**Report to the Legislature on the
General Status of Wyoming Public Schools**

Superintendent Jillian Balow

October 15, 2015

Legal impetus:

> W.S. § 21-2-202(f)-"Not later than October 15 each year, the state superintendent shall prepare a report on the general status of all public schools for the legislature. The report shall include the quality of education including any proposed improvement to address any shortfalls, the relevance of education, the measurement of achievement of educational goals, the improvement of learning and any suggested innovations in education. The state superintendent shall identify professional development needs for Wyoming schools and teachers based upon the analysis of the quality indicators specified under this subsection, establish a plan to address the professional development needs, contract with necessary expertise to provide professional development to Wyoming certified teachers and conduct up to five (5) regional workshops each year providing the identified professional development needs."

Delineated elements of W.S. § 21-2-202(f):

1.   "Proposed improvement to address any shortfalls;"

Shortfall A

> Wyoming experiences a high and deleterious turnover rate for local superintendents. According to the Executive Director of the Wyoming Association of School Administrators (WASA), Dan Stephan, 93% of Wyoming district superintendents are new to their position in the last four years. This is due in part to a shortage/incapability of meaningful networking and mentoring opportunities for Wyoming district leadership. See **attachment A** for Drs. Barker and Chase's report on professional development needs and delivery methods.

> Many of the same challenges exist for principals in Wyoming. Education leaders' jobs are complex and isolating. Leaders lack the ongoing support and development needed to foster a sustained commitment at this level.

Proposed Improvement A

> The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), in collaboration with the State Board of Education, has contracted with the University of Wyoming Center for Educational Leadership (WyCEL) to provide technology-based networking and mentoring opportunities for teachers, principals, and administrators as part of the multi-tiered state system of support. WyCEL will also host a principal academy, education law seminar, and other professional development opportunities for school and district leadership.

Shortfall B

> AdvancED Wyoming accreditation scores for 2013 and 2014 indicate that Wyoming is below the national average when it comes to leadership capacity. See **attachment B** for school district leadership data for 2013 & 14.

Proposed Improvement B

> The WDE, in collaboration with the State Board of Education, has contracted with WASA to host regional workshops on professional learning communities as part of the multi-tiered state system of support. These workshops will be conducted by international experts and train teachers, principals, and administrators on how to create a professional learning community in efforts to create a culture of high academic expectations for all students within their schools and districts.

Shortfall C

> Wyoming needs to do a better job of targeting and supporting the most underachieving schools when it comes to high school graduation rates. See **attachment C** for 2013-14 high school graduation rates.

Proposed Improvement C

> The WDE is partnering with several other states and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) on an aggressive career readiness initiative. As part of this initiative, the WDE will work with the employer community, local school districts, and higher education partners to encourage schools to provide industry-aligned, engaging learning opportunities for students. These opportunities will provide skills, certifications, and coursework that is valuable in the workplace and higher education. It will also afford the opportunity to explore enabling policy and legislation aligned with successful initiatives and existing opportunities.

> See **attachment D** for information on participation in the Hathaway student scholarship program (W.S. §21-16-1307(g) & 1308(c)). A report on possible methods to incentivize completion of success curriculum by high school students (2015 Laws, Chapter 142, Section 206, Footnote 11) will be presented to the Joint Education Committee on October 30, 2015.

2.   "Relevance of education;"

Context of Relevance 1: *The individual*

> Each person, in order to provide for oneself and potential family in a civilized society, must have a basic understanding of the modern world around him or her. This basic understanding is traditionally obtained by completing a multi-tiered progressive series of instructional seminars over a period of years. American society has engineered the K-12 instructional sequence to develop this basic understanding in our youth. It is with that understanding that our children can seek more advanced schooling, specialized training, or enter the workforce with an ability to adapt to a given work environment.

Context of Relevance 2: *The employer community*

> In order to sustain a workforce, employers must ensure that the educational systems in place both locally and nationally are producing individuals with the ability to meet the needs of the employer. In addition to the basic understanding referenced above, efforts can be made in a K-12 system to advance interested students into specialized training to meet specific needs of interested employers. Initiatives related to STEM, career and

technical education, college readiness, and other applied learning programs create these opportunities that are mutually beneficial for employers and students who seek such a path.

Context of Relevance 3: *The democratic collective*

In a society such as America and much of western civilization, where a learned and civically engaged citizenry is essential to proper function of government and marketplace, education is paramount. Without providing opportunity to all citizens to achieve the aforementioned basic understanding of our world through education, a democratic society will fail.

3. "Measurement of achievement of educational goals;"

Wyoming Accountability in Education Act goals-W.S. § 21-2-204(b)(iii)-(ix)

(iii) Become a national education leader among states;
Measurement: NAEP and ACT scores

(iv) Ensure all students leave Wyoming schools career or college ready;
Measurement: WDE College, Career, and Military Ready Success Formula

(v) Recognize student growth and increase the rate of that growth for all students;
Measurement: State accountability model growth indicator

(vi) Recognize student achievement and minimize achievement gaps;
Measurement: State accountability model achievement indicator, federal AYP

(vii) Improve teacher, school and district leader quality. School and district leaders shall include superintendents, principals and other district or school leaders serving in a similar capacity;
Measurement: AdvancED leadership capacity metric

(viii) Maximize efficiency of Wyoming education;
Measurement: District assessment systems. See **attachment E** which is a report on district assessment systems and high school graduation requirements (2015 Laws, Chapter 179, Section 6(b)).

(ix) Increase credibility and support for Wyoming public schools
Measurement: Credibility will be increased through higher NAEP and ACT scores. Support will be increased through the many efforts the WDE is undertaking to directly support local districts and educators and increase Wyoming stakeholder buy-in to our public education system.

4. "Improvement of learning and any suggested innovations in education;"

The WDE, along with many state and national partners, is working to improve learning at all levels of education in Wyoming and foster education innovation.

Improve learning:

-Multi-tiered state system of support

-STEM initiatives

Foster innovation:

-Distance Learning: See **attachment F** which is the WDE's final report documenting the recommendations of the Distance Education Task Force (2015 Laws, Chapter 157, Section 2).

-Career Readiness Initiative

-Build expertise and capacity at the state level: The focus of the State Superintendent and WDE staff is to be leading partners in Wyoming education with expertise, credibility, and professionalism.

5. "**Identify professional development needs for Wyoming schools and teachers based upon the analysis of the quality indicators specified therein;"**

See item 1 above. Results from district accreditation visits, statewide assessments, and local district selected assessments are examined as part of needs assessments at the district and school levels. These assessments provide evidence in relation to the quality indicators in Wyoming's accountability model. See **attachment G** for ETA account expenditures related to implementing and building agency capacity to support the statewide education accountability system (2014 Laws, Chapter 26, Section 206, Footnote 5).

6. **"Establish a plan to address the professional development needs;"**

See item 5 above. The WDE is currently working with the North Central Comprehensive Center to examine and build capacity to deliver targeted professional development to Wyoming's school districts. From this internal work, a statewide professional development calendar will be shared with Wyoming school districts. A collaborative council is being formed for the statewide system of support. This council, made up of statewide education stakeholders will meet regularly to review and identify the statewide system of support needs and services. In addition, schools identified as high priority schools by not meeting WAEA performance levels will be provided with professional development and technical assistance to complete a needs assessment through an in-depth look at their academic performance data and through an analysis of their root cause for poor performance.

