

**WYOMING**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## **Annual Report on the Distance Education Grant**

**Presented to Joint Education Interim Committee  
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**Authority**  
2008 Wyoming Session Laws 204-05

## History

In 2008, the Distance Education Grant (DEG) was established as a competitive grant funding opportunity to assist school districts and postsecondary institutions in further developing and maintaining distance delivery programs to best meet statutory and educational quality requirements. The funding was allocated as a means for distance programs to create or improve core courses, including Hathaway Success Curriculum offerings, and dual enrollment and advanced placement courses. In addition to course design improvements, the grant was intended to strengthen program efficiency and individual educator effectiveness in the online environment.

The DEG has consistently provided funding for six categories:

- A. Course Design and Creation
- B. Additional Content Design and Creation
- C. Professional Development
- D. Course/Program Evaluation
- E. Accreditation
- F. Maintenance and Operations

## 2016-17 DEG Awards

For the 2016-17 DEG award cycle, a total of \$200,000 was awarded to six school districts and one community college from the DEG biennium budget. The awards represented each type of distance education program available in Wyoming and were for utilized for approved activities from August 2016 through July 2017.

This report includes data charts and tables that represent a breakdown of the 2016-17 awards by each program funded and the DEG funding priorities, award summary information, and a compilation of the reports submitted by each DEG recipient at the end of the grant period.

## Awards by Program

Chart 1 includes a breakdown the award information including grant amounts, expenditures, and unexpended funds by each 2016-17 Distance Education Grant (DEG) recipient.

