announces launch of New Educator Member Benefits Program

New educators are faced with professional and financial decisions that can be overwhelming. How do I set up my classroom? How do I survive financially the month before I get my first paycheck? Can anyone help me with Praxis training?

After more than a year in the development stage, the Utah Education Association is proud to announce the launch of the **New Educator Member Benefits Program**, specifically designed to meet the needs of new educators in Utah.

In the summer of 2006, the UEA conducted a focus group involving new educators from various Utah school districts. These individuals provided valuable information about the needs of teachers who are in their first three to five years in the profession. Working with its business partners and NEA Member Benefits, the UEA created a **New Educator Member Benefits Guide** – now available in local education associations throughout the state.

New educators who join the UEA after July 1, 2007 will have access to auto, insurance, health, and financial benefits, as well as discounts on classroom supplies, retail services, and entertainment. In addition, the Association will offer a wide variety of training sessions, such as one on how to pass the Praxis Test and a popular workshop called "I Can Do It," tailored to help new teachers understand effective classroom management. As always, new members will enjoy the benefits of contract

bargaining, legislative lobbying, personalized on-the-job representation, and a \$1 million personal liability policy.

Here are just a few of the money-saving benefits and services available to new educators:

- ▶ NEA Personal Loan — The National Education Association helps new educators erase student debt.
- ▶ Horace Mann Insurance — Offering auto, renter's, and homeowner's insurance. Plans cover vandalism to cars parked on school property and coverage for personal items used at school.
- ▶ Staples & Utah Idaho School Supply & Map World — Stores throughout the state offer discounts on classroom supplies.
- ▶ Access (Your UEA Membership Card) — Members can enjoy discounts at restaurants, shops, and travel destinations throughout Utah and the United States. Over 150,000 locations to choose from.
- ▶ "Securing Your Financial Future" — This free seminar helps new educators learn how to pay off student loans, live within a budget, and understand retirement benefits.
- ▶ NEA DUES-TAB Insurance — Take advantage of free life insurance when you join the UEA and National Education Association.
- ▶ UEA Professional Development — "Pass The Praxis Test" and other valuable workshops are available to help new educators gain success in their careers.

New teachers can sign up for the New Educator Member Benefits Program by contacting their UniServ director (visit www.utea.org, click first on the "Inside the UEA" pull-down menu and then "UniServ Units," or use the following link: <http://www.utea.org/insideUEA/uniservs/index.htm>).

UEA People

Arch Coal Achievement Awards given to five outstanding Utah educators

Five outstanding Utah classroom teachers received Arch Coal Teacher Achievement Awards earlier this spring at a ceremony at Ashman Elementary School in Richfield, Utah.

In addition to Arch Coal Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Steven F. Leer, State School Board Member Dixie Allen and Utah Education Association Vice President Ellen Thompson were on hand to honor the recipients. The teacher recognition program is in its first year in Utah. Teachers from Carbon, Emery, Sanpete, and Sevier counties were eligible for the award.

The five recipients included **Rodney Hurd**, North Sevier High School, Salina; **Leslie Jewkes**, Castle Heights Elementary School, Price; **Stacey Rasmussen**, Spring City Elementary School, Spring City; **Sue Southwick**, Ashman Elementary School, Richfield; and **Elaine Street**, Richfield High School, Richfield.

"I am very pleased to announce these five recipients," said Leer. "They are obviously superior classroom teachers who deserve this recognition. They are masters of their subject matter, highly

competent in their teaching techniques, and caring individuals who place student learning first. Arch Coal employees from our Sufco, Skyline and Dugout Canyon operations join me in saluting these teachers who are making a difference in our schools,” Leer said. “As a corporation, we value excellence in everything we do. It is natural that we would carry this over into the communities in which we live. Certainly, teachers have one of the most important jobs in America, and we are proud to honor these five recipients.”

“Someone once said, ‘To teach is to touch a life forever.’ It is clear that these talented educators have touched many lives, and the children of these communities are better prepared to meet the future because of their dedication and hard work,” said Ellen Thompson, vice president of the Utah Education Association.

The awards program is underwritten by the Arch Coal Foundation. In addition to recognition, award recipients receive a \$2,500, unrestricted cash prize, a distinctive trophy and a classroom plaque.

“What do classroom teachers and a coal company have in common?” asked Ken May, general manager, Sufco Mine, at the ceremony. “The answer is ‘students.’ Great classroom teachers give business and industry great employees. Arch Coal needs employees who are able to think independently, speak, write and calculate effectively, and know how to work safely for themselves and their co-workers. Outstanding teachers also provide our communities with leaders, our families with good mothers and fathers, and our country with good citizens.”