7. "**Contract with necessary expertise to provide professional development to Wyoming certified teachers;" and**

-The WDE has contracted with Marzano, Inc. for regional assessment literacy training events. This training supports districts in the development and deployment of their district assessment systems.

-The WDE has contracted with WyCEL for the robust leadership training initiative portion of the multi-tiered system of support. The details are mentioned above in item 1.

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-The WDE has contracted with Dr. Anthony Muhammad, through WASA, for the regional professional learning community trainings portion of the multi-tiered system of support. The details are mentioned above in item 1.

-The WDE has contracted with a former district superintendent and WDE district coach to work on multi-tiered system of support strategic planning.

-In addition to contracted professional development, professionals in school districts and the WDE provide dozens of pertinent trainings throughout the year. The WDE will continue assist with brokering district-to-district trainings. The WDE will continue to evaluate trainings provided by staff for relevance, effectiveness, and convenience.

8.　"**Conduct up to five regional workshops each year providing the identified professional development needs."**

-The WDE conducts hundreds of hours of professional development workshops every year across the state. In addition, the WyCEL and WASA state system of support programs address this mandate through regional professional learning community workshops and other trainings.

WDE Strategic Plan

The WDE has undertaken an extensive process to generate a strategic plan that will guide and measure the work of the Wyoming Department of Education. The process of creating the plan has included, but is not limited to, the following activities:

Superintendent Balow's Transition (Nov. 4, 2014-Jan. 5, 2015)

-An education stakeholder survey sent out during the 2014-15 transition period obtained over 500 responses on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the work ahead for the WDE and the Wyoming education system;

-A transition cabinet of statewide education experts reached out to hundreds of Wyoming stakeholders with questions about how the WDE can better serve Wyoming;

-A facilitated strategic planning session with transition cabinet, Superintendent Balow, and members of Superintendent Balow's leadership team;

First Six Months (Jan. 6, 2015-July 6, 2015)

-With the assistance of the Council of Chief State School Officers, undertook a leadership analysis and executive coaching program focused on strategic planning and agency performance;

-A full department capacity review conducted by the U.S. Education Delivery Institute which included numerous leaders from across Wyoming and existing WDE staff;

Finalization Period (July 7, 2015-October 15, 2015)

-Worked with internal teams, professional strategic planner, Marzano Research, and REL Central to establish the WDE mission, vision, definition of college, career, and military ready (CCMR), indicators of readiness for CCMR, a formula to generate baseline and goal for CCMR, and five specifically targeted goals with action steps to achieve overall CCMR goal. The action steps are currently being finalized.

In conclusion, thank you for all you do for Wyoming education. The WDE is honored to serve Wyoming as your partner in furthering the most important of goals-the future of our state through the education of our youth.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Jillian Balow

Materials Index

Attachment	Description	Provider
A	Data on professional development needs and delivery methods	Drs. Barker and Chase
B	School district leadership data for 2013 & 14	AdvancED
C	2013-14 high school graduation rates	Wyoming Department of Education
D	Hathaway Scholarship program participation and retention rates	Wyoming Department of Education
E	Report on district assessment systems and high school graduation requirements	Wyoming Department of Education
F	Distance Education Task Force final report	Distance Education Task Force
G	Report on ETA Account expenditures related to implementing and building agency capacity to support the statewide education accountability system	Wyoming Department of Education

Attachment A:

Data on professional development needs and delivery methods

Excerpts from *Wyoming Education Leaders' Perceptions of Professional Development Needs and Delivery: Methods in an Era of Accountability* by David P. Barker and Gerry J.R. Chase, a project submitted to the Department of Professional Studies and the University of Wyoming in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership in August of 2015.

From pages 30-31:

Professional Development Delivery Methods

What are the preferred professional development delivery methods of Wyoming principals and central office personnel? Table 5 outlines responses to the survey question that asked educational leaders to assess their preferred professional development delivery methods using a scale with possible responses of no interest (1), little interest (2), slight interest (3), moderate interest (4), and strong interest (5). The delivery methods with the highest-ranked interest were networking and professional learning network (PLN) via technology. Networking was defined as meeting regularly through roundtables, workshops, regional collaborations, and/or panel discussions while PLN via technology was described as colleagues and/or experts discussing a variety of issues using an electronic medium, for example. The lowest ranked interest for a delivery method was university coursework on campus, working toward a degree.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Professional Development Delivery Methods

Preferred Delivery Method	*M (SD)*
Networking	3.76 (1.06)
Professional learning network via technology	3.52 (1.04)
New Superintendent/principal workshops	3.37 (1.29)
Formal mentoring program	3.25 (1.20)

Note: Response scale ranged from 1 (no interest) to 5 (strong interest).

Professional Development Needs

What are the perceived professional development needs of Wyoming principals and central office personnel? A scale was provided with possible responses of no need (1), little need (2), slight need (3), moderate need (4), and essential need (5). The topics were then rank-ordered from highest mean to lowest mean as seen in Table 2. Those topics with the highest mean (greatest need) were promoting quality instruction, providing differentiated professional development, understanding accountability, leading change, using data for decision making, leading the school improvement process, and building professional learning communities. The overall mean in these topic areas indicated the highest needs. The two topics with the lowest means included working with the media and developing policy.

Table 2

Percents, Means, and Standard Deviations of Professional Development Needs

Professional Development Need	Percents					M (SD)
	No Need (1)	*Little Need (2)*	*Slight Need (3)*	*Moderate Need (4)*	*Essential Need (5)*	
Promoting quality instruction that maximizes student learning	0.5%	8.9%	20.0%	33.2%	37.4%	3.98 (0.99)
Providing differentiated professional development for staff	2.6%	6.8%	19.5%	46.8%	24.2%	3.83 (0.96)
Understanding accountability (WA EA)	1.6%	13.8%	22.3%	38.8%	23.4%	3.69 (1.03)
Leading change	4.8%	10.1%	23.9%	34.0%	27.1%	3.69 (1.12)

Attachment B:

School District Leadership Data for 2013 & 14

Data Highlights:

- **Index of Education Quality (IEQ)**
  - **Average of all of the External Review Team's indicator scores**
  - **In addition to Stakeholder Feedback and Student Performance scores**
  - **A score of 300+ is desirable**

Wyoming Average IEQ 2013, 14	AdvancED Average IEQ 2015
272.07	277.93
Teaching & Learning Impact	Teaching & Learning Impact
264.94	268.30
Leadership Capacity	Leadership Capacity
276.79	292.24
Resource Utilization	Resource Utilization
283.73	283.59

Attachment C:

