

Town of Residence	I am a	My comment is...
Cody	Paraprofessional	<p>College and Career ready is a good goal, but the focus should be more heavily on "Career ready". All of our students should be ready to succeed in a career whether they go to college or not. Only 25-35% of our students get a college degree in six years, and actually that is not too far from the number of employment opportunities that require a college degree. I know that specific industries are having issues, but overall that is a fairly accurate statement.</p> <p>Our education system needs to follow the lead of business/industry and start to focus on skills, not degrees. A person with a high school diploma and no employability skills will struggle no matter what direction they choose to take after high school. Just academic proficiency (even that measured by the ACT) is not sufficient to prepare students for the future.</p> <p>The present system, driven largely by the Hathaway Scholarship requirements, encourages a large number (in our case 30-35%) of our students to enroll in college where they are not successful. A focus on college as the first step to a career misleads students and parents into spending time and money on a process that may not be the best choice for that individual.</p> <p>We need to establish an educational system that recognizes every career that leads to a family sustaining income as equally valuable. There should be no "better or best" career path except the one that fits the individual student and his goals.</p>
Sundance	Teacher	<p>On p. 34 and p. 52, the term "effective school libraries" is employed. I would like this general, subjective term replaced with the American Association of School Libraries' definition, which reads that an effective school library ". . . has a certified school librarian at the helm, provides personalized learning environments, and offers equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded</p>



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		education for every student." The AASL also lists as a key component that an effective library program ". . . provides regular professional development and collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians."
Moorcroft	Librarian	Thank you for doing this!
Teton County	Teacher	As a secondary teacher I think it is great that the state education is focusing on college and career readiness. This is a vital link for students to transition from school to "the real world". As you look at ways to support this program I would like to strongly recommend that the state consider supporting and funding a position at each high school for a college and career focused counselor. Previously our school had this position and first hand I saw the incredible impact it had on all our students. From helping seniors with post-secondary opportunities to working with underclassman to explore and participate in programs to increase their chances of better career or college choices. I was disappointed when our district did not replace the college and career position this year due to budget cuts. I have watched as seniors tried to figure out what they were going to do next year without the direct guidance a support the college and career specialist provided in the past. I think this position to help support college and career readiness is invaluable to high schools. If the state chooses to require and/or financially support a college and career specialist all students would have an increased opportunity to be successful at the post-secondary level. Thank you.
Cheyenne	Specialized Instructional Support Professional	Thank you for acknowledging the positive impact that robust school library programs can have on student achievement. In today's world, it is very important to have a specialist available who can teach students how to evaluate and utilize both digital and print resources.

Green River	Support Staff	<p>I realize that every teacher needs to be held accountable for every student's success; but the funds needs to be put into place to make that happen. It seems like we're trying to steer away from vocational education funding, the art and music program funding and looking at the cutting in the special education funding. It is imperative that the funding is there for these groups, so that all students can become successful. We need to have the school districts and legislature work together for the best quality education for our students and to look at the "actual" cost of funding a quality education, instead of numbers that are derived from California, Texas or Florida. Please use the right data for our students.</p>
Wright	Teacher	<p>I am encouraged to read that school libraries are addressed finally. Our schools are losing a valuable resource for students, teachers, and the community when certified teacher-librarians are easily cut from the district without any regard to best practices, or related research information regarding the benefits of school librarians such as higher testing scores and lower graduation drop-out rates. I am a certified, teacher librarian and lost my job in Wyoming once as a young woman due to the district deeming my degree not sufficient enough to foster student success. Years later in Wyoming I face the same situation again. I have survived the first round of librarian cuts in my recent position and will have a renewed contract for 2017-2018. I am concerned for my position in the 2018-2019 school year and next round of cuts. The tradition in Wyoming tends to be cutting school librarians and/or library staff first. I will not be surprised if my position is cut in 2019. There is no accountability held to school districts in Wyoming to keep school libraries even though money is appropriated for this reason. Thanks to ESSA I see a glimmer of hope that recognizes the positive impact school librarians bring to their buildings and patrons.</p>
Laramie	Higher Education Professional	<p>I am including two comments here. First, I would encourage the committee that is developing this document to consider including health and physical education as parts of this program equal to all</p>

