

**WYOMING**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



# **Annual Report on the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant**

**Presented to Wyoming Legislature  
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**Presented by:**  
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**Authority**  
W.S. 21-22-107 (g)

## History

The statutory authorization for this program and the application requirements are contained in Wyoming Statutes 21-22-101 through 21-22-107. In 1991 the 51st Wyoming Legislature established a trust to be held in perpetuity titled the Wyoming Education Trust Fund. Interest earned from the corpus of the trust is to be distributed to districts as innovative program grants to fund programs providing innovation in or improvement to public education.

The Trust Fund legislation was amended in 1997, 2001, 2005, and 2008. Most of the amendments related to the maintenance of the trust itself. The 1997 amendment pertained to the distribution of funds to the University of Wyoming and community colleges. The 2008 amendments adjusted the funding mechanism to narrow the purpose to provide innovative grants to districts only along with an annual conference on innovative education.

Currently, the trust balance is \$10,000,000.00. By statute, the Governor is required to recommend an additional \$10,000,000.00 appropriation to the fund until the balance reaches \$50,000,000.00. In the history of the trust, no additional funds have been appropriated.

The law allows for grants to be approved in the following categories: curriculum development, operational initiatives, administrator and staff development improvement programs, acquisition of technology equipment, applied science and technology programs, and technical preparation programs. Priority is given to those programs which supplement not supplant existing courses and curriculum, are easily transferred and duplicated by other districts, provide matching funds from non-state sources and demonstrate the ability of the recipient district to continue the programs after innovative fund monies are exhausted.

## 2017 Actions

Six grants reviewers were determined in February of 2017 and included staff from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) and University of Wyoming, and a member of the Wyoming State Legislature. Twenty-four grants were received by the WDE by the deadline of May 27, 2017 with two grants pulled from consideration for being received after the posted deadline or not following the grant application requirements as posted in the grant application documents.

All grant reviews were completed by with scoring sheets returned to the program manager by June 16, 2017. Grant scores were compiled and results showed the top scored grant in each district would result in a total award amount of \$240,278.42. As only \$200,000.00 was available to award, a final meeting of the grant reviewers took place on June 23, 2017 to determine the amounts that would be awarded to each district. The grant reviewers determined that the top scoring application in each category would be awarded on a percentage basis to ensure that the total award amount was at or just below the available \$200,000.00. The review team determined that a total of four (4) grants were to be awarded totaling \$199,431.10. A short description of all awarded projects for 2017-18 is located below.

In June of 2017, the top scoring districts received notification that their grant was successful, but that lack of general funds would result in their grant award being less than requested. All

successful applicants accepted this lesser award. Each awarded district received a grant award letter notifying them of the success of their grant request in July of 2017. In September, all districts received a general services contract, detailing the responsibilities of both the department and the district as the awardee.

As per the terms of the grant contract, all awarded districts are required to submit invoices to the WDE to receive reimbursement for funds spent in implementation of their proposed projects. In order to receive reimbursement, the district will be required to submit: an official district invoice, all receipts showing the date of purchase, and packing slips or company invoices showing a zero balance. All purchases must be made within the contract date as outlined on the grant award letter. Any purchases made outside of the contract dates will not be reimbursed.

At the end of the 2017-18 grant award year, all districts will be required to complete and send a grant evaluation to the WDE for reporting on the use and effectiveness of grant funds. Grant recipients from the 2016-17 award year reported on their project results by submitting a grant evaluation to the department by June 1, 2017. The compilation of these evaluations is located below. This narrative describes all 2016-17 district awardees and details each project funded. All outcomes of 2016-17 projects were positive, with all districts indicating their interest to apply for the grant in the future.

The final activity for 2017 will be to thank grant reviewers for their time and service and determine whether they are interested in serving again.

