

September 19, 2018

As the leaders of Utah's public colleges and universities, we support Opinion Question 1, the education funding approach agreed to by the Governor and Legislative leaders including referenda that will be on the ballot this fall. This represents a significant investment in public and higher education that can open the doors for more students to fully partake in the opportunities of our growing economy and assure its growth for the future.

We applaud the Governor and the legislature for their commitment and forward-thinking leadership in funding education. The 10-cent increase in the gas tax will bring an additional \$125 million each year. Combined with other new sources of revenue, public education will be able to improve academic proficiencies and increase graduation rates for students ready for college and careers. Higher education will improve access and affordability, increase completion rates and expand the desperately needed supply of highly skilled graduates ready to meet the needs of Utah's employers.

Investments in higher education are proven to provide greater economic development opportunities for Utahns—both along the Wasatch Front and in Utah's rural communities. In fact, students who graduated college in 2017 earned an additional \$480 million following their first year of employment more than their counterparts who only attained a high school diploma.

No longer does a high school diploma provide our children with quality opportunities for success. Additional investment in education will continue to make Utah the best state in the country to work, raise a family, and enjoy a strong quality of life.

We express our strong support and join the higher education community, public education, businesses, our elected officials and families across the state in supporting Opinion Question 1, and continue the successful path we have embarked upon for education.

Sincerely,

David Buhler, Utah Commissioner of Higher Education
Ruth Watkins, President, University of Utah
Noelle Cockett, President, Utah State University
Norm Tarbox, Interim President, Weber State University
Scott Wyatt, President, Southern Utah University
Gary Carlston, President, Snow College
Richard Williams, President, Dixie State University
Astrid Tuminez, President, Utah Valley University
Denece Huftalin, President, Salt Lake Community College