		<p>other content areas. The research that supports the inclusion of health and physical education as core components of any school educational plan is overwhelming. Second, I would encourage you to add the Division of Kinesiology and Health, University of Wyoming, as an ESSA-engaged partner in this work as is the Wyoming Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. Drs. Mark Byra, Tristan Wallhead, and Jayne Jenkins have been leaders in developing the Wyoming state K-12 standards and benchmarks in physical and health education as well as K-12 physical and health education assessments for the past 25 plus years. I would be happy to answer any questions the development committee may have specific to health and physical education.</p>
Dubois	School Administrator	<p>Reporting graduation rate is a necessary part of a school's achievement data to determine improvement priorities. The targets and goals outlined in the ESSA draft plan seem reasonable and attainable. However, the current model of calculation for individual school rating under WAEA is unfair and not representative of what we actually accomplish.</p> <p>Currently, WDE's FAQ on graduation rate calculations reads that only a student who transfers out and enrolls in another school or in an educational program that culminates in the award of a regular high school diploma, emigrates to another country, or dies may be removed from a high school's or district's cohort.</p> <p>Changes should be made to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -a student who was enrolled in the district for less than one school year -a student who transferred in with less than the required number of high school credits needed for on-time graduation -students completing an alternative program such as the Challenge Academy or Job Corps

		<p>In addition, WDE should take into account ESSA’s non-regulatory guidance of January, 2017 which states that: A student who transfers into a high school must be assigned to the cohort in which the student started grade 9 for the first time. (B-4) A student who leaves a public high school to be homeschooled would be considered to be a transfer if the homeschool program meets the State’s requirements for compulsory attendance or other State laws or policies applicable to home schools. (B-7)</p> <p>Another issue that continues to be confusing is the state’s practice of allowing students who complete a general equivalency diploma being eligible to receive a Hathaway Scholarship. I believe the requirements for a Hathaway Scholarship state that you must be a “graduate” of a Wyoming High School. Why are they considered a graduate on one hand and a non-graduate on the other?</p> <p>Our local story of two out-of-state transfer students enrolled for less than nine weeks dropping our 2015-16 graduation rate from 91% to 69% highlights the concern and need for reform.</p> <p>Dubois High School is a successful school with caring, dedicated teachers. This year we are graduating eleven students. Some of those students have been considered “at risk” by a number of state indicators, and yet, all eleven student are 4 year, on time, graduates. One family expressed their appreciation and credit the teachers and staff of Dubois High School for the success:</p> <p>“I wanted to say THANK YOU to all the teachers and staff for what you have done, gone through and dealt with for the past several years. I know as all of you it has not been easy. But the end goal is about here and XXX will be Graduating this coming Sunday, thanks to all of you and your ability to never give up. You should all be commended.”</p>
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Laramie	Parent	<p>I have worked in the field of technology – both software development and hardware support since 1993. In moving back to Wyoming and working in the same industry, I quickly realized that the technology curricula state-wide is varied in its quality. In reading the DRAFT ESSA State Plan I realized that it is missing community involvement from Wyoming business.</p> <p>On page 9 of the draft, if Wyoming is really serious about increasing our assessment scores state-wide, then addressing dyslexia in kindergarten through 3rd grade would almost guarantee a significant jump in scores. It is estimated that 15-20% of children have dyslexia and, thus, have trouble reading. I would highly recommend implementing a state-wide Orton-Gillingham training for all K-3 elementary teachers if you want to make a big impact on the state assessment scores.</p> <p>Technology education isn't just for students, it is for everyone because our world is becoming more tech-oriented in day to day matters.</p>

