



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2010-053

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Dianne Frazer, Education Consultant 
Educational Quality and Accountability Unit

DATE: March 12, 2010

SUBJECT: Wyoming Bridges Grant Applications

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Attached you will find information for this year's Wyoming Bridges grant. The electronic version of the WDE539 application is available for download and completion under the forms inventory section of the Department's website at <https://wdesecure.k12.wy.us/stats/forms.inventory>. The law specifies that applications are to be submitted to the Wyoming Department of Education by April 15. Applications may be faxed to the Department at (307) 777-6234, but the original application with assurances and submittal signatures must still be mailed to the Department in Cheyenne at the address shown in the upper left hand corner of the application itself, with a postmark no later than April 15. Applications will be reviewed and needed district follow-up will take place the following two weeks. We request that you have available during those weeks someone who can answer questions which may arise concerning your application. The Department will notify you by May 1 of grant eligibility and preliminary grant awards.

As you might remember from last year, the grant calculation has moved from a percentage of total enrollment to a percentage of a district's at-risk proxy count with grant amounts calculated on specific district average teacher pay. These estimates are based on data submitted by districts during spring data collection through the WDE684. After the funding model is formally updated with adjustments made by districts through the WDE684 during May, we will send you final Bridges grant calculations by June 1. If WDE684 data is missing or deemed to be inaccurate, the district's grant award will be calculated to be \$0.00 and forfeited.

We remind you of the changes made by the legislature in 2008 to reiterate the target audience of the grant as *academically at-risk students* as well as the establishment of a *minimum length of 15 days* for a summer school session.

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We believe most districts already adhere to this length, and many exceed this minimal amount of time.

Additional changes are being made to the Bridges grant for 2010, the major one being the submission to the Department of district spring and fall student growth data from the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP). This will preclude the need for districts to administer pre/post assessments to summer school students, hopefully allowing more direct student instruction during summer. Other changes are being proposed in rules as well as in guidelines found in the instruction page of the WDE539 application. Changes are highlighted in orange on the application itself. Attachment A to this memorandum provides more detailed information on modifications made to the grant this year.

We remind you that the Wyoming Bridges grant encourages you to make available to students learning that is *different* from your traditional school year. We again ask you to embed enriched learning opportunities for the students you have identified as needing intervention and remedial instruction who will be attending your summer school or extended day programs. This is in keeping with research-based findings that rigorous and relevant instruction results in bigger learning gains for all students. This becomes especially important for those who have fallen behind or need additional time to learn. The enriched instructional component of summer school can become an opportunity to demonstrate to students how what they are learning is relevant to the world around them.

Please take this opportunity to think beyond a traditional learning environment and to embrace new and exciting opportunities for students. There are abundant resources available to districts to accomplish things not before considered, and I encourage you to embrace this occasion. If you have any questions concerning the enclosed materials please feel free to call Ruth Sommers at 632-0157 or Dianne Frazer at 777-8676.

DF:al

CC: Summer School Grant Coordinators

Attachments: Attachment A – Modifications to the Bridges Grant Program, 2010
Attachment B – FAQs for Wyoming Bridges Grant Program
Attachment C – Ideas for Summer Programs

Bridges Grant Changes
2010 Summer School/SY10-11 Extended Day

Student Assessment

Superintendent's Memorandum No. 2009-143 dated 9-18-2009 alerted districts that the Department was directed under W.S. 21-13-334(h)(iv) to implement a structured common assessment evaluation of the effectiveness of summer school programs. The Department began this process through a pilot project utilizing data gathered from selected districts' NWEA's Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) spring and fall student assessments. This data has proven to be a valuable tool to measure program effectiveness. Thus, beginning with the summer of 2010, all districts electing to utilize Bridges Grant funds must submit to the Department MAP student assessment data in order to answer the grant's requirement for student pre/post assessment reporting.

