

# Total Transformation: A Roadmap Toward Local Control of Education

Oak Norton

# Presentation Outline

1. Foundation
2. Principles
3. Core Transformation
4. Reshaped Roles
5. Some Specifics

# **Section 1**

# **Foundation**

# Political Spectrum



# Education Spectrum

(Socialist)

(Fascist)

Establishment

Reformers

Local Control



Agency-Based  
Free Will

100%

0%



Compulsory  
Government  
Education

Parent &  
Family  
Oriented

No  
Direction

# Thomas Jefferson letter to Joseph Cabell

"But if it is believed that these elementary schools will be better managed by the governor and council, the commissioners of the literary fund, or any other general authority of the government, than by the parents within each ward, it is a belief against all experience.

...

No, my friend, the way to have good and safe government, is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many, distributing to every one exactly the functions he is competent to.

# Thomas Jefferson letter to Joseph Cabell

Let the national government be entrusted with the defence of the nation, and its foreign and federal relations; the State governments with the civil rights, laws, police, and administration of what concerns the State generally; the counties with the local concerns of the counties, and each ward direct the interests within itself.

It is by dividing and subdividing these republics from the great national one down through all its subordinations, until it ends in the administration of every man's farm by himself; by placing under every one what his own eye may superintend, that all will be done for the best.

What has destroyed liberty and the rights of man in every government which has ever existed under the sun? The generalizing and concentrating all cares and powers into one body..."

# James Madison, 1792 House Debate

If Congress can employ money indefinitely to the general welfare, and are the sole and supreme judges of the general welfare, they may take the care of religion into their Own hands; they may appoint teachers in every state, county, and parish, and pay them out of their public treasury; they may take into their own hands the education of children, establishing in like manner schools throughout the Union; ...

I venture to declare it as my opinion, that, were the power of Congress to be established in the latitude contended for, it would subvert the very foundations, and transmute the very nature of the limited government established by the people of America.



# Wendy Hart, Alpine School District Board

- "My suggestion was to always bring everyone back to answering two questions:
- 1. How does this strengthen the family and the parent-child relationship?
- 2. How does this help our kids 'know and prize the rights which God has given them' so they cannot be enslaved and will be empowered to maintain their freedom?"

# Fundamental Liberty Interest

(1) (a) Under both the United States Constitution and the constitution of this state, a parent possesses a **fundamental liberty interest** in the care, custody, and management of the parent's children...

(i) a parent has the right, obligation, responsibility, and authority to raise, manage, train, **educate**, provide for, and reasonably discipline the parent's children; and

(ii) the **state's role is secondary and supportive** to the primary role of a parent.

- UT Code 62A-4a-201, Rights of Parents

# Parental Involvement #1

“(1) The Legislature recognizes the importance of parental participation in the educational process in order for students to achieve and maintain high levels of performance.”

- UT Code 53A-1a-105, Parental Participation in Educational Process

# **Section 2**

# **Principles**

# On Principles

- “It mattereth not whether the principle is popular or unpopular; I will always maintain a true principle even if I stand alone in it.”  
- Joseph Smith

# Core Principles – Local Control

- *Local control is at its heart, self-government*
- The closer control is to individuals, the greater the ability to meet the needs of the people involved
- Until such time as children become self-governing, parents are the God-given stewards over their development
- Parents must retain the controlling influence on primary education issues
- Thus, we must trust parents to do the right thing for their own children

# Core Principles – Parental Involvement

- Parental involvement is the #1 factor in student success
- State law recognizes that parents have a fundamental liberty interest in the education of their children
- It is wrong for parents to abdicate responsibility to someone else to educate their children, thus greater parental involvement is a God-given obligation.
- Parents have primary responsibility over their children's education
- As such, parents must have primary authority over the same
- *To have responsibility without authority is destructive to parental involvement*