The second annual Arch Coal Teacher Achievement Awards program will begin with the start of the next school year, according to May.

The program is supported by the Office of Governor Huntsman, Utah State Office of Education, Utah Education Association, Utah School Superintendents Association, Carbon County School District, Emery County School District, Sevier County School District, North Sanpete School District, South Sanpete School District, Far West Bank, Market Express, KUSA FM/ KASL AM, and both Taco Time and Bookcliff Sales in Price.

Arch Coal is Utah’s largest coal producer and a large, state employer with a combined workforce of approximately 800 from its Dugout Canyon, Sufco and Skyline mines. Through all its operations, Arch Coal, Inc. is among the nation’s largest coal producers. The company is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and has its headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri.

KUED honors six teachers and two school volunteers

Six educators and two school volunteers were recognized during the 2007 Utah PTA Golden Apple Awards.

The 2007 teacher honorees include **Cindy Durante**, a Longview Elementary teacher in the Murray School District; **Scott Gregory**, a math teacher at Olympus Junior High School in the Granite School District; **Larry L. Larson**, principal of North Cache 8/9 Center in the Cache County School District; **Daren Lentz**, a math teacher at Mount Logan Middle School in the Logan School District; **Jon Winget**, a seventh-grade teacher at Oak Canyon Junior High School in the Alpine School District; and **Robert Turk**, a teacher at Blanding Elementary School in the San Juan School District.

The 2007 Outstanding Volunteer Awards were presented to **Julia Walker** from Kaysville, Utah, and **Sandy Whitehead** from Pleasant Grove, Utah.

Each Golden Apple Award recipient received a \$1,000 cash award and was honored at an awards ceremony and dinner in May.

Cash awards and program funding of the Golden Apple Awards is provided by NuSkin Enterprises, Utah Education Network, Educators Mutual Insurance Association, Utah Education Association, and the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation.

New faces at the UEA, Jordan Education Association

A graduate of Viewmont High School (Bountiful) and the University of Utah, **Jared Blauer** has joined the staff of the Utah Education Association. As business manager, Blauer will coordinate the financial operation of the 18,000-member organization.

Blauer previously worked for Lake, Hill & Myers, Utah Legal Services, and Flying J, where he was responsible for developing a new accounting division. He holds both a bachelor's degree and MBA from the University of Utah.

Blauer was born in Salt Lake City and graduated from Viewmont High School in Bountiful. He and his wife have five children, three of which attend public elementary school and, according to Blauer, "are receiving a great education."

Blauer says his proudest accomplishment in life was convincing his wife to marry him, adding, "I also married out of my league." Asked why he enjoys working at the UEA, Blauer said, "good people, challenging work, and autonomy."

Blauer's hobbies include water skiing and spending time with his family.

One of the newest members of the UEA staff is **Dawn Riganto**, who was hired as a paralegal earlier this year. She works directly with UEA General Counsel Michael McCoy.

Riganto graduated from Lone Peak High School in Highland, Utah, and attended Everest College, West Valley City, where she received an A.S. degree in Paralegal Studies. She hopes to continue her education and pursue a career as an attorney.

A native of Virginia Beach, Virginia, Riganto says the best part about working at the UEA is the people. "It's like being with a family all day," she said. "I couldn't have been invited into a better place to hang my hat."

Prior to joining the UEA staff, Riganto worked as a paralegal for Long Lawyers, Inc., and Rasmussen & Miner, both firms located in Salt Lake City.

Riganto says she is most proud of graduating Summa Cum Laude and being named Valedictorian while working as a single mother and raising two children.

Former Jordan educator **Tony Romanello** has been named associate director of the Jordan Education Association. From 2001-2007, Romanello taught Physics, Astronomy, and Mathematics at both Alta High School and Copper Hills High School in the Jordan School District.

During the 2000-01 school year, Romanello returned to his birthplace – Cincinnati, Ohio – where he taught Physics and Chemistry at North College Hill High School.

Romanello also spent several years teaching at Murray High School in the Murray School District.

After graduating from Norwood High School, Norwood, Ohio, Romanello went on to attend the University of Cincinnati, where he received a B.S. in Secondary Education. His post-graduate work at Brigham Young University resulted in a MEd. in Educational Leadership.

Romanello says his proudest accomplishments are being the father of a 17-year-old daughter “who is the joy of my life,” and achieving National Board Certification. Romanello says he likes working for the UniServ unit because “I get to work with educators and make their working conditions and professional lives better.” He also says, “I love teaching and learning and I believe that what we do is the most important work for society.”

Romanello replaces Nikki Peterson, now a UniServ director in the Granite Education Association.