- This year's WDE-539 grant application contains a separate set of assurances relative to student assessment, and asks the district to confirm that it assesses students in at least reading and math from the spring of second grade through the fall of ninth grade using NWEA MAP's Survey with Goals. There are a very small number of districts which will not begin using MAP until the fall of 2010, and some districts which do not assess all students in all grades (spring of second grade through fall of ninth grade) with MAP's Survey with Goals. These districts will be asked in the application to provide a timeframe for grant compliance.
- Districts will be able to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NWEA that will allow NWEA to directly submit student data to the Department of Education rather than the district submitting that information twice yearly. The grant application will ask districts to indicate interest in pursuing this option.

Regardless of entering into the MOU with NWEA, districts will still need to submit files which will link WISER and MAP student identification numbers (if different), as well as to identify in their October 1 end-of-program report which students (by WISER ID) completed summer school and subjects studied. Further instruction on this submission will be forthcoming.

We hope districts will see the value in moving to this approach of evaluating summer program effectiveness. Over time, districts have consistently expressed frustration in their ability to analyze the success of their summer programs, the time pre and post assessment removes from direct instruction in a short summer period, and the failure to measure student academic growth when evaluating only student attainment of proficiency. We anticipate use of MAP student assessment data will ease these concerns.

Attachment A
To Superintendent's Memo Dated 3-12-2010

Proposed Rules Changes Which:

- Clarify that student individual learning plans should be developed by the certified teacher or team referring the student to summer school or extended day. This is intended to allow the summer school teacher to immediately begin instruction rather than assessing student performance in order to ascertain student needs or learning styles.
- Specify that students in grades K-8 need to receive direct hands-on instruction delivered by an appropriately certified teacher rather than instruction delivered through computer-based learning programs not associated with a distant certified teacher. This is not meant to preclude the use of computers or computer-based programs to *aid* or *supplement* instruction;
- Require that high school students utilizing computer-based learning programs to recover credits must do so in an environment supervised and attended by a certified teacher (but not necessarily certified in the content area);
- Incorporate MAP data submission requirements (explained above); and
- Delineate timeframes and data used to calculate district grant awards. Preliminary grant amounts will be communicated to districts May 1 in their grant award letter based on at-risk student data submitted in their spring WDE684. Final grant award amounts will be recalculated and communicated to districts by June 1 using any updated information submitted by districts during May. If district data is missing or deemed to be inaccurate, a district's grant award will be calculated to be \$0.00 and forfeited for the applicable grant year.

Changes in Guidelines/Instructions:

- If either contracted services or supplies/materials exceed 20 percent of the total proposed budget for summer school or extended day programs, the district is asked to submit an itemized list of the proposed expenditures.
- Bridges funds can be used to refund district expenditures proportionate to the share of those expenses used by Bridges students. It is not appropriate to charge the Bridges grant for the full expense of supplies/materials or a contract that applies to or is used by the general student body.

Frequently Asked Questions

Wyoming Bridges, a Grant for Summer School and Extended Day Programs

1. Who began this grant, and why?

The need for funds specifically targeted to summer school and extended day interventions was originally identified in a 2002 study which examined the at-risk adjustment to Wyoming's block grant funding to public schools. That report found that the model at that time did not fund programs which operated outside the regular school day. The study also found that services provided to students needing additional instruction varied so greatly among districts that policymakers could not be assured all students were exposed equally to quality educational supports.

The following summer, in 2003, educators joined with Harris Cooper, Ph.D., of Duke University, to discuss summer learning loss, who it impacts most, and what components needed to be in place for a successful summer program. Wyoming educators then designed a program which incorporated these defined elements and presented a proposal to the legislature in 2004 to fund summer programs. Lawmakers expanded the proposed summer program to include extended day offerings, and the first grant was made available to districts for the summer of 2004. In 2006, the Bridges Grant was expanded further to include an independent enrichment component, and funding was doubled. Then in 2008, the legislature again modified the program, focusing once more on its original mandate of providing supports to *academically* at-risk students, eliminating funding for an independent enrichment component, and moving the funding formula to one based on district at-risk proxy numbers rather than general enrollment.

