Welcome to the 2011 Common Core Academy in Sixth Grade Mathematics. We are excited that you have chosen to spend a week with us in exploring these new standards. We have designed an outstanding experience for you over the course of four days that has the potential to change the way you view mathematics understanding and impact the way you teach mathematics forever.

Please find attached a document entitled “What to Expect in the 2011 Sixth Grade Mathematics Common Core Academy”. Please read it carefully for an overview of what you can expect to learn and to gain from your participation. Please be aware that you will NOT experience the same thing you have come to expect out of the Core Academy. We are aware that may not be good news to some of you who have come to expect ready-made lesson plans and materials that you can take and use immediately in your class. This year’s academy is different by design from the ground up.

First, it is based on the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics that were adopted by the Utah State Board of Education in June, 2010. These standards are different from what we have had in the past. Properly implemented, the standards have the promise of leading students to really understand mathematical concepts and to be able to use those concepts to solve real world problems.

Second, the academy is designed to help you understand the standards. Facilitators have created a learning-task based atmosphere that will engage you as a learner. As you allow yourself to become immersed in the mathematics you will come to appreciate the concepts being taught and will become excited about their implementation. You will probably truly understand mathematical concepts you have not understood or have taken for inconceivable in the past.

Third, the academy is designed to help you, the teacher, understand a different way of teaching mathematics. You will see the power of rich mathematical tasks in helping learners understand mathematical concepts. You will experience the integration of mathematical practices into everyday math lessons and see how students can become mathematically proficient. You will also begin to see how mathematics instruction can be balanced between direct instruction and inquiry lessons that allow learners to explore mathematical concepts.

Please bring the following with you, if possible:

* A calculator (it doesn’t have to be fancy. A basic four function calculator will do.)
* Rulers, metric and customary
* Pens and pencils
* Markers
* Highlighters
* Colored Pencils
* Laptop Computer (internet access will, most likely, not be available in the classroom. However, we will be asking you to create mathematical tasks to share across the state and will need to have those lessons typed into a template on the computer.)

Please be sure to read the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics prior to your Common Core Academy experience. It would be best to read all the elementary standards, as well as the Grade 7 and 8 standards. At a minimum, however, you should read the introduction (pages 3 through 8) and the entire section of the sixth grade standards (pages 39 through 45).