Gillette	Teacher	For Wyoming's ESSA implementations, why are the arts not listed? At the federal level in ESSA, arts are mentioned as a core subject.
Cheyenne	Teacher, Parent, State employee	The state plan uses 21-7-102 to equate an initial contract teacher (based on state statute) with an inexperienced teacher. I would suggest that replacing this definition with 5 year requirement for IFs to define inexperienced. The initial contract status only defines time within a given district, not the amount of time a teacher has been teaching. If a teacher moves from one district to another, they lose continuing contract status and become initial contract. This does not cause them to lose experience, in fact in Wyoming when changing districts, a teacher still gets experience credit on the new district's pay scale.
Laramie	School Psychologist	I am concerned about the significant length and frequency of required standardized testing that students go through. They are time consuming and leave little time towards actual instruction. In addition, research demonstrates that computerized measures do not necessarily reflect student's true abilities and are not representative of student's functional academic skills.
Upton	School Administrator	The plan doesn't take full advantage of the level of personalized learning that ESSA allows for district's to implement (and expects) for students and staff. I would like to see a plan that honors more growth in student performance versus the one-time assessment that we know can have so many variables. I don't see significant changes from our current WAEA and NCLB expectations.
Green River	Teacher	While the Every Student Succeeds Act identifies school health and physical education as part of a student's "well-rounded education," along with other subjects such as art, music, civics, science and more it is our hope this new federal education legislation provides increased access to funds for health and PE programs (including professional development) and will show that WYO and our school districts will set their own priorities for funding and accountability for physical education and health and make this integral subject

		<p>matter a priority. Physical education is an academic subject and serves as the foundation of a CSPAP model, which Wyoming schools employ, and, as such, demands the same education rigor as other core subjects. Physical education provides students with a planned, sequential, K-12 standards-based program of curricula and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge and behaviors for active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. Physical education develops the physically literate individual through deliberate practice of well-designed learning tasks that allow for skill acquisition in an instructional climate focused on mastery. Physical education addresses the three domains of learning: cognitive or mental skills related to the knowledge of movement; affective, which addresses growth in feelings or attitudes; and psychomotor, which relates to the manual or physical skills related to movement literacy. Study after study points out that the benefits of physical education go far beyond fitness and can lead to higher scores on standardized tests, increased concentration and many other academic advantages in addition to attendance, other important measures of testing, an increase in participation and enthusiasm for other subjects (academic) and reduced discipline referrals. Furthermore, evidence also shows that effective school health education reduces students participating in behaviors such as smoking, heavy drinking, school misbehavior as well as violence. All in all, physical education and health provide our students with a solid foundation for a lifetime of health, wellness and character development.</p>
Cody	School Librarian	<p>I am glad to see school libraries included in the plan, but I would like to see a small change made in the wording on page 51 where it says, "When employed as part of a comprehensive education strategy, the effective use of school library systems or technology to provide tools, resources, data, and supportive systems that increase teaching opportunities and promote efficiency." I believe this should say "the effective use of school library programs AND technology"</p>

		<p>as the two go hand in hand when we are discussing information skills. Too often the "technology" part wins out and devices, hardware or software are purchased without thought to effective teaching surrounding and supporting the access provided. Effective school library programs incorporate technology and support the school culture in the integration of technology. Our students deserve qualified support and instruction in navigating the data and information to which technology will provide access.</p> <p>Also, I see that much of this section of the plan also surrounds the Future Ready Schools initiative, and therefore, also the Wyoming Digital Learning Plan. Please take a look at the Future Ready Librarians framework which shows that school library programs can benefit more areas than just "Robust Infrastructure": http://1gu04j2l2i9n1b0wor2zmgua.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Library_flyer_download.pdf. Thank you!</p>
Laramie	Parent	<p>I have a son that struggles with school. He has since about 2nd grade. He is now going into 7th. Through all the schooling cuts, I have seen the intervention classes be cut. The classes that are to be in place to help make sure No Student Is Left Behind. Cutting those kinds of programs doesn't not keep children from being left behind. It only helps makes them feel like bigger failures and like they don't matter. Thus why I am very strongly looking into home schooling just my son next year.</p>
Casper	Counselor	<p>We have a large # of foreign exchange students, has there been consideration as to why we test them when they have been here less than a year and are in a foreign exchange program? It seems unethical and unkind.</p>
Shosoni	Teacher	<p>WDE and schools need to work together. With new testing we need results, and need them quickly if we're going to help these kids.</p>

