



Wyoming Department of Education

PRESS RELEASE

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Education Summit to be held in Cheyenne

Cheyenne – Improving high school graduation rates and preventing drop outs will be the key focus of an upcoming Wyoming Education Summit to be held in Cheyenne on August 5 and 6 at Little America Hotel.

The summit is the result of a partnership between the Wyoming Board of Education and the Wyoming P-16 Council. Graduation rates continue to be a concern for education stakeholders throughout the state of Wyoming.

“Graduation rates aren’t just a number we track, they are an indicator of whether or not our students are succeeding and prepared for whatever path they choose after high school,” Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Jim McBride said. “We have to begin to affect change if we want to make a difference.”

The summit is a step in that direction, he said. For the past ten years, Wyoming’s graduation rate has hovered between 77 and 81 percent. McBride believes Wyoming’s education system can do better and, to that end, has made improving Wyoming’s graduation rate over the next five years a key mission for the Wyoming Department of Education.

The State Board of Education and Wyoming P-16 Council agree and realize that the change needed is not just a state agency or school district issue. They believe this is an issue that requires the involvement of community members, parents, business leaders, and national experts.

“We have to come together from across the state to hit this issue full-force,” Wyoming Board of Education Chairman Bill Anthony said. “It’s only through a coordinated effort that we are going to be able to make a difference and the State Board is dedicated, with the P-16 Council, to leading this charge and affecting change.”

“The focus of the Education Summit is one of the Wyoming P-16 Council’s core goals,” Rollin Abernethy, chairman of the P-16 Council, said. “With our membership representing early childhood through post-secondary education, workforce, business, community and legislative leaders, the Council is well positioned to effectively support implementation of outcomes from the summit.”

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The summit will include a special presentation by Dr. Jay Smink of the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University. Smink has been the executive director of the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University since 1988. He is a professor of education in the College of Health, Education, and Human Development.

He also serves as the executive director of the National Dropout Prevention Network, a professional organization of 2,000 members representing education, business, and community leaders who are concerned with school dropout issues. Smink is recognized as a national leader and authority on dropout prevention, school reform, mentoring, service learning, alternative schools, school-to-work, educational marketing, and program evaluation.

Participation in the summit is by invitation only and includes education stakeholders, legislators, policy makers, community leaders, tribal leaders and many others.

“Hopefully, we will walk away from this summit with a defined plan of attack,” Anthony said. “We want to make sure our children have every opportunity to succeed in life, and making sure they graduate from high school is a key indicator to that success.”

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