# Core Principles - Schools

- The purpose and focus of a school should be to educate
- Education must be to meet the needs of students based on parental input
- Things that do not focus on this goal should be removed
- Every school must be free to innovate for the benefit of their students
- Where one school succeeds, other schools will follow
- Where a parent disagrees with the approach a teacher or school takes, that parent must be free to take their child to another nearby school or place him/her with another teacher



# **Section 3**

## **Core Transformation**

# Why do we lack parental involvement?

- Parents attend school board meeting
- Board serves the district instead of parents
- Parents' concerns are ignored
- Parents lose confidence in schools supporting them
- Parents become apathetic and uninvolved
- Parental involvement reduced/ceases



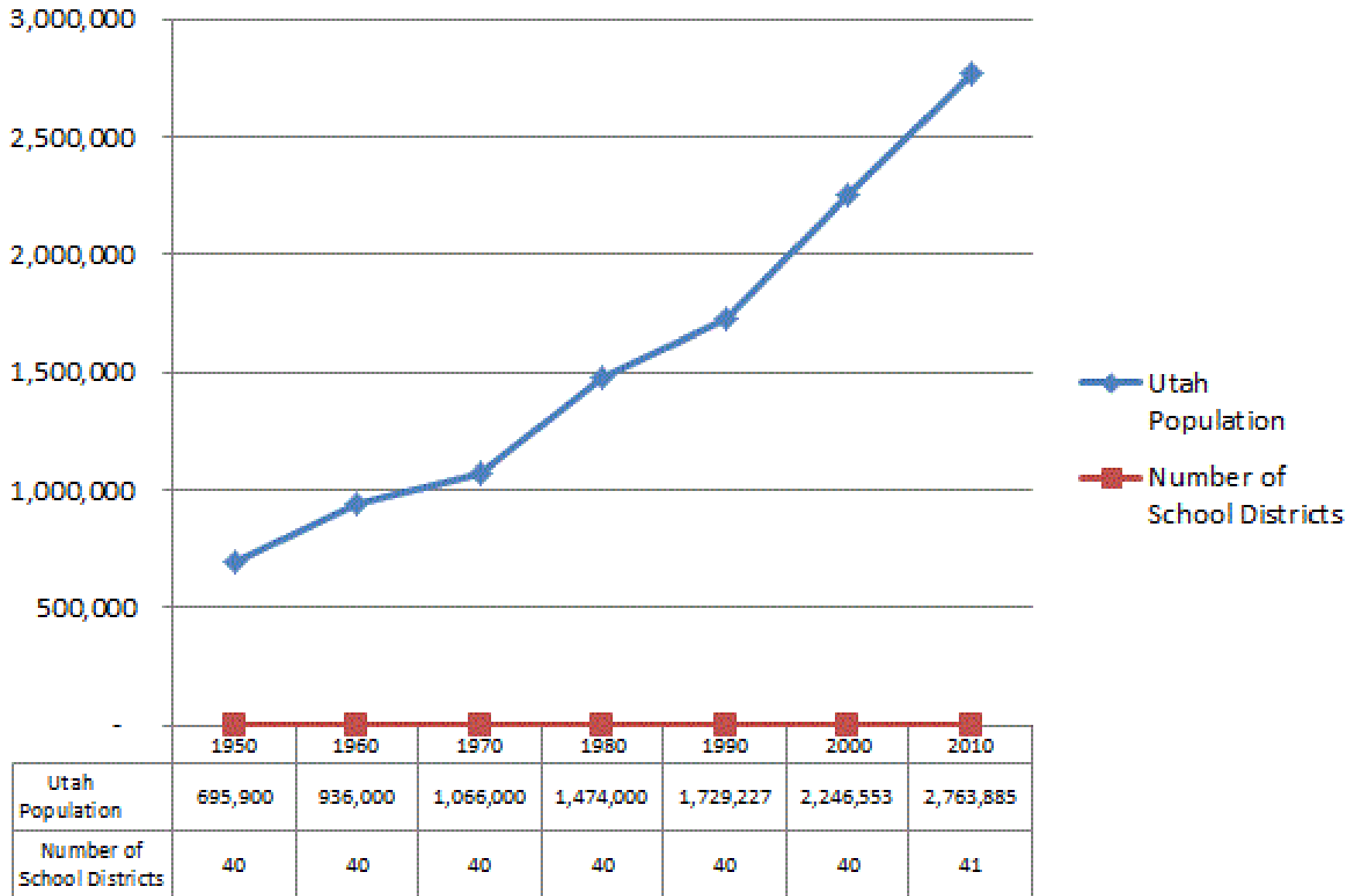
# Ex. Alpine School District

- Largest district in Utah
- 72,000 students
- 70 schools
- 7 school board members
- Before redistricting in 2010, one board member had 23 schools under her jurisdiction
- Avg. time commitment is 15-20 hrs/week for board members
- There is no way a school board member can address needs of individuals. It's just too big.
- A board member can't be responsive to all parents' concerns

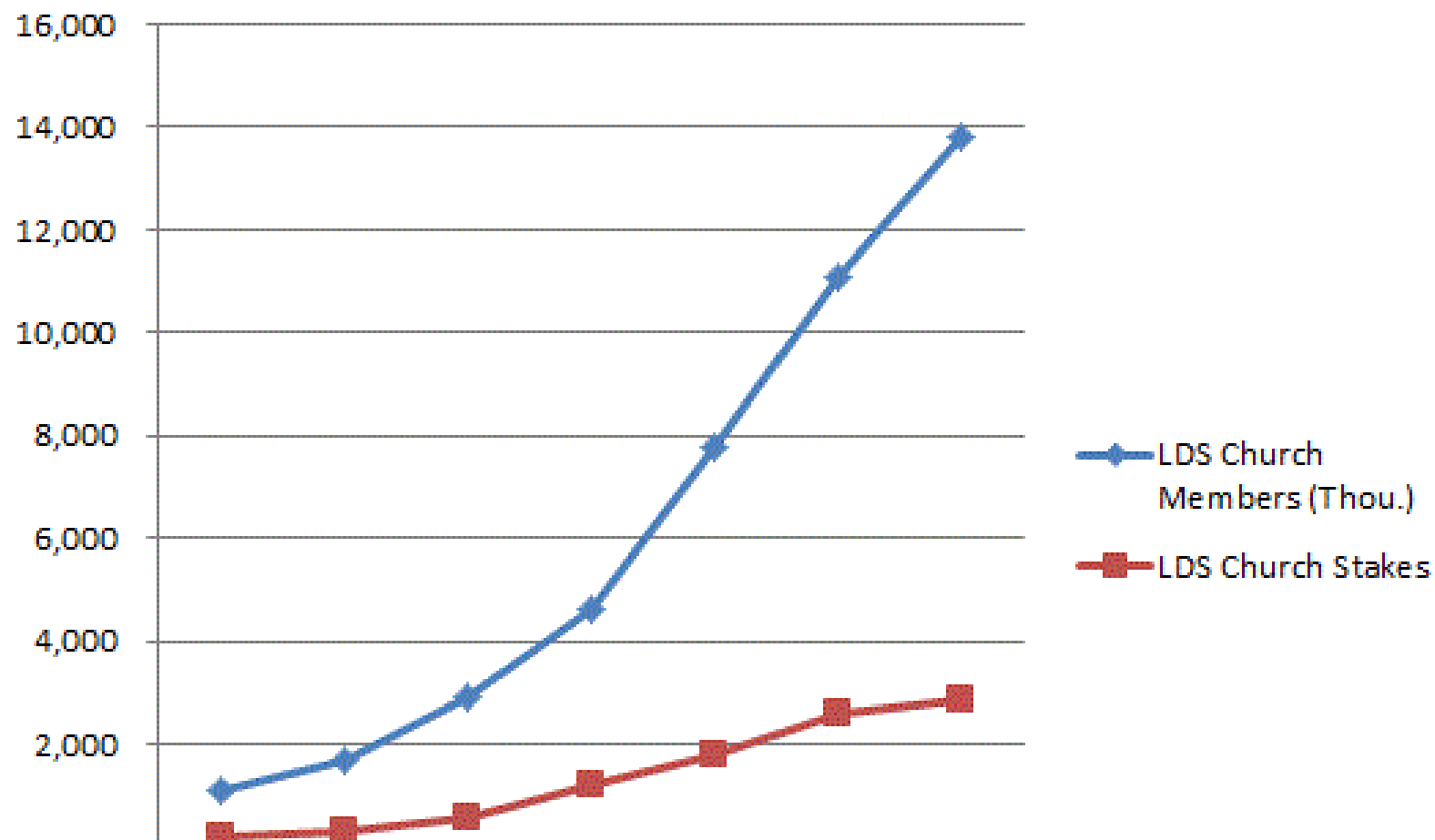
So how do we change?

