



Parents for  
Choice in Education

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PCE Initiates Expansion of Alternative Teacher Certification**  
*New program addresses teacher shortage,  
attracts talented professionals to the classroom*

*Salt Lake City – May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008* – To help relieve Utah's ongoing teacher shortage and attract skilled individuals to the teaching profession, Parents for Choice in Education (PCE) worked with key stakeholders to significantly expand an existing alternative teacher certification program, called Passport to Teaching. The program is administered by the non-profit group American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) to recruit and train mid-career professionals to become teachers. Unlike other programs, skilled individuals can become certified in as little as 6 months.

"I commend PCE for taking the initiative to push for full expansion of the Passport to Teaching program. We share the common goal of ensuring that the finest teachers end up in our public schools. At a time when Utah faces serious teacher shortages, the State Board agrees that this program will encourage more quality professionals to enter the classroom," stated Mark Cluff, Vice Chairman, Utah State Board of Education.

"With the looming teacher shortage facing Utah it was imperative that alternative routes to teacher certification be made available to qualified professionals seeking to bring their talents into the classroom. I applaud PCE for seeing an opportunity to expand an already existing, high quality program administered by ABCTE and working to facilitate that expansion through approval by the State Board of Education", stated Representative Greg Hughes, House Education Committee Chair. "Our mutual goal is to provide the children of Utah with great teachers."

Working directly with ABCTE President Dave Saba and members of the Board of Education, Parents for Choice in Education facilitated the initial discussions to expand the Passport to Teaching program that Utah had adopted in 2004 for math, grades 6 to 12. This resulted in a discussion of program expansion being placed on the agenda for the Board of Education's February meeting, which ultimately led to the vote of approval on May 9th to accept all certifications offered by ABCTE.

"ABCTE knew there was increased demand for our program in Utah but needed some help in understanding the complexities of education policy in the state. PCE provided that guidance as well as contact with key stakeholders to facilitate acceptance of all our certifications," said Dave Saba, President of ABCTE.

"PCE knows that great education starts with great teachers, and we have been impressed with the quality of the individuals that ABCTE's program brings into the classroom," said PCE Chairman Robyn Bagley. "With Utah facing severe teaching shortages, we wanted to make sure there were more routes to certification in Utah."

Information about Passport to Teaching and ABCTE:

- \* There is no cost to the state or the district for ABCTE programs
- \* ABCTE will conduct recruitment events throughout the state in August to help recruit more teachers for Utah schools
- \* Based upon the quality of the teachers and the rigor of the exams, the Utah State Office of Education recommended expansion to all certifications offered by ABCTE.
- \* ABCTE is a non-profit organization started with funding from the US Department of Education to help states recruit, prepare and certify more teachers for America's classrooms
- \* Primary focus is to help relieve critical teacher shortages in core subjects
- \* Rigorous program with only 40% good enough to make it into the classroom
- \* ABCTE teachers – average age is 37, over 35% are male, over 20% are teachers of color
- \* For more information, visit [www.abcte.org/teach](http://www.abcte.org/teach)

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Parents for Choice in Education is a grassroots organization that advocates quality education for every child. As the leading voice for education innovation in Utah, we promote proven market solutions both within and outside the public school system.