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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Utah State Board of Education

FROM: Brad C. Smith
 Chief Executive Officer

DATE: February 5-6, 2015

ACTION: Social Studies Credit Changes

Background:

Recommendations from the Board's Graduation Task Force were initially presented to the Board in its June 4, 2014 meeting. Not all recommendations were acted upon at that time. The Graduation Task Force recommended a change to the graduation rule requiring a total of 3.0 units of social studies credit, which is an increase of .5 units.

Key Points:

The social studies requirement of 3.0 units would restore social studies to its historic level. It would bring Utah in alignment with the national average for social studies course requirements and bring the state requirement closer to the 3.5 units required by the Regents Scholarship. Social studies requirements of 3.0 units or more, not including General Financial Literacy, are in force in over 40 percent of districts, not counting charter schools.

Anticipated Action:

It is anticipated that the Standards and Assessment Committee will consider approving the proposed credit changes. If approved, the full Board will consider approving the change.

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Social Studies Graduation Requirements



Prepared by the

Utah State Office of Education

February 6, 2015

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Background Information: Social Studies Graduation Requirements

The Graduation Task Force of the Utah State Board of Education met in 2012-2013, and presented preliminary recommendations to the Board in March 2013. Among them was a recommendation of an increase of a half credit to the social studies requirement. This would mean that social studies would increase from two and one-half to three units required for graduation.

The current requirements in high school are one half-credit of geography, one half-credit of world civilizations, one credit of United States history, and one half-credit of U.S. government and citizenship. An increase of one-half credit would give LEAs flexibility to extend half-year courses to full years thus having a significant impact on the quality and depth of the offerings available to Utah students.

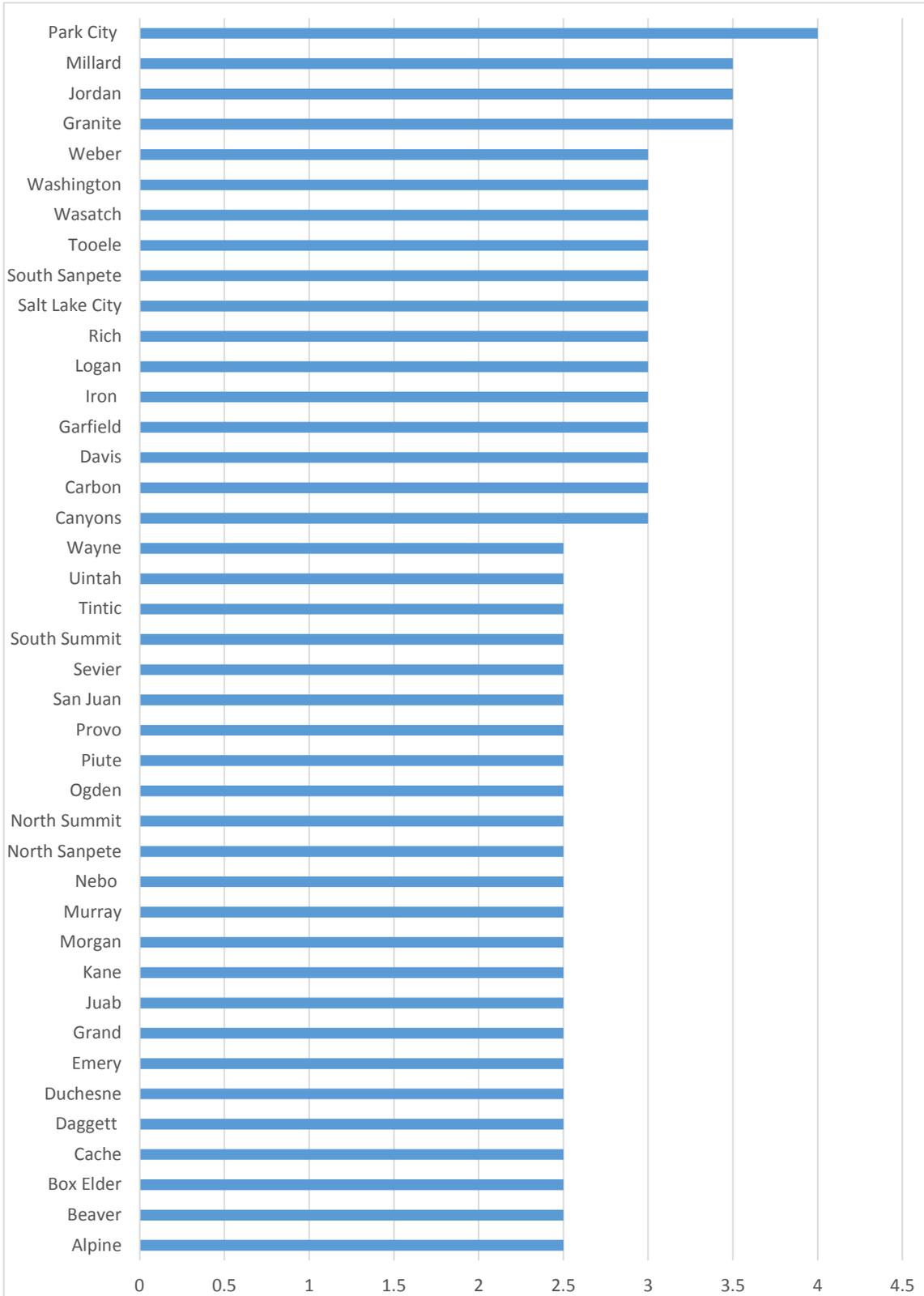
Comparisons for Consideration

- Utah is an outlier from the national average. 38 states and the District of Columbia require three units or more of social studies credit in high school (See Figure 1).
- 17 of the 41 districts, or 41%, currently require more units than the current state guidelines.
- The Utah System of Higher Education's Regents' Scholarship requires three and one-half credits of social studies.

Social studies plays a central role in the development of civically-engaged, well-informed citizens. Social studies courses provide students with essential opportunities to apply reading, writing, speaking and listening skills to the disciplines of history, geography, economics, and civics.

Social Studies Graduation Requirements

Public School Districts



Social Studies Graduation Requirements

Public Charter Schools