How do we create a more  
responsive system?

# Utah Population vs. Number of School Districts

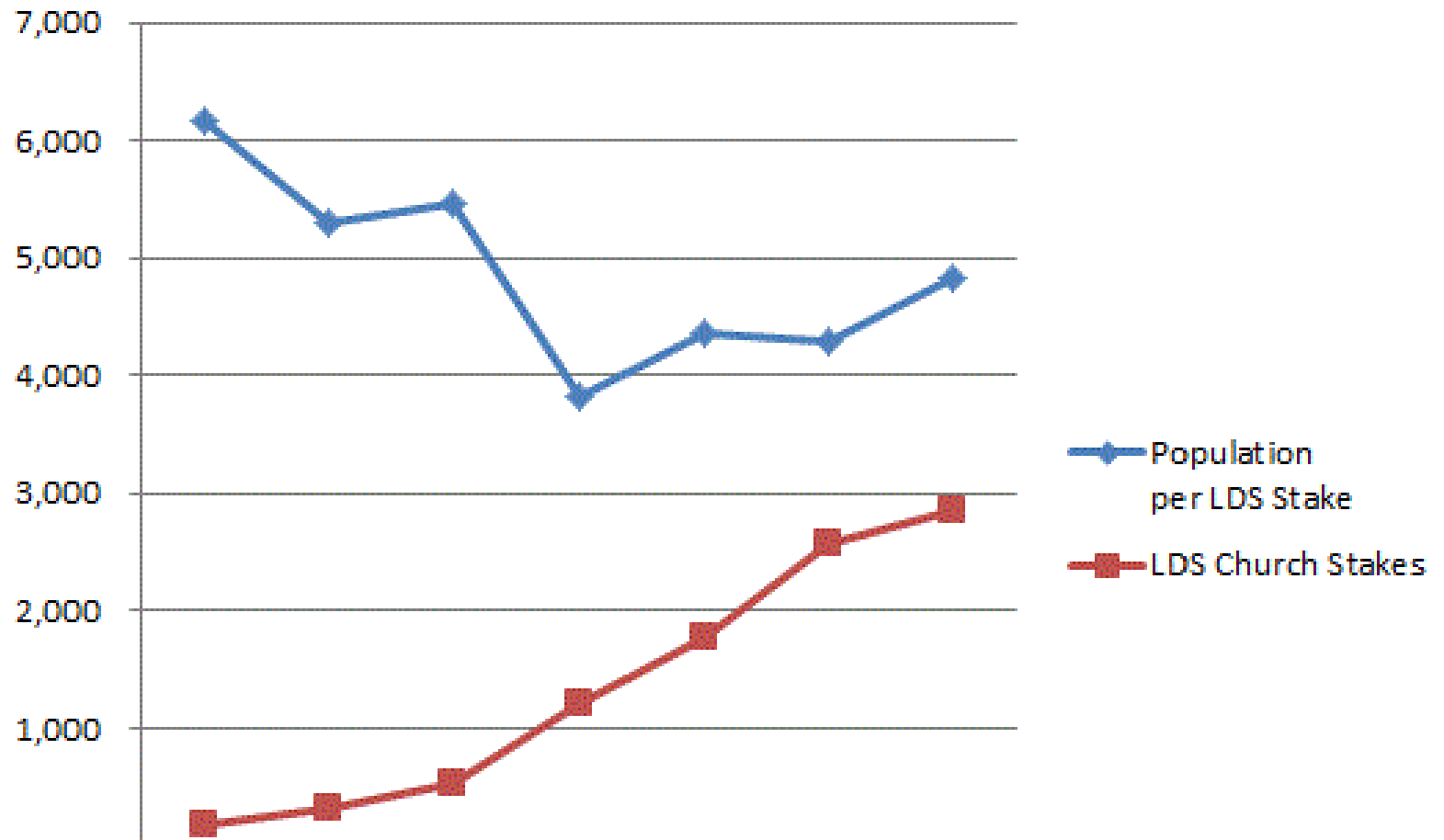


# LDS Church Population vs. Number of LDS Stakes



	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
LDS Church Members (Thou.)	1,111	1,693	2,931	4,640	7,761	11,069	13,825
LDS Church Stakes	180	319	537	1,218	1,784	2,583	2,865