2013-14 High School Graduation Rates

2013-14 Wyoming High School Graduation Rates

District	School	Graduation Rate
Fremont #38	*Arapahoe Charter High School	4.00%
Carbon #1	*Cooperative High	5.88%
Fremont #21	Ft. Washakie High School	12.50%
Sweetwater #1	*Independence High School	20.00%
Laramie #1	*Triumph High School	25.58%
Lincoln #1	*New Frontier High School	33.33%
Platte #1	Chugwater High School	37.50%
Uinta #1	*Horizon Alternative School	37.50%
Park #1	*Shoshone Learning Center	42.86%
Fremont #1	*Pathfinder High School	43.75%
Niobrara #1	^Niobrara County High School	49.51%
Fremont #14	Wyoming Indian High School	51.06%
Natrona #1	*Roosevelt High School	51.25%
Sweetwater #2	*Expedition Academy	52.38%
Lincoln #2	*Swift Creek High School	52.38%
Carbon #2	HEM Junior/Senior High School	56.25%
Big Horn #1	^Rocky Mountain High School	57.58%
Crook #1	*Bear Lodge High School	63.64%
Carbon #1	Rawlins High School	68.18%
Sheridan #1	Tongue River High School	68.75%
Sheridan #2	*Ft. Mackenzie	69.23%
Campbell #1	*Westwood High School	69.91%
Laramie #1	South High School	70.00%
Goshen #1	Torrington High School	74.44%
Fremont #2	Dubois High School	75.00%
Sheridan #3	Arvada-Clearmont High School	75.00%
Natrona #1	Natrona County High School	76.08%
Campbell #1	Wright Jr. & Sr. High School	76.92%
Fremont #25	Riverton High School	77.23%
Hot Springs #1	Hot Springs County High School	77.59%
Platte #1	Wheatland High School	77.78%
Teton #1	*Summit High School	77.78%
Albany #1	*Whiting High School	78.26%
Uinta #6	Lyman High School	79.03%
Platte #1	Glendo High School	80.00%
Natrona #1	Kelly Walsh High School	80.25%
Fremont #1	Lander Valley High School	80.73%
Uinta #1	Evanston High School	81.25%
Campbell #1	Campbell County High School	81.70%
Carbon #2	Saratoga Middle/High School	81.82%
Laramie #1	East High School	82.06%
Converse #1	Douglas High School	82.98%
Park #16	Meeteetse School	83.33%

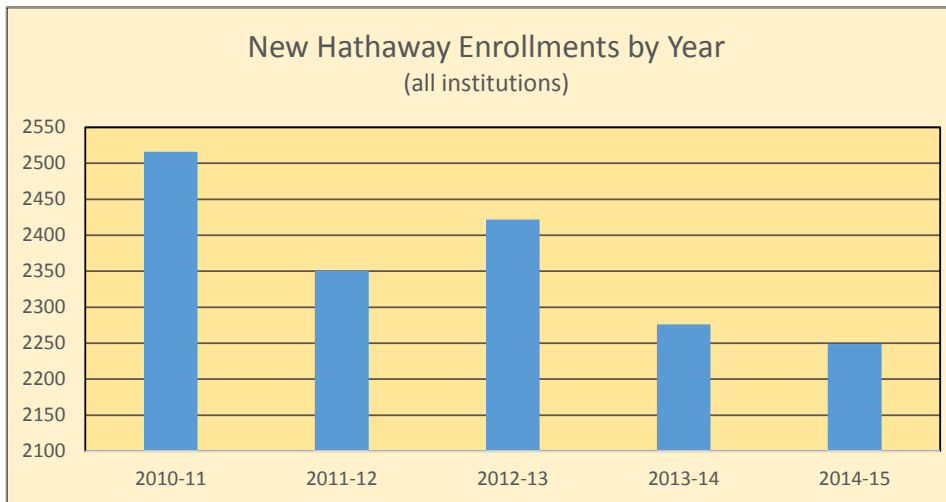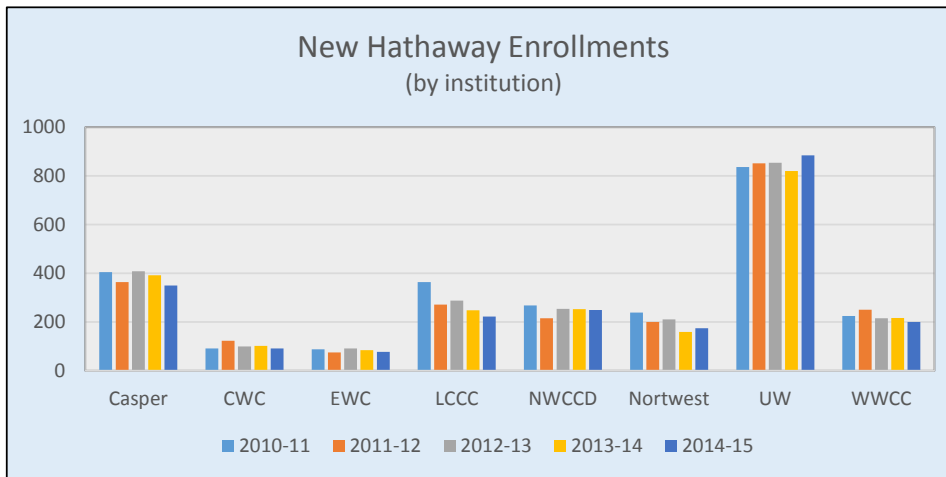# 2013-14 Wyoming High School Graduation Rates

Sweetwater #1	Farson-Eden High School	83.33%
Sweetwater #1	Rock Springs High School	83.55%
Natrona #1	Midwest School	84.21%
Washakie #1	Worland High School	84.27%
Sheridan #2	Sheridan High School	84.55%
Laramie #2	Burns Jr & Sr High School	84.62%
Goshen #1	Lingle-Ft. Laramie High School	84.62%
Park #1	Powell High School	85.29%
Carbon #1	Little Snake River Valley School	85.71%
Fremont #24	Shoshoni High School	86.21%
Park #6	Cody High School	86.70%
Converse #2	Glenrock High School	87.72%
Big Horn #4	Riverside High School	88.00%
Sublette #9	Big Piney High School	88.57%
Johnson #1	Buffalo High School	88.76%
Laramie #1	Central High School	89.00%
Albany #1	Laramie High School	89.43%
Big Horn #2	Lovell High School	90.20%
Big Horn #3	Greybull High School	90.24%
Laramie #2	Pine Bluffs Jr & Sr High School	90.48%
Sublette #1	Pinedale High School	90.74%
Washakie #2	Ten Sleep K-12	90.91%
Platte #2	Guernsey-Sunrise High School	91.67%
Sheridan #1	Big Horn High School	92.31%
Crook #1	Moorcroft Secondary School	92.31%
Fremont #6	Wind River High School	92.59%
Weston #7	Upton High School	92.86%
Weston #1	Newcastle High School	93.33%
Uinta #4	Mountain View High School	93.65%
Crook #1	Sundance Secondary School	93.94%
Crook #1	Hulett School	94.12%
Sweetwater #2	Green River High School	94.35%
Lincoln #2	Star Valley High School	94.90%
Lincoln #1	Kemmerer High School	97.50%
Teton #1	Jackson Hole High School	98.37%
Carbon #2	Encampment K-12 School	100.00%
Albany #1	Rock River High School	100.00%
Big Horn #1	Burlington High School	100.00%
Goshen #1	Southeast High School	100.00%
Johnson #1	Kaycee School	100.00%
Lincoln #2	Cokeville High School	100.00%

^ Includes full-time distance education students

* Alternative High School

Attachment D:

Hathaway Scholarship Program Participation Rates

School Year	Casper	CWC	EWC	LCCC	NWCCD	Nortwest	UW	WWCC	Total per Year (all institutions)
2010-11	405	91	88	364	268	239	836	225	2516
2011-12	364	123	75	272	215	200	852	250	2351
2012-13	409	100	91	288	254	211	854	215	2422
2013-14	392	102	85	248	253	159	820	217	2276
2014-15	350	91	78	222	249	174	885	200	2249

New Hathaway Enrollments
(by institution)

New Hathaway Enrollments by Year
(all institutions)

Attachment E:

Report on District Assessment Systems and High School

Graduation Requirements

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Brent Young, Chief Policy Officer

DATE: October 6, 2015

SUBJECT: District Assessment System Update

The WDE's work on District Assessment Systems (DAS) has focused around three areas during the past year. This includes review and recommended revisions to Chapter 31, Graduation Requirements, the development of a district assessment system guidebook to support schools and districts as they transition to the new review and reporting requirements, and statewide professional development on assessment literacy and formative assessment resource development.