**Chart 1: DEG 2016-17 Program Awards and Expenditures**

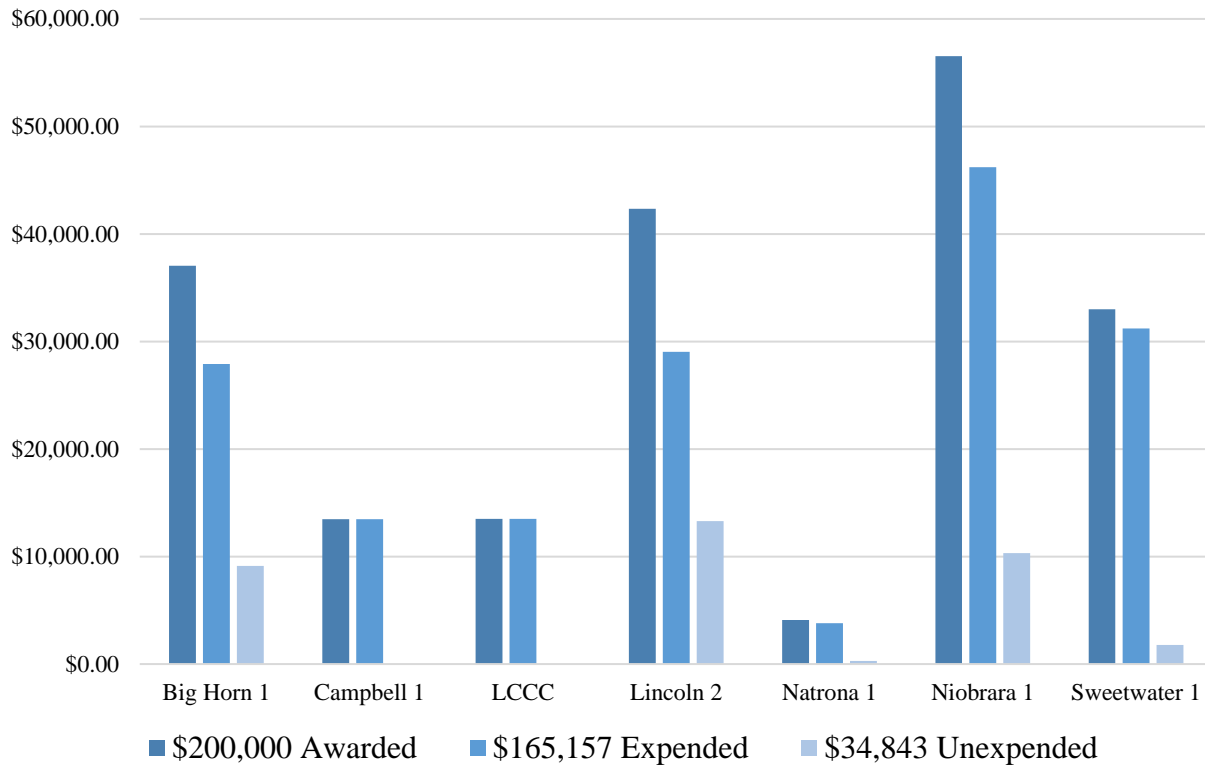


Table 1 is a breakdown of the amounts awarded to each grantee and the amount of unexpended funds at the end of the grant period. Also included in the table are the percentage of the total award funds granted to each program and the percentage of award funds that were not utilized.

**Table 1: DEG 2016-17 Award and Unexpended Funds Totals and Percentages**

Distance Ed Program	Awarded	% of Funds	Unexpended	% Unexpended
1. Big Horn 1	\$37,057.00	18.5%	\$9,135.00	24.6%
2. Campbell 1	\$13,467.00	7%	\$0.00	0.0%
3. LCCC	\$13,500.00	7%	\$0.00	0.0%
4. Lincoln 2	\$42,350.00	21%	\$13,305.00	31.4%
5. Natrona 1	\$4,090.00	2%	\$291.35	7.1%
6. Niobrara 1	\$56,536.00	28%	\$10,320.27	18.2%
7. Sweetwater 1	\$33,000.00	16.5%	\$1,791.78	5.4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$200,000.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$34,843.40</b>	<b>17.42%</b>

**Awards by Priority Funding**

Chart 2 is a breakdown funding priority information which includes the amount granted per category, expenditure totals, and unexpended funds remaining at the end of the 2016-2017 grant cycle.

**Chart 2: DEG 2016-17 Awards and Expenditures by Funding Priority**

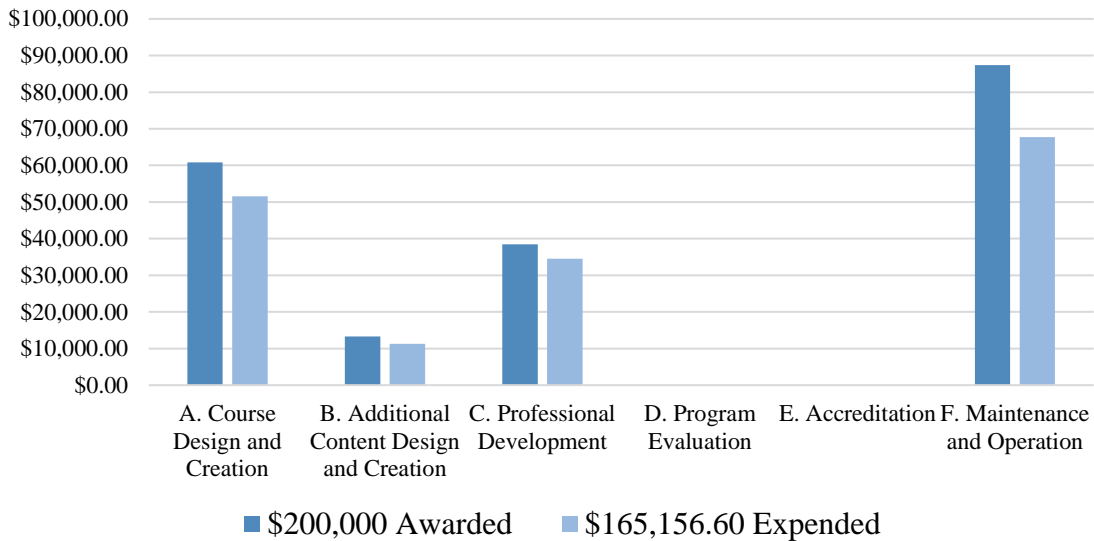


Table 2 includes the total amounts awarded by grant priority and the percentage of those funds as well as the amount and percentage of unexpended funds in each category.