# LDS Population per Stake



	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population per LDS Stake	6,174	5,308	5,458	3,809	4,350	4,285	4,825
LDS Church Stakes	180	319	537	1,218	1,784	2,583	2,865

# What if every high school was a district?

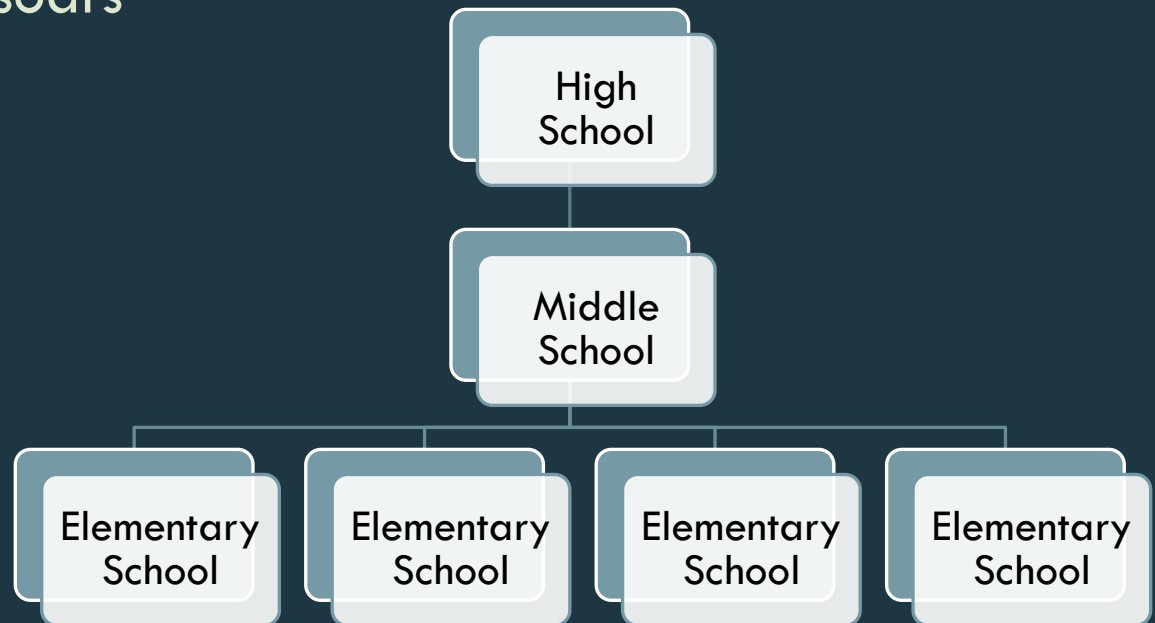
	Current System	What if Scenario
Utah School Districts	40	116
Residents/District	67,412	23,827
School Board Members	205	580
Students/District	13,228	<b>4,561</b>
LDS Members/Stake		<b>4,825</b>