Cody	School Administrator	With the 95% participation rate staying the way it is for the statewide assessment, is there a plan in case schools struggle to meet that? We haven't had many issues with the in Wyoming yet, but what if we do? We need to make sure the assessment is valuable for teachers and parents.
Big Piney	School Administrator	How are growth and equity going to be measured as we move to new assessment? PAWS was not adaptive. It doesn't seem like apples to apples. Concerned with growth piece. We want to make sure the correct message is given to districts/communities about their ratings.
Laramie	Higher Education Professional	My hope is that Wyoming will honor the directive of a well-rounded education. Healthy students achieve more in the classroom. Allocated funding needs to be provided to push forward "healthy students." Title IV-A funding should be allocated to the promotion of creating healthy structural school environments.
Cheyenne	Teacher Advocate	One of my biggest concerns in this plan is discussion around "ineffective," "effective," and "inexperienced" teachers. I object to the definition of an "inexperienced" teacher by referring to contract status—in fact, if teachers move to different districts, they start over again as far as contract status. That is NOT the same thing as whether or not they are "experienced." A teacher could have 15 years of experience in one district, get a job in a different district, and thus return to initial contract status in the new district. That does NOT mean they are "inexperienced"! What will this data collection look like? Will it be by teacher name, or will it be aggregated data? Will it imply consequences? Teacher employment is a district decision, not a State decision—will that play into it?
Wyoming	Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities	Good schools have flexible curriculum, adaptable curriculum, meet students where they are rather than having kids meet in the middle, provide good outcomes, have good connections, relationships and communications, and provide transition programs and more career pathways and vocational options other than college. Teachers need leadership support, more trained teachers with special education

		<p>knowledge, and support on behaviors and co-teaching. The state should support low-performing schools by asking what they need and where they need help rather than demanding, help high performing and low performing schools collaborate, help schools minimize turnover. Low-performing schools should provide a sub and allow teachers to visit schools that are excelling to learn what works.</p>
Washington, D.C.	College Board	<p>The College Board applauds Wyoming for taking steps to incentivize students to pursue college-level coursework while still in high school. We are equally encouraged by the fact that schools that offer Advanced Placement courses will be recognized for providing students with access to challenging coursework that is essential for college and career readiness. The College Board also welcomes the opportunity to assist Wyoming in increasing AP access and participation.</p> <p>Wyoming can look to some of its districts, like Sheridan #2 and Johnson County, which were recognized in the 7th Annual AP Honor Roll for consistently increasing participation in AP over the past three years while maintaining or improving performance.</p> <p>As a result of the inclusion of AP in Wyoming’s postsecondary readiness measure for federal accountability, the College Board strongly recommends that Wyoming help defray the cost of AP Exam fees for low-income students.</p>
Washington, D.C.	National Down Syndrome Congress and The Advocacy Institute	<p>It is critically important to ensure that the alternate assessment is used only for those students for whom the test was designed and field-tested and does not inappropriately lower achievement expectations for students who should take the general assessment. It is also important for the definition of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to acknowledge that these students are working on the grade level content standards, even though the</p>

		<p>achievement expectations are not the same as for students taking the general assessment.</p> <p>Wyoming will use a minimum subgroup size of 10 for all indicators. The draft plan presents data on both the percent and number of schools that do not meet min. N-size on at least one indicator for N sizes of 10-15-20-25. While these data are not required by the revised template, the state is recognized for supplying these data to provide adequate information to the public. It would be helpful to have further details esp. regarding impact of N-size on graduation. Additionally, WY should make clear the N-size it will use to determine test participation – whether it will use 10 or a different minimum.</p> <p>The “lookback” approach that WY will use when schools do not meet the N-size is much more desirable than the averaging approach that many states propose to use. In other words, the “lookback” approach doesn’t allow schools to go for several years before recognizing subgroup performance. Additionally, small schools may be paired in order to be included in the accountability. This is preferable to combining subgroups – a practice known as “super subgroups.”</p> <p>WY might want to consider requiring implementation of MTSS long before schools reach the level of More Rigorous Interventions for CSI Schools that Fail to Meet the Exit Criteria. This is listed as a requirement for LEAs serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement under Technical Assistance. We also point out the close connection between Universal Design for Learning and MTSS. Universal Design for Learning is not mentioned in the MTSS checklist.</p>
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		<p>The dropout rate for students with disabilities in WY is 30% - one of the highest in the nation. WY should expand upon this section to include specifics regarding how it will support LEAs in reducing the dropout rate of students with disabilities. We are pleased to see a specific focus designed to address the need for special education teachers in the state.</p>
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