## 2017-18 Proposed Projects Funded

Total Funds Requested: \$240,278.42

Total Funds Awarded: \$199,431.10

### Class 1

Weston County School District #7 \$38,037.10  
*“Creating a Customized Learning System for the Future”*

Weston County School District #7 has been awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant to increase the blended and customized learning opportunities for students at K-12 schools by providing professional development for district educators through the “TIE: Technology In Education Customized Learning Series” during the 2017-2018 school year. Through this training and acquired advanced knowledge, Weston County School District #7 will focus on developing a Strategic Structural Rebuild Plan, which will alter the traditional school model and structure, and create a Curriculum Redesign Plan, which will offer students more personalized learning opportunities. This initiative will help the district support a customized learning environment and provide a proficiency-based system for measuring student progress in grades K-12.

## Class 2

Big Horn County School District #2 \$64,681.90  
*“Lovell High School Tiny House Project”*

Big Horn County School District #2 was awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant to plan and implement a cross-curricular project of designing and constructing a mobile “tiny house”. The creation of this program promotes student engagement through real-world experiences, while also providing the opportunity for students to earn postsecondary credits and have direct experience with industry experts. This project will also provide students with the chance to understand how the content and skills they learn each day translate to the real world and result in a successful and valuable product. The “Tiny House” project will involve numerous courses and content areas at Lovell High School including: Construction Technology, Computer Aided Drafting, Interior Design, Video Production and Journalism, Environmental Science, Geometry, and Statistics.

## Class 3

Johnson County School District #1 \$63,063.40  
*“The Coding Apprenticeship Project”*

Johnson County School District #1 has been awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant to fund the creation of “CAP: Coding Apprenticeship Project” in the district. The first group of students will begin meeting in the fall of 2017 and the second group of students will begin meeting in January of 2018. Both programs will run for six months, with all students receiving three months of intensive training in coding followed by three months of a coding apprenticeship with industry experts in Johnson County. The goal of this project is to provide real world training in coding for a minimum of 10 students per apprenticeship group and provide viable career opportunities for all students completing the program.

## Class 4

Natrona County School District #1 \$33,648.70  
*“Financial Literacy”*

Natrona County School District #1 was awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant to create financial literacy curriculum which will provide skills to Natrona County students, parents, and teachers while encouraging all participants to make smart financial decisions. The creation of this curriculum will help participating students to meet the Wyoming State Standards for Career and Vocational Education and prepare them to earn proficiency in the Wise Financial Literacy Certification exam. The goals of this program are to: prepare students to succeed in the national certification exam, increase community involvement by encouraging participants to create household budgets, provide staff development dedicated to financial literacy and responsibility, and increase the number of students that have access to computers in the business lab.

## 2016-17 Project Overview and Outcomes

Total Funds Requested: \$187,923.00

Total Funds Awarded: \$187,923.00

### Class 1

Big Horn County School District #4                      \$20,523.00

*“Full STEAM Ahead: Preparing Students for 21st Century Careers”*

Big Horn County School District #4 was awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant in order to purchase equipment for their “STEAM” (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) classrooms. Identified equipment to be purchased included: robots, Andruinos, and probeware. By purchasing these items for the STEAM classrooms, the district hoped to increase the desire for their students to pursue more math and science courses during their high school career.

At the end of the grant award year, the district found that they had succeeded in encouraging more upper level students to become involved in math and science courses and ultimately receive a fourth year math or science credit, as well as raising awareness of STEM fields and future careers. Through the use of the grant funds, the district was able to create a new math elective which will prepare students for college coursework, promote problem solving in real-world applications, and help prepare students for the ACT assessment. The district believes that they will continue to see a significant increase in student interest in participation in advanced science courses over the next few years.

### Class 2

Uinta County School District #6                      \$40,000.00

*“Customized Learning with the Lyman Teachers Academy”*

Uinta County School District #6 was awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant to plan and implement a blended learning program within their district to move education from the industrial age to the innovation age. The grant funds would allow the district to provide digital content and curriculum for Project Based Learning (PBL) programs, train educators to incorporate PBL, and provide supports to both teachers and students as they made the move towards individualized instructional practices. The hope of this project was to “re-engage the un-engaged learners” at any point of the achievement spectrum and connect the “world of school” to the outside world through Project Based Learning.