For 3 years, the WDE has collaborated with a group of district curriculum directors and a University of Wyoming College of Education representative who serve as the DAS Steering Committee. This ensures that the Department is responsive to needs and interests of the field as well as consistent with statutory requirements.

Chapter 31, Graduation Requirements
Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) No. 87 (2015 Session Laws, Chapter 179) eliminates the requirement for tiered diplomas (W.S. 21-2-304 (a)(iv)). Previously, districts were required to transcript one of the three following endorsements related to a student's level of proficiency in the areas of the common core of knowledge and skills: A) advanced endorsement, B) comprehensive endorsement, or C) general endorsement.

This legislation also eliminates district assessment system annual reporting requirements and requires a review of the district assessment system as part of the accreditation review process every five years on a staggered basis (W.S. 21-2-304 (a)(iv)).

The WDE provided information to districts regarding these statutory changes in Memorandum to Superintendents 2015-053, Changes to District Assessment Systems, found here:
http://edu.wyoming.gov/downloads/communications/memos/2015/2015-053.pdf

Given that changes in statute were effective immediately, emergency Chapter 31 rules were necessary. Following a preliminary review by the DAS Steering Committee, the Department finalized the revisions and, upon approval by the State Board of Education (SBE), requested approval for emergency rules simultaneous to the regular rules proposal. The Governor approved the emergency rule on August 18, 2015. Public comment for regular rules closed on October 4, 2015. The SBE is currently considering all comments received and will move forward with adoption and promulgation of regular rules accordingly.

District Assessment System Guidebook
During the past year, the DAS Steering Committee has responded to changing legislation by developing and then updating a *District Assessment System Guidebook* that aligns with the design and reporting requirements required in law and rules at the time. The first comprehensive document provided guidance on all required DAS design criteria (alignment, consistency, fairness, standard setting), the revised standards implementation timeline, and the annual reporting process including information on recommended supporting documentation. This document was later simplified to address only the alignment criterion in more detail and statements of assurance by districts to support the inclusion of the other criteria within their systems. All documents were presented to the SBE for consideration.

The 2015 General Session of the Legislature resulted in new legislation that eliminates the annual reporting requirement, focuses district assessment system requirements on alignment to the state's adopted content and performance standards, and integrates the review of district assessment systems within the annual accreditation process. Every five years, as a component of the comprehensive accreditation review process, there will be a thorough review of each district's assessment system. And, under WAEA, the district assessment system may also be reviewed more frequently if districts have schools that are low performing.

The current draft of the *District Assessment System Guidebook* outlines the following:
- Components of a district assessment system (state assessments, district assessment, school assessments, and classroom assessments)
- Types of assessments (formative, interim, summative)
- Information on AdvancED Standards and Indicators that specifically reference assessment (Standards 3.2 and 5.1).

Members of the DAS Steering Committee have been careful to ensure consistency with both the new Wyoming Comprehensive School Plan and the AdvancEd accreditation process as well as with the recommendations of the Assessment Task Force relative to district assessment systems. The document will be finalized and presented to the State Board for consideration at a meeting in the near future.

Professional Development
Assessment Literacy and Formative Assessment Resource Development
The WDE worked with the committee to develop a scope of work related to assessment literacy and formative assessment resource development. The Department contracted with Marzano Research, LLC, and specifically named Jan Hoegh, Associate Vice President to provide 15 two-day training sessions across the state. These trainings were organized into three sessions, spring 2015, summer 2015 and fall 2015. To date, over 775 educators have registered and/or attended this training with all 48 districts represented. Participants include UW professors, pre-services students, district administrators, and building principals. However, the primary audience has been classroom teachers and instructional facilitators. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. A sample of the session evaluation is attached.

The second phase of this formative assessment professional development is being designed and will be offered in the spring, 2016. One general session on assessment literacy and formative assessment will be offered. Other sessions will include separate modules for elementary and secondary work on performance scales and priority standards. Additional sessions with a focus on specific content areas will also be included. This approach will contribute to differentiated support for schools with performance ratings that indicate a need for professional development in specific content areas.

MAP

For the second year in a row, the WDE is offering customized workshops on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. NWEA will create the Applying Reports, Informing Instruction and Focusing on Growth professional development to assist teachers in their application of MAP data to inform instruction in the classroom. The locations for the four training sessions were selected based on the most recent WAEA school performance rating information.

For further information on the district assessment system work, please contact Shelly Andrews, shelly.andrews@wyo.gov, 307-777-3781.

Attachment F:

Distance Education Task Force Final Report

WYOMING
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2015 House Enrolled Act No. 101 Distance Education Task Force

Full Report: October 15, 2015

Submitted to:
Legislative Service Office

Submitted by:
Jillian Balow
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
on behalf of the Wyoming Department of Education

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Force

Glossary of Terms

Average Daily Membership (ADM) - ADM is the process of determining the number of students in a school for purposes of allocating resources through the Wyoming funding model. Membership is the appropriate inclusion of a student in a school's student accounting records for all or part of a day when the school is regularly in session, whether the student is physically in attendance or absent on that day. For distance education, milestones are used to monitor student progress through the course, report distance education course completion rates, and calculate the student's ADM equivalency.

Brick and Mortar- Refers to classes taught face-to-face in a traditional school building as contrasted with classes taught online in a virtual environment.

Distance Education - "means instruction in the statewide educational program prescribed by W.S. 21-9-101 and 21-9-102 and accredited by the state board under 21-2-304(a)(ii), whereby the teacher and student, physically separated by time or space are connected by means of a communications source used to provide synchronous or asynchronous instruction;" (W.S. 21-13-330(f)(i), Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules)

Distance Learning Plan (DLP) - "means an agreement between a school district or districts, a student and his parents or guardian, together with expectations and achievable performance benchmarks required for completion of the program in accordance with content and performance standards promulgated by the state board under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii);" (W.S. 21-13-330(f)(ii), Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules)

Full-Time Virtual Education Student - A student taking more than 50% of their courses in an online format with a single virtual provider district (As defined by the Distance Education Task Force in September of 2015).

Learning Management System (LMS) - A software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of online courses.

Milestones - "means achievable performance benchmarks required for completion of the program which are used to track student progress through the course;" (Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules) For distance education, milestones are used to monitor student progress through the course, report distance education course completion rates, and calculate the student's ADM equivalency.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - "means a signed documented agreement between a distance education program provider and a resident district outlining fees paid for a distance education program, educational support provided to the student(s), required training, and conflict resolutions policy,"(Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules)

Nonresident District - "means the school district in which the participating student does not reside but which employs the distance education program teacher and which sponsors, approves, facilitates, and supervises the distance education program course material provided to the participating student;" (W.S. 21-13-330(f)(iii))

Part-Time Virtual Education Student - A student taking 50% or less of their courses online (as defined by the Distance Education Task Force in September of 2015). Part-time online courses may be referred to as "supplemental" or "single" courses.

Postsecondary - The seven Wyoming community colleges and the University of Wyoming.

