

Dialogue on Democracy
Thursday, September 10, 2009
State Capitol Rotunda
Mayor Ralph Becker

Mayor Becker will be seated at the head table with Governor Keating. The Mayor will speak immediately after the Chief Justice opens up and the Color Guard presents the colors.

The Mayor will welcome everyone to the Capital City and make his remarks. He will be followed by Michael Young, who will welcome folks on behalf of higher education and make remarks about the importance of civic engagement. Dinner will be served, and then Larry Shumway (new superintendent) will speak briefly on behalf of public education. Kim Burningham will present award to State Bar. And then, on to the keynote!

Remarks

- Good evening, Governor Keating, Chief Justice Durham and all who are here tonight.
- Welcome to the Capital City, home of our beautiful State Capitol.
- How appropriate we are all meeting here tonight – here in the People’s House – to discuss our active roles in our democracy and how we can promote civic engagement throughout our communities.
- All of us here tonight know that schools K through 16 have a very important civic mission to fulfill.
- In active partnership with our schools, we can work together to provide our young people opportunities for civic engagement and learning; to help students understand the core civic principles and values that undergird our constitutional framework and support our political, cultural and civic life together.
- The core ethical values that sustain high quality community life, that foster civility and support the common good, are also at the heart of our civic compacts.
- The Utah Coalition for Civic, Character and Service Learning seeks to provide opportunities for deep, rich civic learning, for civic engagement and action, and service in our communities.

- Benefits from civic learning to the community can range from appreciation for and involvement in our public processes to more civility in public dialogue and political action.
- Civic, character and service learning promote development of qualities and skills that better prepare our young people to become tomorrow's leaders; to develop the reflection and thinking skills that are so important to active citizenship, skills that help young people identify and find real solutions to challenges that face our communities.
- All of us here tonight share the vision and the responsibility for promoting that civic understanding; for taking active roles in the lives of our young people and engaging in and modeling civil community action and participation.
- In the largest study ever undertaken on the causes of crime and delinquency, the Harvard School of Public Health conducted the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods.
- The study found that "there are lower rates of violence in urban neighborhoods with a strong sense of community and values..."
- Leaders of the study team concluded, "By far the largest predictor of lower violent crime rate was collective efficacy," a term they used to mean a sense of trust, common values and cohesion in communities.
- Felton Earls, the director for the study and a professor of psychiatry at the Harvard School of Public Health, described cohesion as "shared vision and social trust, a shared willingness of community residents to intervene, a sense of engagement and ownership of public space."
- The study highlights ideals that characterize strong communities where adults intervene in the lives of young people, support young people and very clearly articulate a core of shared common values.
- Through civic and character education, through service learning, we can promote the ideals that build strong, cohesive communities.
- As civic participants, our young people can reach their full potential and contribute to the strength, the vitality and the common good of our communities.

- I am looking forward to our dialogue tonight and participating with you in our collective efforts to strengthen our communities through civic, character and service learning.
- Thank you.