2. What is the size of the grant?

The funding formula for the Bridges grant was modified in the 2008 legislative session to more closely target students at risk of failure as indicated by district at-risk student proxy counts which include students who participate in free and/or reduced lunch, those who are English language learners and those who are mobile. This reiterates the philosophy of focusing the grant to the needs of students who are statistically academically at risk of failure. Grants will be calculated for districts using each district's specific average teacher compensation, and it is based on a total of 150 hours for summer school and extended day instruction, preparation, and assessment time. Grants for very small districts are calculated using a minimum of .5 teacher full-time equivalent (FTE), increasing the "floor" amount considerably. Grant increases will now keep pace with increases in the block grant funding model, eliminating the need to separately adjust the Bridges Grant for cost-of-living increases. At this point in time, the Wyoming Bridges Grant is funded around \$12 million/year.

3. Which students does the grant target?

Enabling legislation and rules stipulate that the target audience of the Wyoming Bridges grant is students who are academically at risk of failure.

4. What if classes include students not academically at-risk?

If your district also includes students in summer school who were not identified as being at-risk of failure, grant funds should be apportioned by those students who do and do not meet grant requirements. For instance, if you offer a summer algebra class that is attended by both students requiring remediation as well as students obtaining first time credit for algebra, divide the cost of the class proportionately according to the number of students receiving remediation and those receiving first time credit. The Wyoming Bridges Grant should pay only for the costs of students academically at-risk.

5. What are the defined successful elements of a summer program?

Dr. Cooper, in conjunction with a number of other researchers, analyzed multiple summer programs for effect and found that certain elements were associated with success. Some of these elements are mandatory grant requirements and are defined in law:

1. **Concentration on the basic subjects of math and language arts;** for Wyoming Bridges, both must be available to students who need interventions in math or language arts, although districts may certainly add other subjects.

2. **Minimum instructional hours;** at elementary and middle school/junior high, 60 hours of math and language arts instruction must be *delivered* (can be one or both subjects); at the high school level, 60 hours of instruction (per subject) must be *available*, but students can prove proficiency before sitting for 60 hours.

3. **Delivery of instruction by highly qualified, trained teachers;** summer school teachers must be certified in their content area and receive annual training on research-based instruction for at-risk students.

4. **Minimum length of program;** summer programs must last *at least* fifteen (15) days. However, fewer hours per day over a longer period of time is more effective.

5. **Well defined learning goals for each student;** individual learning plans must be developed for all Bridges students.

6. **Supervision and monitoring;** those supervising Bridges summer or extended day programs also must receive annual training on research-based instructional strategies for at-risk students.

Attachment B
To Superintendent's Memo dated 3-12-2010

7. Small class size.

6. Other than successful program requirements, are there other conditions that must be met for the grant?

Yes. First and foremost, since the original intent of this grant was to provide the additional instructional time needed to stem summer learning loss and improve student proficiency with rigorous and relevant summer programs, **districts must have in place a comprehensive K-12 summer school before funds can be used for extended day offerings.** However, this does not mean that districts have to enroll more students or spend more money on summer programs than on extended day programs. It does mean that summer school has to be available to those who need it and are particularly vulnerable to summer learning loss, compounding an already evident deficient mastery of standards.

Summer learning is regarded the same as learning during the regular school year. Thus, PTSB guidelines on teacher certifications are the same. Only teachers certified in specific content areas can teach those subjects in summer school.

High school students using computer-based educational learning programs during summer to recover lost credits (like NovaNet, Plato, OdysseyWare, rather than distance learning programs with a certified teacher) must be **supervised and the labs attended** by a certified teacher. This teacher does not necessarily need to be certified in the specific content area the student is studying.

Students in grades K-8 require direct hands-on instruction by appropriately certified teachers rather than instruction delivered through computer-based learning programs not associated with a distance certified teacher. This is not meant to preclude the use of computer programs to aid or supplement instruction. But they cannot supplant instruction.