Resident District - "means the school district in which the participating student resides, receives distance education program instruction and where the student's distance learning plan is filed;"(W.S. 21-13-330(f)(iv))

Single-District Online Program - Wyoming Switchboard Network approved distance education programs within school districts that have opted to only deliver distance online courses to students residing within the district.

Statewide Online Program - Wyoming Switchboard Network approved distance education programs within school districts that have opted to deliver online courses to students residing anywhere within the state of Wyoming.

Supplemental Courses - Online part-time courses taken to access offerings not available in the student's brick and mortar school.

Virtual Education System - Wyoming's system for providing students access to taking online courses.

Virtual Education Course - Courses where a series of lessons are delivered to students through a web browser or mobile device, to be conveniently accessed anytime, anyplace.

Wyoming Switchboard Network (WSN) - "means an approved network of distance education programs that meet state-established guidelines for courses content and delivery." (Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules)

Introduction

To address the numerous distance education challenges in Wyoming, the Legislature tasked the State Superintendent of Public Instruction with chairing a Distance Education Task Force (DETF). This task force met monthly between April and September of 2015 to discuss, identify, and finalize a proposed virtual education model with the goal of developing a revised distance education system in Wyoming to meet the needs of all learners and provide access for all students. The proposed solutions attempt to resolve the challenges identified by both the Legislature and task force.

General Overview of Distance Education in Wyoming

Distance education in the state was initially developed utilizing the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN), which included a video conference independent network. In 2008, upon the recommendations from the 2007 Distance Education Task Force, statutes were written to include online delivery of courses to the virtual education program. Today, essentially all virtual education courses are delivered online.

While the WEN videoconferencing technology (WEN Video) was state-of-art in its time, the required synchronous delivery of courses (teachers and students in different locations but on the conference together) led to its downfall. Since very few schools in the state operate on the exact same daily schedule, it was an ongoing challenge for students and staff to make the timing differences work. In addition to the course delivery scheduling issues, there were also issues with connectivity in districts with limited broadband capacity. Due to scheduling and connectivity issues, the WEN Video never reached its anticipated potential of providing supplemental distance education courses to students across the state.

Although many students throughout the state would benefit from taking online courses, obstacles prevent access for all students. Issues surrounding student access to virtual education include the challenges faced by districts to document and report milestone completion, manage distance learning plans, and easily provide supplemental online courses for their students.

Additionally, while the 2008 distance education statutes were written with the intent that the majority of students enrolled in courses online full-time would remain enrolled in their resident district, or their district of domicile, that is no longer the case. By statute, if a student's resident district does not provide a full-time online opportunity, the district has the option to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a district providing a full-time online program. However, full-time online students remaining members of their resident district has become the

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exception (rather than the norm) due to a number of challenges arising from maintaining these district partnerships or MOU's.

Today, as a result of the challenges causing a breakdown in district partnerships, students wishing to enroll full-time in an approved Wyoming online program must first unenroll from their resident district and then enroll in one of the two school districts that currently maintain full-time statewide distance education programs. As such, rather than students receiving support services (such as counseling and special education services) from the district they live in, those supports are now administered from afar. While the online provider districts have been able to provide all needed supports to the students they serve, including administration of statewide assessments, the statutes no longer address the current structure of distance education in our state.

Facing the challenges described above, the DETF has been able to work together effectively to make recommendations to the Legislature. These recommendations solve many of the identified concerns. Where the DETF recommendations impact funding or fee structures, the task force will request the Legislature to review and determine the most appropriate path forward.

Understand Challenges

Traditional Vs. Online Instruction

Traditional Instruction is learning in which the teacher and student are located in physical proximity and in which the teacher speaks or presents information and the students listens and retains that information. Author J. Novak, defines traditional instruction as, "Traditional teaching is concerned with the teacher being the controller of the learning environment. Power and responsibility are held by the teacher and they play the role of instructor (in the form of lectures) and decision maker (in regards to curriculum content and specific outcomes). They regard students as having 'knowledge holes' that need to be filled with information. In short, the traditional teacher views that it is the teacher that causes learning to occur".[1]

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[1] Novak, J. (1998) *Learning, Creating and Using Knowledge: Concept Maps as Facilitative Tools in Schools and Corporations*; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc; New Jersey, pp 24-25

Online Instruction occurs when a teacher is delivering instruction using technology and the student is completing assignments and submitting them virtually through an online learning management system (LMS). In this instance, the teacher and student may be separated physically by time and/or space, or they may located in the same area with the teacher providing instruction and the student completing work within the LMS. The International Association for K12 Online Learning defines online learning as, "Education in which instruction and content are delivered primarily over the Internet. The term does not include print-based correspondence education, broadcast television or radio, videocassettes, and stand-alone educational software programs that do not have a significant Internet-based instructional component or a teacher providing instruction through the software/LMS. Used interchangeably with Virtual learning, Cyber learning, e-learning."[2]

A Picture of Virtual Education in Wyoming

In some cases, students are taking online courses (also known as virtual education courses) within their district with a teacher of record assigning their grades and monitoring their progress. In these instances, the students receive some instruction from the teacher of record, so even though all of the course content is online, the student is reported as taking face-to-face courses. As a result, it is difficult to determine the exact numbers of students participating in online courses across the state.

During the 2014-2015 school year school districts reported that 1,168 students took K-12 virtual education courses. Of these students, 1,051 were enrolled in online courses full-time. Additionally, 544 students took postsecondary distance education classes. This totals to 2.2% of Wyoming's student population participating in virtual education courses.

Full-Time Online Learning in Wyoming

Enrollment in full-time online learning increased from the inception of Wyoming's distance education program in the 2008-2009 school year, to a peak of 1,333 full-time students in the 2011-2012 school year. During the 2014-2015 school year, 1,051 students were full-time online students with more than 50% of their courses being taken online. The vast majority of those students unenrolled from their resident district and enrolled in one of the two school districts with full-time online programs offering kindergarten through 12th grade courses.

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[2] http://www.inacol.org/resource/the-online-learning-definitions-project/; The Online Learning Definition Project, October 2011

In September 2015 the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) conducted a survey on behalf of the DETF asking why students and parents elect the full-time online option in order to better understand why some students and parents prefer full-time virtual education (see Table 1 below). The WDE received a total of 237 responses from families with students enrolled in full-time online programs to the survey with 95% of the respondents being parents. These respondents were spread across the state and included 35 of the 48 school districts.

