

# UCTE

Utah Council of Teachers of English

July 13, 2016

RE: Request for a Public Hearing for R277-511

To David Crandall, Chair of the Utah State Board of Education:

On behalf of the executive board of the Utah Council of Teachers of English, the state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, I request a public hearing concerning the Utah State Board of Education rule 277-511.

As the professional organization representing English and language arts teachers across the state of Utah, we are deeply invested in the quality of teachers in Utah classrooms and the experiences Utah students have with those teachers. Along with members of the board, we recognize the seriousness of the teacher shortage problem Utah schools are facing right now and that this challenge mirrors similar problems being dealt with by states across the nation. However, rather than solving the teacher shortage problem, we feel strongly that the proposed changes in R277-511 have significant potential to lower standards for teacher quality. A number of research studies shows that teacher quality plays a central role in student learning and directly influences student achievement. At the same time, according to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the definition of "effective teachers" includes those with formal teacher preparation, who understand not just the content they teach, but also how to teach. Our organization is deeply concerned that the academic pathway to teaching approach outlined in R277-511 removes provisions put in place to ensure teachers receive the pedagogical preparation to help them become effective teachers.

We look forward to working with the Utah State Board of Education to identify solutions to these issues that are in the best interest of students and Utah's future and that do not lower the standards for teachers entering the profession.

Sincerely,



Dawan L. Coombs, Ph.D.  
Utah Council of Teachers of English, President