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WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRANTS WAIVERS FROM 16:1 MANDATE TO 19 DISTRICTS

District earning waivers show improved student-teacher ratios

CHEYENNE – Nineteen school districts were granted waivers Thursday by the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) from the state-mandated 16:1 student-to-teacher ratio in grades kindergarten-3.

In nearly every case, the districts made the request for the waiver due to capacity issues and a demonstrated effort to bring student-to-teacher ratios back to the state-mandated 16:1 level.

“School districts across the state are seeing a lot of growth in their communities, and they are making an earnest effort to support that growth by hiring new teachers, restructuring existing spaces, adding modular buildings, and constructing new schools,” said WDE Director of Standards and Accountability Julie Magee.

According to Wyoming Statute 21-13-307 (a)(iv), passed by the Legislature in 2011, school districts in Wyoming shall provide evidence to the Director of the WDE that their district has maintained an average student-to-teacher ratio of not greater than 16:1 in kindergarten through third grade. Title I and other federally funded teachers are not to be included in the 16:1 ratio. Federal funds are to be used to supplement, not supplant, a district’s obligation to provide a 16:1 ratio.

The Director of the Wyoming Department of Education can waive the 16:1 requirement for any district that demonstrates insufficient school facility capacity, positive school performance, positive student achievement, or for other reasons related to the delivery of the education program to students.

According to state law, districts seeking a waiver from the 16:1 mandate are statutorily required to apply for the waiver no later than March 15. Staff of the WDE reviewed the applications and forwarded recommendations to WDE Director Richard Crandall.

School districts that do not achieve the 16:1 student-to-teacher ratio and do not receive a waiver from the Director of the WDE are not eligible to share in distribution of funds from the school foundation account. In the three years since the 16:1 mandate was passed, all schools that have requested a waiver have received a waiver from the WDE.

Schools receiving a rating of 'Exceeding Expectations' in the pilot of the state's educational accountability model had the 16:1 requirement removed prior to calculating the district's student-teacher ratio for grades K-3. After removing those schools, districts with a student-teacher ratio greater than 16.49:1 were asked to submit a waiver.

Attached is a list of all districts in Wyoming and their corresponding student-to-teacher ratios for grades K-3, as well as the list of districts and the reasons they listed for requesting a waiver.