Table 1: Responses to "Full-Time Online Family" Survey

Why did you (or your student) decide to go to school full-time online? (select all that apply)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
To access programs not available locally.	15.2%	36
To make up missed credits.	5.5%	13
To get ahead and graduate early.	11.0%	26
To begin postsecondary education sooner.	7.6%	18
To pursue passions (sports, performance art, etc.) at level higher than is offered in school.	11.8%	28
To focus on academics without distractions from classmates.	62.0%	147
To progress at individual pace.	59.5%	141
To share thoughts and ideas without competition with classmates.	12.2%	29
To learn despite health issues that might get in the way of a traditional class setting.	13.1%	31
To easily communicate with the teacher when needed.	25.3%	60
To easily communicate with classmates when needed.	7.6%	18
For the flexibility to accommodate our unusual schedule.	35.4%	84
To get away from negative peer groups.	59.1%	140

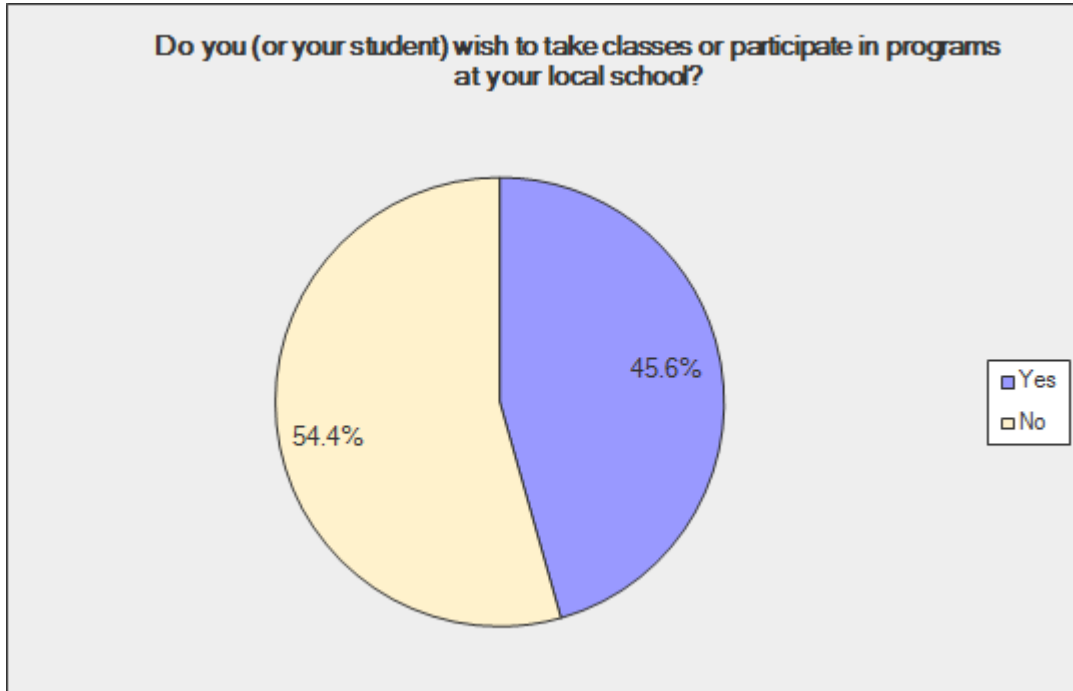| Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
To sleep in and do school work when I'm more alert and can concentrate.	16.9%	40
To escape bullying.	38.0%	90
We're located in a remote or rural area which makes getting to a school difficult.	5.9%	14
I (or your student) was being homeschooled but decided to switch to a Wyoming school district online program.	5.5%	13
None of the above.	4.2%	10

The highest rated reasons from the 237 respondents why full-time virtual education is preferred include:
- To focus on academics without distractions. (62.0%)
- To progress at individual pace. (59.5%)
- To get away from negative peer groups. (59.1%)

There are also challenges when full-time virtual education students request to take courses from their local brick and mortar schools. Some resident districts are unwilling to allow full-time virtual education students, enrolled in Big Horn County School District No. 1 or Niobrara County School District No. 1, to take courses in their local schools. The WDE and virtual education program providers do not track this information and there is no official record of the district or school refusing these courses to online students, but anecdotally estimated at 40% of the time. When requesting participation in these courses, full-time virtual education students and their families are informed the decision allowing them to participate in courses at their resident school is a local control decision.

The second purpose behind the Full-Time Online Family survey was to find out how many full-time virtual education students would like to be able to access part-time brick and mortar classes as this was one of the challenges identified by the task force. These types of classes could include welding or band or programs such as those provided for gifted and talented students. Of the 237 respondents, 108 (45.6%) indicated they would like to be able take some classes at their local school but the opportunity is not always available (Figure 1

Figure 1: Responses to "Full-Time Online Family" Survey

Do you (or your student) wish to take classes or participate in programs at your local school?

45.6%

54.4%

- Yes
- No

Wyoming Switchboard Network Approved Virtual Education Providers

Currently, there are eleven virtual education programs offered in Wyoming, with two programs offering courses to students statewide. An overview of all courses offered through the statewide programs is listed on the Wyoming Switchboard Network (WSN) website.[3] As per current Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules, Section 4, Process to Join the Wyoming Switchboard Network (WSN), all courses must be submitted to the WDE to be verified and approved prior to being offered to students.

Two districts in the state offer full-time virtual education courses statewide to students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The Wyoming Connections Academy program is located in Big Horn County School District No.1 and the Wyoming Virtual Academy program is located in Niobrara School District No.1. These providers partner with the district to offer core courses (mathematics, English, science, foreign languages, health and physical education) in addition to numerous supplemental courses, such as accounting, sign language, and web design.

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[3] Wyoming Switchboard Network can be found at http://www.wyomingswitchboard.net/Home.aspx

Nine districts currently offer approved WSN online programs to only their students.[4] These programs offer both full-time virtual educational opportunities as well as part-time supplemental course offerings. In order to offer these additional online education opportunities for their students, districts choose to use a variety of resources from various virtual education entities. Some districts choose to purchase seats from virtual education companies while other districts choose to purchase single courses from virtual education institutions in other states. Examples of out-of-state offerings include purchasing individual courses from Florida Virtual Schools or purchasing program such as Odysseyware.[5]

Currently, students throughout Wyoming need to have access to both full-time and part-time virtual educational opportunities. Although students do have options when choosing to take full-time online courses, there are few choices for these students to take single courses from in-state providers. In terms of part-time course offerings, the only in-state single course choices offered through Wyoming Virtual Academy are not widely known nor is this option facilitated at a state level. Some districts address the need for part-time online courses by obtaining approval for in-district virtual education programs or by purchasing courses from out-of-state providers. However, not all districts have the time or resources to obtain these methods of providing supplemental online courses to their students.

To assess the need for part-time virtual education courses to supplement brick and mortar enrollment, the WDE sent a survey to school districts on behalf of the DETF in September 2015. Responses were received from 197 representatives from each of the 48 school districts in the state. Responses were received from superintendents, curriculum coordinators, special education director's, career and technical education coordinators, computer/technology coordinators, principals from elementary, middle and high schools and middle and high school counselors. The following table (Table 2) indicates the types of part-time online K-12 courses district representatives thought may be beneficial to the students in their districts.

Every type of part-time online course opportunity received a response rate of at least 30%. The highest rated categories were as follows:
- 67.5% credit recovery courses
- 58.8% additional foreign language courses
- 52.6% gifted and talented courses

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[4] Campbell County School District #1, Carbon County School District #1, Carbon County School District #2, Fremont County School District #21, Natrona County School District #1, Park County School District #1, Sheridan County School District #2, Uinta County School District #1, Washakie County School District #1

[5] Florida Virtual Schools website can be found at https://www.flvs.net/. Information regarding Odysseyware program software can be found at https://www.odysseyware.com.