“What if” figures from around 2009-10 statistics



# Ex: Alpine School District

- 8 High Schools means 7 district board members become 56
- What if you then replaced School Community Councils with elected local school boards at every school?
- 70 schools means 490 board members instead of 7
- Parental involvement soars



# Utah Education Budget Allotment

**\$4.3 Billion Budget**

**41 School Districts**

**287 Board Members**

# **New Utah School Boards**

**\$4.3 Billion Budget**

**1,044 Schools**

**7,308 Board Members**

# New Utah School Boards

**287 Board Members**

**VS.**

**7,308 Board Members**

**25x Increase**

## New Utah School Boards

If 5 people know a local board member to talk with about school issues...

**125x Increase  
in Parental Involvement**

# Current District School Boards

- People won't run for the board
- Huge time commitment (15-20 hours/week)
- A single board member covers many schools
- Can't review things happening at all the schools
- Public oversight is a joke (particularly financial approvals)
- Board members are instructed their role is to protect the district rather than represent the taxpayers

# New Local School Boards

- 2-3 hours/week
- Monthly board meeting
- Board members still have time to spend with their families
- More children see their parents and neighbors involved in the schools and community
- Much greater oversight by taxpayers
- Charter schools are already doing this successfully

# Jethro and Moses (Exodus 18)

- Moses, you're wearing yourself out
- AND you're wearing the people out
- You do the hard stuff nobody else can do
- Delegate power and localize decision making
- Appoint captains of 10, 50, 100, and 1,000 to handle smaller issues



# How about the finances?

- 41 school districts become 41 tax zones
- Boundaries are fixed and never change
- All tax collections in those zones are distributed pro rata to every school based on monthly enrollments
- Every new high school is a new district within a tax zone
- One high school in a tax zone may become the fiscal district, or contract with a CPA firm to handle collection and disbursement of funds in a trust
- Current district offices can be assigned to the fiscal district (perhaps the high school closest to the offices) so that high school's board would provide oversight to the district office

# Major Key – 100% local financial control

- Local schools get 100% of the cost to educate a child
- All taxes collected are distributed directly to the local school to allocate with its elected board
  - State income taxes – paid to schools
  - County property tax – paid to schools
  - Other taxes – appropriate authority pays to schools
- Current state and district entities that provide services to a school will provide a line item invoice to the school showing all the services they are providing and charging for
- Local school boards determine expenditures for services, assessments, raises, all expenses...

# Real Empowerment

- Parental Involvement becomes meaningful when you have full responsibility, authority, and financing
- More parents will want to be involved when they see they have real responsibility, real authority, and real influence
- Major tertiary effects to neighborhoods who truly feel their local school is theirs and they know their board members
- “No, my friend, the way to have good and safe government, is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many, distributing to every one exactly the functions he is competent to.” – Thomas Jefferson

# Concerns

- “People are incompetent” - Susceptible to bad local decisions
  - (Already happens at district and state levels – course corrections are easier when neighbors have a board member close by to complain to)
  - (The argument that people won’t choose correctly has been going on since the beginning of time – Liberty is still the right choice)
- Micromanagement of the board
  - (Local boards are governing boards not managing boards)
- Financial controls will be poor
  - (Approx. cost to audit all 1,044 schools = \$10,440,000)
- Inner city - lack of leadership for local board
  - (Individual schools that lack leadership can have assistance provided by the district office at the high school to train them)

# Other States

- Idaho: 151 school districts
- Utah: 41 school districts
- Utah currently has 141 high schools
- Idaho's Graduation Rate exceeds Utah's by several percent
- Is that parental involvement?
- California: 1,050 school districts
- That's about the same amount of schools in Utah

## The Bottom Line

- The closer leaders are to you, the more influence you have over decisions.
- Washington centralizes power away from us so we can't easily change things or communicate with influential people.

