

June 25, 2014

Dear Utah Teachers,

I want to thank you for your great work this year in continuing to improve student achievement. I also want to thank you for all your patience and support in rolling out Utah's new SAGE assessments. Implementing new computer-adaptive tests on this scale has been a Herculean task. We recognize and greatly appreciate the time and attention that you have given to preparing your students for this first year administration. We know this has impacted classrooms and your instructional time. Given the magnitude of this state wide implementation, the majority of the feedback has shown that this first administration was very successful. However, we recognize there is much room for improvement.

Thank you for all of the feedback that you have provided in regards to your experiences with SAGE. There have been several surveys soliciting your feedback and we appreciate the time you have spent providing this information. We also appreciate the phone calls and E-mails that have provided very specific experiences. Your positive comments and your concerns are greatly appreciated. We are using all of this feedback to improve the assessments for the coming year.

We recognize that there were many technical challenges with the new system which resulted in frustration for students and teachers. Thank you for working through all the problems and completing all of the testing.

I want you to know that we have heard your concerns and positive experiences and recommendations for improvement. We are already working with the contractor to continue what worked well and to fix/improve the concerns. I think you will be very pleased with the improvements you will see next year. The writing portion of SAGE will have a greatly reduced testing time, 90 minutes for the first prompt and 60 minutes for the second prompt. The technology will be greatly improved and beginning this fall with the interim test, the glitches and problems that were experienced last spring will be fixed. We are also working to improve the administration manual and the testing ethics policy to give you more specific information. We are confident that the second year will be much better for students and teachers.

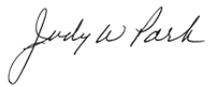
Spring 2014 testing included a one-time only requirement that allowed USOE to do a vertical linking of the test results. This vertical linking will result in a scale score that links the English Language Arts scores for grades 3 – 11 to be on the same scale. The same will be true for math. This one-time requirement resulted in some students seeing 1 – 4 test questions that were one grade below or above their grade level. Reports that there were many questions that were not at their grade/course level is not true.

August 11 – 15 will be the standard setting process where 200 teachers will review the test results to determine the proficiency cuts for SAGE. Following state board approval of the proficiency cuts, student results will be sent to the schools and districts in September.

I will look forward to receiving ongoing feedback from you next year. We are committed to improving SAGE. We want it to be a successful experience for all teachers and students. When you receive the student results in September, we will welcome your feedback on the new electronic reporting system.

Thank you again for your service to Utah's schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy W. Park".

Judy Park, Ed.D.  
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