Extended day programs must be assigned a certified **"Teacher of Record"** to supervise the program(s) and develop the student's Individual Learning Plan. This teacher is not required to be certified in the content area being delivered to the student.

New this year (2010) is the suspension of grant requirements to test summer school students ahead and behind summer school. Pre/post testing will be replaced with district submittal of spring and fall student RIT scores from NWEA's Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP). It is anticipated this move will provide more contact time for students during summer school, and will satisfy the legislative mandate for uniform assessment of summer school effectiveness. To further facilitate data sharing, districts will have the opportunity to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with NWEA to directly submit student data to the Department.

Attachment B
To Superintendent's Memo dated 3-12-2010

7. What other practices are highly encouraged to deliver effective summer school and extended day programs?

Grant administrators encourage other components be in place to assure effective programs, although they are not mandated by law:

1. The delivery of instruction in a manner **different from** the traditional school year that incorporates hands-on manipulatives, and is rigorous and relevant to real life; this is so important that a component has been added to the grant that requires learning opportunities engaging academically at-risk students in rigorous higher order thinking. This is defined in the rules as "enrichment".
2. The provision of **meals** (not just snacks) even if programs begin after breakfast and end before lunch. If meals cannot be provided through your district, consider contracting with local entities – this is an approved expense for grant funds;
3. For elementary and junior high/middle students, programs which start and end closer to the beginning of school the following year;
4. Formative assessment which can enlighten teachers and administrators of effective instructional delivery; and
5. Transportation.

8. How can districts access the grant? What are the timeframes?

The Wyoming Bridges Grant is not competitive. Districts which meet program requirements are eligible for the grant. Program requirements are generally set forth and defined in the application itself either through answers provided to questions, or through assurances. We encourage districts to review assurances, and not just initial them without careful thought.

Typically the Department will make applications available to districts by the second week of March. The application packet will come via the Superintendent Memorandum process and are due back at the Department April 15. Applications are reviewed by the Summer School Design Team, and Superintendents are informed of eligibility no later than May 1 of each year.

Grant awards are calculated utilizing spring demographic data submitted by districts via the WDE684 process and will adhere to the timelines set forth for that data collection. Preliminary grant awards will be calculated May 1, then finalized June 1 ensuring the most up to date student data is used in awarding grant amounts. If WDE684 is missing or deemed to be inaccurate, a district's grant award will be calculated to be \$0.00 and forfeited.

Attachment B
To Superintendent's Memo dated 3-12-2010

The law specifies that application for the grant must be sent to the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) by April 15. Grants contain signature pages and assurances which must be attested; thus they cannot be uploaded into the WDE report system, but rather the original with signatures must be **mailed** to the Department, postmarked no later than April 15. They are to be mailed to:

Dianne Frazer
Wyoming Department of Education
Standards, Assessment and Accountability Unit
2300 Capitol Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0050
(307) 777-8676
dfraze@educ.state.wy.us

If districts so choose, applications can additionally be submitted by facsimile to Dianne Frazer at 777-6234, followed by the mailed application with a postmark no later than April 15.

9. How do districts apply for both components of the grant?

The single application, the WDE539, covers application for use of the funds for both summer school and extended day programs.

10. Who determines student eligibility?

Districts have discretion on determining which students can most benefit from the programs made available under this grant; however, the law does specify that the grant is to target and support *academically* at-risk students.

11. What are the grant's reporting requirements?

Reports for **summer programs** are due October 1 with the Department's fall data reporting group. Generally speaking, for summer school programs, districts will be asked to provide descriptions of summer programs offered, data on how many students (K-12) began and completed each subject. Beginning in 2010, as part of the October 1 end of program report, districts will also submit an electronic file indicating by WISER ID which students completed summer school and in which subjects.