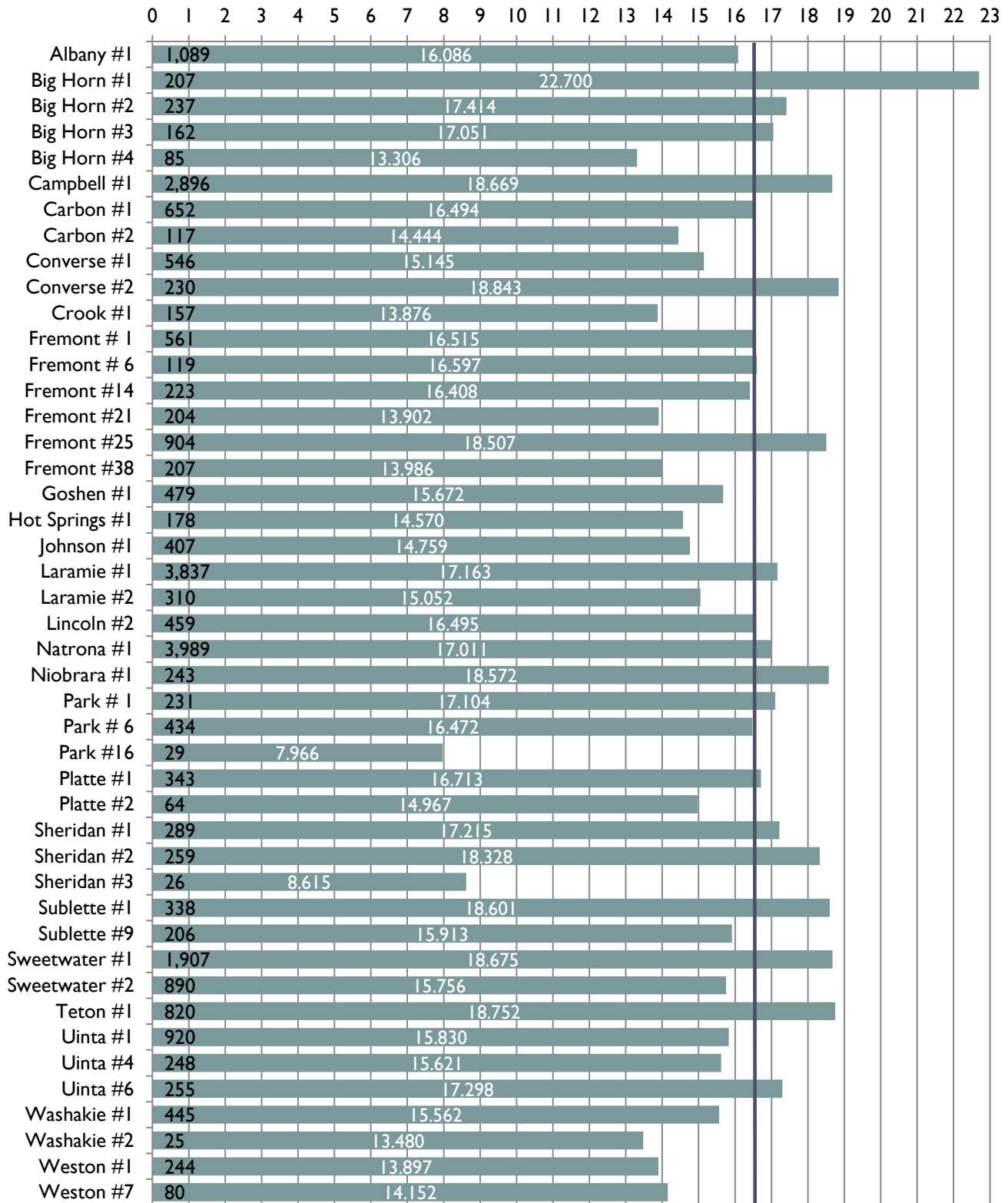
For more information on the 16:1 mandate, contact Julie Magee at 307-777-8740 or julie.magee@wyo.gov.

Student to Teacher Ratio

Grades KG - 3 School Year 2013-14



Students Per Teacher



Rich Crandall, Director

Below are the Wyoming school districts, which requested and received waivers from the state's 16:1 student-to-teacher mandate in grades kindergarten-3. This graphic shows the school's ratios, as well as justifications for the waiver being awarded.

District	Ratio	Reason	Previous Waiver (2013)?	Previous Ratio	Approved?
Big Horn #1	22.70	Online School/High-Achieving School/Other Education Program: BH1's K-3 population includes Wyoming Connections Academy students (online students); these students were included in calculation of the 16:1 ratio; PAWS scores in rdg & math above state average (71.7%, 88.3%, respectively); directing resources to hiring/reassigning 3 more FTE's for K-3	Y	17.70	Y
Converse #2	18.84	High-Achieving Schools: District consistently outperforms state in PAWS (both reading and math) in nearly every subgroup, including all students	Y	16.96	Y
Teton #1	18.75	Capacity Issues/High-Achieving School: TCSD1 has experienced significant growth over past five years especially in grades K-3; have added nine teachers this year and repurposed existing spaces for classrooms; also working to purchase land for new ES (on SFD list); also allocation of staff to serve needs of ELL population (six above model) has resulted in steady increases in PAWS scores; waiver would allow sustainability of program that has helped ELL students progress as well as dual immersion program; additionally, one school (Wilson ES) has meet AYP every year since implementation of NCLB	Y	18.35	Y
Sweetwater #1	18.67	Capacity Issue: Groundbreaking for new K-4 building scheduled for summer 2014 which will add 22 K-3 classrooms for the district. Additionally, work orders filed with School Facilities Department for three schools (order numbers 031759, 031760, 031762)	Y	19.86	Y
Campbell #1	18.66	Capacity Issues/High-Achieving School/Positive Student Performance: CCSD1 has experienced an 12.5% increase in K-16 since 2008; a new ES opened in fall 2012 which added 11 new	Y	19.02	Y