Due to a number of extreme extenuating circumstances within the district, Uinta County School District #6 repurposed the grant request after the initial award determination to create personalized learning opportunities for the educators of the district through personalized professional development. The hope was that this change in professional development would translate into higher achievement for students through the educators understanding of the benefits of students’ control over time, place, path, and pace.

In order to achieve individualized professional development, the district partnered with the School Improvement Network, now known as Frontline Education, to provide online professional development courses to teachers. In addition, a personalized professional development implementation timeline was developed for the 2017-2018 school year. The district began implementing this plan in August of 2017 and will collect data on student engagement and achievement throughout the implementation process.

### Class 3

Carbon County School District #1                      \$16,000.00  
*“Increasing STEM Awareness Through Robotics”*

Carbon County School District #1 was awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant to fund the purchase of two robotics kits and their engineering counterparts. The goal is to “unleash the students’ creative imaginations” and enrich their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities at the high school level. The district hoped to generate so much interest in robotics and engineering through the use of these robotics kits and the creation of a robotics and engineering course that they would have the opportunity to create an after school robotics club where several varying age groups of students could compete with neighboring districts.

At the end of the grant award year, Carbon County School District #1 determined that they would be unable to meet some of the initial goals of their project. Although they were unable to create a robotics club, a number of students participating in the STEM program joined SkillsUSA and competed in the state conference in robotics and programming. In addition, the students enrolled in the Robotics and Engineering course showed the ability to construct and demonstrate use of several different types of robots, participated in both the robotics course and the SkillsUSA project after school hours, and demonstrated the ability to accomplish these tasks both individually and in teams. The hope is that student interest in robotics in engineering increases during the course of the 2017-2018 school year.

Platte County School District #1                      \$85,916.00  
*“Music and Stage Technology for College and Career Readiness”*

Platte County School District #1 was awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant in order to pilot the “Aesthetic and Technical Creativity through Music and Stage Technology Project” and purchase equipment for the Music and Stage Technology courses offered at Wheatland High School, including professional lighting systems from Barbizon Lighting. Through this project students had the opportunity to embrace their artistic side and find an outlet for their creativity as well as allow them to meet one of their Performing Arts graduation requirements without needing to participate in a performing ensemble. The participating students were able to work one-on-one with music directors, theater directors, and community members of various performing groups to create and collaborate with other students to produce a like-minded vision for a final production.

Prior to implementation of this program, students at Platte County School District #1 had little to no knowledge of the function and proper use of modern lighting systems. Through completion of

the Music and Stage Technology course, students gained knowledge on the installation, programming, maintenance, and effective use of stage lighting. This was the primary success of the program, as students received direct hands-on experience in operating lighting equipment and in turn were able to instruct others how to use this advanced technical equipment.

#### Class 4

Sheridan County School District #2                      \$25,484.00  
*“Improving Literacy Achievements Through the Arts”*

Sheridan County School District #2 was awarded the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant in the spring of 2016 to create and implement a phased design of art and music opportunities at the elementary and secondary levels with the goal of connecting students with the local theater and building background knowledge on targeted state standards in English Language Arts. The hope for this project was to connect students with the historical WYO Theater and create an educational partnership in musical and theatrical productions, expose students to the world of music and art, and grow students’ confidence and interest in those fields, thus providing educational literacy opportunities and increasing literacy achievement scores of participating students.

Upon completion of this program, the district saw a slight 3% increase in MAP scores for those students completing the grant program which meets the goal of increasing literacy achievement within Sheridan County School District #2. However, the most significant impact was the positive effect the program had on the student participants. Through student, parent, and teacher interviews it was found that the program provided the students with opportunities for classroom discussion and cultural awareness that they otherwise would not have had.