●   51% Advanced Placement courses

Table 2: Responses to "Need for Part-Time Online K-12 Courses" Survey

The following is a list of part-time (one to two as needed) online course examples students may need to supplement their brick and mortar enrollment or to access opportunities that may not be currently available to them. Indicate which opportunities you think may benefit students in your district if such opportunities were available online statewide. (Select as many as apply.)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Advanced Placement (AP) courses	51.0%	99
Hathaway Success Curriculum courses	38.7%	75
Additional world languages not currently offered (e.g. Chinese, German, Latin, etc.)	58.8%	114
Additional years of world language (e.g. Spanish III, Spanish IV)	30.4%	59
Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) courses	33.5%	65
Career Technical Education (CTE) courses	26.8%	52
Credit recovery courses	67.5%	131
Higher than current grade level courses for gifted and talented students	52.6%	102
Lower than current grade level courses for remedial students	43.8%	85
None of the above	4.1%	8

An overwhelming majority of the 194 survey respondents (93.3%) indicated they thought their district would utilize part-time online courses available statewide (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Responses to "Need for Part-Time Online K-12 Courses" Survey
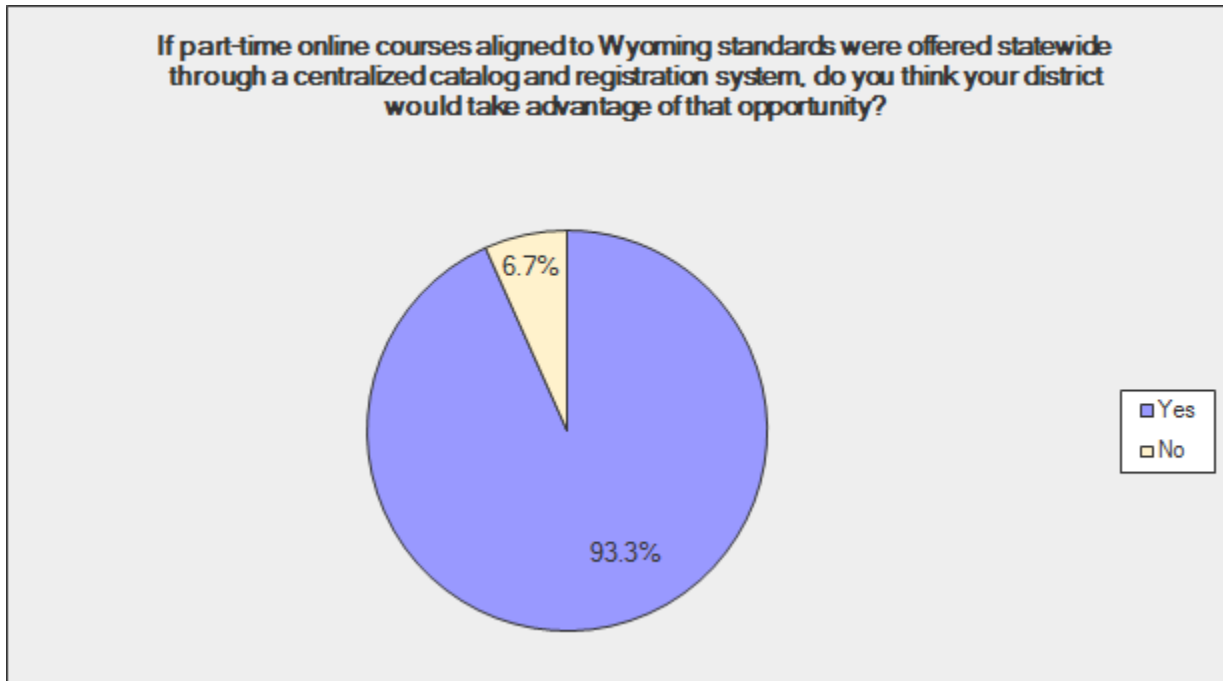
The proposed models for delivery of part-time online supplemental courses would require support for the students from brick and mortar schools. As such, district personnel were asked if these types of support would be available in their school districts (See Table 3).

Table 3: Responses to "Need for Part-Time Online K-12 Courses" Survey

If districts utilized part-time online courses for their students, they would be responsible for monitoring student enrollment and course completion. Indicate which items your students would have access to if they were taking part-time online classes. (Select as many as apply.)		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Time in their schedules to access and complete online courses (this assumes the part-time online enrollment doesn't exceed a full load of courses).	83.5%	162
Classroom or space in the school(s) for your students to take their online courses during the school day.	77.3%	150

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
An instructional coach to students taking online courses (does not have to be a certified teacher).	59.3%	115
Equipment such as computers or mobile devices available for students to take online courses within their school.	83.5%	162
None of the above	5.2%	10

The majority of respondents indicated they thought this support would be available in each area with the lowest response being to the availability of an instructional coach (59.3%). The comments indicated being able to provide instructional support would be dependent on staff schedules.

Identify Priorities

The Distance Education Task Force was charged with a number of duties and tasks in order to enhance virtual education in Wyoming and ensure all students have the opportunity to participate in quality virtual education courses should they choose. These duties outlined by the Legislature in House Enrolled Act 101 from the 2015 Legislative Session with the task force responses are:

(i) Programmatic requirements for the delivery of quality distance education programs statewide that provide equal access and opportunity for all students enrolled in a Wyoming school district;
Task Force Response: The task force has developed recommendations on both part-time and full-time virtual education models to allow greater access for students to participate in online learning.

(ii) Guidance to ensure compliance with statewide education standards and student assessment and accountability requirements under W.S. 21-2-202, 21-2-204, 21-2-304 and 21-9-101, including, but not limited to, data collection requirements;
Task Force Response: The task force has worked with the WDE Assessment Team and their vendors. The process the Assessment Team developed previously is allowing a greater number of students to test. The unique needs of virtual education students will continue to be considered as Wyoming's assessment system evolves. The task force has developed

recommendations to provide greater transparency for districts and parents on the performance on state assessments for virtual education programs housed within districts.

(iii) In consultation with the professional teaching standards board, professional certification requirements for distance education instructors;
Task Force Response: The task force worked with PTSB to develop recommendations. At this time there are a limited number of educators trained to teach online. If additional certification requirements are put into place at this time, then it would greatly limit the state's ability to provide greater opportunities for students to access virtual education courses. This should be revisited as additional educators are trained and teaching virtual courses.

(iv) A review of distance education that can be used to provide greater transparency in accounting for administering distance education program;
Task Force Response: The funding recommendations included in the proposed virtual education models provide increased transparency and flexibility. The WDE posts the school finance funding formula for each district on its website, making it accessible to the public.

(v) Requirements for partnership agreements, if necessary, for school districts electing to collaborate in the delivery of a distance education program;
Task Force Response: The task force has developed virtual education models which would eliminate the use of partnership agreements and their associated burdens on districts.

(vi) Guidance to ensure compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400.
Task Force Response: The WDE monitors the virtual education programs in districts. Special education students are equally represented in virtual education and served in the same manner as they are in brick and mortar schools.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, serving as chair to the task force, added to this charge by stating:

"It's important that we maximize every opportunity to reach as many students as possible. Whether full-time, part-time, enrichment, or credit recovery, virtual education is one more way to provide a quality and well-rounded education."

-Jillian Balow
Wyoming State Superintendent of Public Instruction

With clear direction to review the current challenges in distance education and to explore the possibilities of how to best afford increased access to quality learning opportunities to every

Wyoming learner, the DETF set out to provide recommendations to the legislative requirements, and look at all the known barriers preventing students to successfully accessing online courses.

Distance Education Task Force Overview

The DETF consisted of fourteen voting members representing a broad spectrum of education stakeholders in Wyoming and two ex-officio members from the Attorney General's Office and the Professional Teaching and Standards Board. The task force held monthly open meetings between April and September of 2015. During these meetings the charges of the legislature remained the focus of the task force.

