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For Immediate Release

Utah State Board of Education appoints Joel Coleman as interim Superintendent of Public Instruction

Superintendent for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind Joel Coleman has been named the interim Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Utah.

Coleman, who has served as the USDB superintendent for the past year, will transition into the interim position at the Utah State Office of Education over the next week. He will remain in that position until a permanent superintendent steps in before resuming his position at the USDB.

Current Superintendent Martell Menlove announced his retirement in March. Menlove will be available to Coleman and other staff members for consultation during the interim period.

Coleman, a resident of West Jordan and longtime educator, is also a former member of the Utah State School Board. He was elected in 2010 and served nearly three years before being unanimously appointed superintendent of the USDB.

"I am happy to accept this assignment and will strive to carry on the good work done by Dr. Menlove and his staff in making this transition as smooth as possible," Coleman said.

Coleman was selected as the interim superintendent through a collaborative process with board members and Menlove.

"Dr. Menlove has successfully navigated public education through a period of unprecedented change. His unique skills in communication and leadership will be greatly missed by the State Board and the greater education community within our state," Board Vice Chair David Thomas said.

Sydnee Dickson, director of Teaching and Learning at the Utah State Office of Education, has been named interim Deputy Superintendent, a position previously held by Brenda Hales. Dickson holds a doctorate in Education Leadership and Policy from the University of Utah, has been an educator in Utah public schools for more than 30 years, and has worked at the State Office of Education since 2007.

Utah State School Board Chairman David Crandall said Coleman has important skills and experience necessary to lead both the Board and State Office staff during this temporary period.

“Joel has the unique benefit of having served as an elected member of the State Board and in working as the superintendent of a large organization,” Crandall said. “We believe he will be a good fit in helping the State Board and State Office transition during this time.”

Coleman obtained a master’s degree in public administration from Brigham Young University and previously worked as a seminary teacher and administrator for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He is the founder of Monticello Academy charter school in West Valley City. He has also served as a city councilman. Coleman and his wife, Kim, have five children.

The State Board of Education launched a nationwide search for a new superintendent following Menlove’s retirement announcement. In addition to accepting applications from interested candidates, the Board has contracted with a Salt Lake City-based firm to assist in the search. It is anticipated that a new superintendent will be named in early October.

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