**Table 2: DEG 2016-17 Award and Unexpended Funds Totals and Percentages by Funding Priority**

Funding Priority	Awarded	% of Funds	Unexpended	% Unexpended
<b>A. Course Design</b>	\$60,840.00	30%	\$9,250.36	15%
<b>B. Additional Design</b>	\$13,300.00	7%	\$2,036.05	15%
<b>C. Professional Development</b>	\$38,447.90	19%	\$3,901.72	10%
<b>D. Evaluation</b>	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	0%
<b>E. Accreditation</b>	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	0%
<b>F. Maintenance &amp; Operation</b>	\$87,412.10	44%	\$19,655.27	22%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$200,000.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$34,843.40</b>	<b>17%</b>

**2016-17 DEG Awards Summary**

Almost half of the awards for the 2016-17 award period were allocated to Maintenance and Operations (44%) with Course Design and Creation being the next highest award category at 30%. Maintenance and Operations activities included administration of state assessments and educational management systems fees. As has been the case for the past four years, no requests for Accreditation activities were included in the grant applications. For this award period, there were also no requests for funds for Program Evaluation.

Each grant recipient reported the grant had a positive impact on meeting the needs of students. The recipients with professional development awards were also better able to train staff to teach online, closely monitor student progress, and meet the diverse needs of students who select

online learning. In the instances of statewide programs, professional development also aided in bringing staff from around the state together for district staff development opportunities.

The \$34,843.40 in unexpended funds for the award period were awarded to school districts for the 2017-18 award cycle.

## **DEG Recipient Reports**

### **1. Big Horn County School District No. 1**

<u>Program Name:</u> Wyoming Connections Academy	<u>Type:</u> Online Full-Time
<u>Available For:</u> Students statewide	<u>Grades Served:</u> K-12
<u>Number of Students Enrolled:</u> 541	<u>Completed:</u> 329

Impact of DEG: The grant assisted the district in meeting distance education program requirements by supporting teacher professional development, a learning management system to record and monitor student progress, and support for administration of in-person student assessments.

Evaluation of Program: For the 2016-2017 school year, an independent survey reported 89.3% of parents gave the overall WYCA online school program an “A” or “B” grade. According to the 46th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, WYCA’s scores stand well above public school ratings, in which 67% of parents gave the public school their oldest child attends an “A” or “B.” The survey also included the following results:

- 91.3% of parents would recommend WYCA to parents whose children are not enrolled in the program
- 86.7% of parents are more satisfied with the WYCA program than their child’s/children’s previous school
- 94.6% of parents say their child/children are satisfied with WYCA’s program
- 92.6% of parents agree that their child/children are making good progress at WYCA
- 89.3% of parents agree that their child/children are enjoying the program

### **2. Campbell County School District No. 1**

<u>Program Name:</u> Campbell County Virtual School	<u>Type:</u> Online Full-Time
<u>Available For:</u> Students within district only	<u>Grades Served:</u> K-6
<u>Number of Students Enrolled:</u> 33	<u>Completed:</u> 24

Impact of DEG: The school district was able to provide a quality education to students through a virtual setting, who otherwise could not have had their individual educational needs met in the brick and mortar school environment.

Evaluation of Program: The distance education program provided through Campbell County Virtual School provides a quality education to students through a rigorous curriculum, highly qualified teachers to assess and develop the individual learning program for each student, to support the learning coaches with the delivery of instruction to students, monitor individual

student progress, intervene and/or deliver direct instruction when necessary to meet the specific needs of the individual student.

### **3. Laramie County Community College**

Program Name: LCCC Dual Enrollment  
Available For: Mainly students within the community college district/area  
Number of Students Enrolled: 106

Type: Online Part-Time  
Grades Served: 9-12  
Completed: 87

Impact of DEG: Student success rates increased in courses redesigned with previous DEG funds. The same outcomes are expected with the 2016-17 courses redesigned.