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		K-3 teachers; CCSD1 is part of capacity study and three schools will be built in the next five years; MAP data shows K-3 students are performing "above the norm" in rdg and math; AYP met in 2012-13			
Sublette #1	18.60	High-Achieving Schools: PAWS performance report shows 95% of 3 rd grade students proficient or advanced in math and 77% proficient or advanced in reading; higher than state average by 8% and 10%, respectively	N	N/A	Y
Niobrara #1	18.57	Distance Ed Provider: w/o DE students, ratio is 14.14:1; DE not funded at 16:1	Y	20.22	Y
Fremont #25	18.50	Capacity Issue: added 13 more teachers since 2011-12, and additional three teachers for current school year (2013-14); old junior high bldg renovated to accommodate space for 3 rd graders; SFD approved three new modulars (one for 2013-14 and two for 2014-15); new school will open in August 2016	Y	18.26	Y
Sheridan #2	18.32	High-Achieving Schools: Schools in SCSD #2 consistently outperform the state in PAWS; MES earned Blue Ribbon Award from USDE	Y	17.81	Y
Big Horn #2	17.41	Capacity Issue: only one elementary school in district, which is filled to capacity; district has requested a capacity study for the last two years; a School Facilities Department Planning meeting was scheduled for April 1, 2014	Y	17.44	Y
Uinta #6	17.29	Capacity Issue: UCSD6 hired three ET in 2011-12, but used up all available space to make room for them, including conversion of computer lab to classroom; in the 2014 Legislative Budget Session, funding was approved for the planning and design of four additional classrooms. It is anticipated the new classrooms will be completed in 3-4 years	Y	17.19	Y
Sheridan #1	17.21	Capacity Issue/High-Achieving Schools: Lack of external cost adjustments for the past four years has forced district to cut 20 positions; Tongue River ES filled over capacity, but new school being built this spring; PAWS scores above state average in both math and reading	N	N/A	Y
Laramie #1	17.16	Capacity Issue: Nine modular classrooms were added for 2013-14 school year, and	Y	17.60	Y

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		18 teaching positions were added; anticipate opening of new Prairie Wind ES in fall 2014 which will add 506 seats			
Park #1	17.10	Capacity Issue/High-Achieving School/Positive Student Performance: PCSD1 has experienced increased enrollment over past seven years, primarily in K-2; will ask School Facilities Department for additional elementary school; PAWS scores higher than state average in both reading and math (87%, 90%, respectively); met AYP every year in every category	Y	17.44	Y
Big Horn #3	17.05	Capacity Issue: Average down from last year by hiring additional 3 rd grade teacher this year; petition to School Facilities Department and new modular building granted and set up a month ago.	Y	19.05	Y
Natrona #1	17.01	Capacity Issue/Positive Student Performance: NCSD1 has plans on file with the School Facilities Department to expand five elementary schools; additionally, PAWS scores show students proficient or advanced in rdg and math are at or above the state level consistently from 2009-2013	Y	17.26	Y
Platte #1	16.71	Capacity Issue: Unexpected increase in enrollment due to new energy company opening in town (this brought a lot of new families to the district); district is planning budget for additional teachers next school year; will also be remodeling space in order to provide two additional classrooms	N	N/A	Y
Fremont #6	16.59	Positive School Performance/Delivery of Educational Program: Meeting expectations on WAEA; hiring a new teacher for the 2014-15 school year	N	N/A	Y
Fremont #1	16.51	Capacity Issue: School Facilities Department funded construction of Gannett Peak ES at 19:1, but 16:1 requirement passed before construction began; asked SFD to fund four additional classrooms in order to meet the 16:1 ratio, but the request was denied; request was made the following year (2012) and again denied; district has hired two interventionists in an attempt to meet 16:1 requirement	N	N/A	Y