You will also be asked demographic information on your students, and other items of interest, like whether or not you provided transportation and meals, how you embedded enriched learning strategies in instruction, etc. Expenditure information will need to be reported in order to receive reimbursement. You will be asked to provide feedback to the Department on how to improve the program. Additionally, you may be asked to participate in surveys involving students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

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Reports on **extended day intervention/remediation programs** are part of the spring data collection and will be due in June after the end of the school year.

12. How do districts receive grant funds?

Districts operating **summer programs** will be reimbursed based on expenditure information submitted in end-of-program reports due in October. Districts operating **extended day programs** will be reimbursed based on expenditure information submitted on end-of-program reports due in June. Reimbursement for both programs may not exceed the allowable grant calculated by formula. Funds will typically come to districts within a month to six weeks after reports are submitted to the WDE.

Unexpended grant funds can be carried forward through a two-year biennium period only. After June of 2010, any unexpended funds from the prior biennium will not roll forward to the next biennium, and a new biennial grant cycle will begin.

Ideas for Summer Bridges 2010

**Don't CALL it summer school - Put a different name on it
Make it Different – Make it Fun**

- ✓ **Trouble with tardy students? Begin your day with group activities like making healthy snacks or games that include teachers and students – so if some are late, it is less of a problem.**
- ✓ **If you have students invited to summer school who do not come, continue to reach out to them through weekly newsletters detailing the activities summer students are enjoying and include ideas for at-home activities parents could do with students in order to continue learning.**
- ✓ **Keep in mind that, if needed, programs can concentrate on a single subject when the student's learning plan so indicates. The grant requires language arts and math be available to those students who need both, but if a student only needs one subject, focus the full program time on bringing them up to level and pre-teaching for the next year.**
- ✓ **One size does NOT fit all – ensure an individual program for each individual in attendance.**
- ✓ **Doing things in the same way = same results. Be sure summer instruction is different from the regular school year. Be creative!! Hide the learning.**
- ✓ **Work with your summer teachers to establish dates convenient for them to teach. Additionally – allow them to teach during only a part of the session and share that position with another teacher.**
- ✓ **Problems with attendance? #1 – Be sure your program is not BORING, that it is fun – and that it does NOT repeat what already didn't work for your students. #2 - Have your principal or teachers**

Attachment C

To Superintendent's Memo dated 3-12-2010

- ✓ personally call students (or parents) if they don't come to school. Let them know they are important and you miss them. #3 – Ask students to call one another if they see someone is absent. Use those cell phones!
- ✓ Fewer hours per day or week + more weeks = better results. Shoot for 6 weeks and more hours than the minimum.
- ✓ Start school later in the day – start at noon - particularly for secondary students. Don't make summer school look like regular school. Make it *different!*
- ✓ Use food as a HOOK to get kids to your program – Provide breakfast and lunch *even if* your school ends before lunch or starts after breakfast. Use the Bridges grant to pay for meals. Ask local businesses to provide lunch or *contract with them* if SFSP won't work for your school. Have healthy snacks available everywhere – with fruit and protein not just carbs. And if you don't think meals are important, ask your kids if they had food before they came to school! Particularly secondary kids all too often do NOT.
- ✓ If possible within your community, delay the start of the summer session for elementary and junior high/middle school students. Research says “jump start” programs scheduled toward the beginning of school are more effective for students than those which start immediately after the end of the school year.
- ✓ After the end of the school day, bus your students to a 21st Century Learning Program or activities at the YMCA, the Boys & Girls' Club, etc.
- ✓ Summer school is not an “add-on” activity to a teacher's contract. It is *teaching*. Please pay them well for their professional services.
- ✓ Encourage attendance by holding “surprise days” where students receive special treats or special trips.

Attachment C

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- ✓ **Be sure your instruction is relevant and full of hands-on activities. What real things are you teaching? Bridges dollars pay to do it *differently*.**

- ✓ **Ask your students what they would like to do on a "special" day – cook (emphasize wellness and measuring)? Make bottle rockets? Put on a play?**

- ✓ **Consider cross-age peer tutoring in your classroom.**