# Elections – must vet candidates

- State school board: 4 year term
- District school board, High School: 4 year term
- Local school board, Middle School: 4 year term
- Local school board, Elementary: 2 year term

# **Section 4**

## **Reshaped Roles**



# Reshaped Roles: Parents

- Responsible for their children's education
- Have total authority to direct their children's education (more customized schedules, choose teachers, etc...)
- Cannot have their rights, responsibilities, or authority infringed
- Decide what constitutes educational progress for their children
- Parents are the employers and stakeholders and schools serve a secondary and supporting role to their needs

# Reshaped Roles: Teachers

- Teachers work with parents to support the educational goals of students
- Teachers should not be evaluated on standardized tests.
- Remove as much “red tape” and state mandates from teachers as possible, particularly special education teachers
- Total focus on meeting the needs of students and not other “stakeholders”
- No teacher should be fired for light reasons but neither should they be immune from removal for reasons of complacency or incompetency

# Reshaped Roles: Students

- Students must first and foremost be responsible for their own education, ie. self-governing
- To accomplish this, more attention should be given to their needs
- Mentoring in independent study should be a key component of a student's education
- This may involve some difficult but valuable life lessons, but it should also involve significant freedom to study and learn things the student is interested in, independent of school

# Reshaped Roles: Principals

- The principal at a local school will now be hired by the local board and functions as a CEO/director.
- The local principal is fully accountable to the board for his job and not anyone at the district office.
- He/she hires and fires teachers, and functions under the policies set by the board.
- Principals at high schools function as both the principal and the superintendent of the district.

# Reshaped Roles: Local School Board

- Total engagement - No more School Community Council
- Hire principal
- Objectively protect teachers
- Review expenditures for the school (put them online)
- Set school policy and direction including standards, curriculum and testing policies
- Meet at least monthly
- Be the people teachers and parents can come to with issues to resolve for the school
- Appeal to the district board when they are unable to resolve something at the school

# Reshaped Roles: District School Board

- Function as the local school board for the high school.
- Function as a "parent" board for issues that schools within the high school boundaries can't handle themselves.

# Reshaped Roles: State Legislature

- Must pass laws preventing schools and districts from engaging in any transactions with federal agencies
- Ensures state board sets only broad policies
- Retrieve taxing authority for property taxes back from districts since legislators can see the bigger picture on taxation and districts are fragmenting under this plan
- Bottom Line: The state must establish the ground rules, but parents elected to local school boards have broad latitude in what they choose to do at that school

# Reshaped Roles: Federal Dept. of Education

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# **Section 5**

## **Some Specifics**

# Specifics: Standards

- The limitation of state involvement in standards should be to specify very broad items. Standards should be determined locally, but the state can set overall goals – not mandates.
  - Multiplication automaticity in 3rd grade
  - Algebra 1 completion by 8th grade
  - US History in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- Students in skill groupings don't need standards – they progress at their own pace
- Provide real opportunities for accelerating in subjects

# Specifics: Curriculum

- New plan: 25 times more parents will be reviewing curriculum choices for their schools and have control over those decisions.
- Real research based programs
- Local schools can choose what to incorporate and focus on with the help of their local school board

# Specifics: Assessments

- Schools and districts should choose their own testing they deem useful and appropriate for students

# Specifics: Non-educational services

- The purpose of schools is to educate
- Why mess with non-educational areas?
- Privatize the bussing, maintenance, and lunch functions
- Spin them off and make current managers CEO's of the new businesses who will contract with the schools

# Pilot Test

- 5+ high schools and the schools that feed into them
- Elect boards next fall
- 100% of school funds go to the school

# Educational Freedom

- How can we ever take half a million children in Utah and say, "you all need the same skill set because you'll be competing for the same jobs."
- End school-to-work notions
- Mentoring in freedom should start at an early age so students learn to pursue their own interests
- Local control helps ensure more parental involvement and greater freedom for children to pursue their dreams

# If...Then

- If we accept the principles of self-government that our Framers intended for our country,
- If we accept that control should be at the most local level possible,
- If we accept that parental involvement is the best path to educational success for our children,
- If we accept current Utah state law,
- Then this plan seems the most logical framework to greater success for our children



**Thank You**