Evaluation of Program: The intent of the course redesigns completed in selected courses was to increase the availability of courses, norm the delivery and layout of courses and provide a student tutorial introducing students to learning online. Each of the intended objectives was achieved which resulted in the following benefits for students:

- More course options
- Increased ability to focus on learning with courses that have consistent delivery and layout
- Better preparation for the course environment by exposure to the online learning management system, tools, terms, and environment

### **4. Lincoln County School District No. 2**

Program Name: Star Valley Learning Center  
Available For: Students within district only  
Number of Students Enrolled: 50

Type: Blended, Part-Time, Credit Recovery  
Grades Served: K-12  
Completed: 50

Impact of DEG: The district was able to increase course offerings through virtual learning for students in the district's small schools through the development of core and elective courses. Because of the grant, Lincoln 2 will be able to offer a complete virtual learning option for the first time during the 2017-2018 school year.

Evaluation of Program: The grant was effective in that it allowed the district to provide options for students previously enrolled in statewide online programs outside the district and homeschool students to transition into the Star Valley online learning options and participate in their local schools and curriculum.

### **5. Natrona County School District No. 1**

Program Name: Natrona Virtual Learning  
Available For: Students within district only  
Number of Students Enrolled: 62

Type: Online Full-Time & Credit Recovery  
Grades Served: K-12  
Completed: 55

Impact of DEG: With the additional content creation portion of the grant, the district was able to expand the science labs and lessons with chemistry sets and microscopes. The student's will continue to benefit from the purchase of these items through varied learning experiences. DEG funds used for student participation in the Lego Robotic program including the purchase of a challenge set and Lego League Team memberships.

Evaluation of Program: The end of year parent and student questionnaire included high teacher interaction ratings. The ability to offer students updated computers was rated low. The district has had trouble obtaining funds to supply newer computers for all virtual students.

## **6. Niobrara County School District No. 1**

Program Name: Wyoming Virtual Academy

Type: Online Full-Time & Part-Time

Available For: Students statewide

Grades Served: K-12

Number of Students Enrolled: 756

Completed: 551

Impact of DEG: The grant funds were used to provide staff professional development throughout the year that would otherwise be limited and to mitigate the expenses related to administering assessments at regional facilities throughout the state to best serve students.

Evaluation of Program: The Wyoming Virtual Academy (WYVA) had a very productive school year for 2016-17. Setting goals to reach, WYVA did obtain several including increasing assessment participation rate, which included multiple 100% rates. WYVA was also able to increase state assessment scores in multiple grade levels and subjects. WYVA has multiple long-term goals that call for working toward state averages in multiple categories, and continue to move toward reaching those long-term goals as short-term goals are achieved. WYVA increased retention of students and number of students who began their senior year and finished that same year by graduating from the program.

## **7. Sweetwater School District No. 1**

Program Name: Sweetwater 1

Type: Online Part-Time

Available For: Students within district only

Grades Served: 9-12

Number of Students Enrolled: 0

Completed: 0

Impact of DEG: The grant allowed the district to develop four courses that meet graduation requirements to be delivered in a distance education format. The grant serves this process in a very effective manner in enabling the district to compensate teachers for the development of courses, provide support through a project manager and assistant project manager, and pay for necessary technology trainings and technology upgrades. The district now has the ability to meet the distance education program requirements and deliver distance education.

Evaluation of Program: Distance education was not available to meet the needs of students during the grant period because the purpose of the funds was to develop courses to be able to offer a program in the future. Everything is now in place to offer distance education courses and meet the needs of students. The students who's needs could be met include, but are not limited to, students with life circumstances that make it difficult to attend school on a regular basis,

students with anxiety issues involved with attending school and being around their peers, and students looking for acceleration opportunities in terms of flexibility in their day to take college courses.