The task force discussed, identified, and finalized a list of current challenges facing Wyoming distance education, determined the priorities of these challenges, and established a list of options to address these priorities. All suggested options were thoroughly researched and models created, discussed, and voted on as recommendations that should be presented to the legislature. A final model was accepted to solve the challenges facing part-time virtual education using a phased approach, as well as solve the challenges facing full-time virtual education using a revised form of the current distance education model.

The DETF made a decision to focus solely on virtual education as it relates to students taking classes for credit (or its equivalent for elementary school). Although the use of blended learning and other technology integrations in the curriculum and classroom is critical, they do not align with the charge outlined by the Legislature. Instead, the DETF supports the WDE taking the lead on curricular integrations of technology.

Underlying Assumptions

The DETF agreed upon a set of underlying assumptions to serve as a foundation to build upon. These assumptions allow the task force members to focus on the merits associated with proposed solutions and agree upon critical components must be included with any model under consideration.

1. Make students and meeting their needs the highest priority of the system.
2. Create a statewide vision of a high quality distance education system.
3. Step away from the current model to consider what could be.
4. Build the distance education system upon research/evidence based best practices.
5. Funding requirements from the Legislature will not increase Average Daily Membership (ADM).

6. Support partnerships between school districts and distance education providers.
7. Create a funding model incentivizing the program requirements.
8. Increase flexibility and access for all students.
9. Allow school districts to manage their distance education programs while ensuring equal opportunities are provided to every student.
10. Meet state requirements for standards, assessment, and accountability.
11. Infrastructure is key for success and varies throughout the state.
12. Wyoming will have a K-12 model for distance education.
13. Considerations will need to be made for training and professional development of K-12 distance educators in addition to training of distance education students.
14. Distance education students must be able to access opportunities.
15. Distance education courses for credit will continue to be approved by the WDE.

Summary of Task Force Activities

Over the course of six months, the task force focused on improving virtual education in Wyoming by focusing on program requirements to develop a revised functional system designed to meet the needs of all students. The first major task the DETF took on was to clarify the definition of virtual education and develop a vision for what virtual education could be throughout Wyoming in the future.

The DETF reviewed several different possible programmatic models. These models were analyzed to determine if they aligned with the vision and underlying assumptions.. Once the programmatic models were developed, the DETF analyzed the funding impacts. Task force members focused on developing solutions to improve the virtual education model in Wyoming.

Evolution of Distance Education Terminology

The definition of distance education in Wyoming statutes from 2008 emphasizes the separation of teacher and student by space or time, allowing for more than one distance delivery method to fall under distance education programming. At the time, distance education in the state included video conference courses taught through the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN) Video, correspondence courses and online courses.

The usage of WEN Video has significantly dropped over the years with no classes being held on the network during the 2014-2015 school year. Based on current reporting, other than limited correspondence courses (in 2014-2015 seven students participated in five correspondence courses), distance education under the W.S. 21-2-202 (xxxi) program refers essentially to virtual

education courses with 2,236 courses delivered in 2014-2015. Given that all but a few courses considered distance education are being taught online (on a computer over the internet), the DETF believes it is time to update the term used to describe this type of education program from *distance* to *virtual*.

Definition and Vision of Distance Education

The task force developed the vision for Wyoming's virtual education system to provide clear direction for everyone involved in virtual education. Without the vision it would be difficult to develop a cohesive plan. In turn, this allows the Legislature, WDE and school districts to pursue statutes, policies and activities leading to a successful virtual education system and to avoid devoting resources to ineffective activities.

Definition of Virtual Education

Virtual education is the delivery of K-12 education, primarily through technology, outside of the physical classroom as prescribed by Wyoming statute.

Vision for Virtual Education

Wyoming's virtual education system seeks to expand learning opportunities by providing access to global educational resources for all students.

Programmatic Challenges Identified by the Distance Education Task Force

The DETF identified the following programmatic challenges within the current virtual education model to be addressed. Information regarding each challenge has been gathered to assist task force members in making recommendations to resolve these issues.

Limited Online Single Course Access

Statewide online part-time offerings are not always available to full-time brick and mortar students. As described earlier, due to the complexities created by milestone reporting, distance education ADM funding calculations, distance learning plans, and monitoring student progress in an online course, it is not easy for districts to access single online course options being provided within the state. There are many instances where students could benefit from supplemental online courses (especially within smaller districts) such as additional Hathaway Success Curriculum courses, Advanced Placement courses, credit recovery courses, and additional foreign language options. When surveyed, 93.3% of district respondents thought their district

would take advantage of part-time online courses offered to students statewide.

Limited Brick and Mortar Single Course Access

Full-time online students typically reside in districts outside of the district housing the full-time virtual education programs. Almost half of those students have expressed a desire to be able to take classes like welding, band, or art in their district of residence. Although some districts have made this possible, other districts have struggled with providing this access.

Reporting Issues

Performance of virtual education students on assessment and accountability measures are not transparent because their results are combined with the brick and mortar student results of the school they are assigned to per statute W.S. 21-13-330(g)(ii). School districts, school boards, and parents of full-time online students struggle with being able to assess the performance of the virtual education programs and students. This information also makes it difficult for the WDE to ascertain the appropriate differentiated supports these districts need for both their brick and mortar schools and the virtual programs.

Assessment Issues

Unique challenges arise with the administration of assessments for districts with full-time virtual students as those students may reside anywhere in the state. These districts must find ways to make the state assessments available for all full-time virtual students regardless of their location. It is often the case these students do not want to be required to return to (or enter for the first time) their local schools to take state and district assessments. Consequently, the online program district is tasked with creating alternative avenues (such as securing hotel conference rooms to administer tests) in order for those students to participate in required testing.

Generate Solutions and Evaluate Options

Solutions to address the challenges identified above were discussed, developed and thoroughly researched. Models for each proposed solution were created, improved, and voted on by the task force as recommendations that should be developed and presented to the Legislature. To better understand the challenges and find appropriate solutions, the DETF broke the analysis into three topical areas: Part-Time Virtual Education and Full-Time Virtual Education. An analysis of the Part-Time Virtual Education and Full-Time Virtual Education models that were proposed and selected by the task force are included in this section of the report.

Part-time Virtual Education

Students are considered part-time virtual students when 50% or less of their courses are taken online. Facilitating opportunities for students to access at least one virtual education course is a high priority for the task force. Underlying the part-time virtual education models is a belief districts will make these courses available if the courses are easy to locate, have a quick enrollment process and not too expensive. The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) would update its online course catalog system to make it easier to add to and maintain the catalog. There will also be an expansion of the system, creating a pre-registration system for districts to use. This would allow a school to quickly find courses students need and pre-register them. Information on the site would include, at a minimum: a course synopsis, standards alignment document, district providing the course, and the cost of the course. The task force is recommending the Legislature provide guidance on the development of course fees between districts.

Proposed Part-Time Phase 1: In the first phase, the WDE will work with the existing districts housing approved virtual education programs to make single online courses available to other districts.

Proposed Part-Time Phase 2: The WDE would provide opportunities for all districts across the state to develop and offer virtual education courses to other districts. The WDE would be responsible for providing professional development opportunities to support educators in the development and teaching of those courses. A WDE hosted learning management system (LMS) is a critical component of this model. WDE would be able to take advantage of economies of scale and acquire the LMS at a lower cost than if each district purchased the system on their own. It would also develop a consistent system, making it easier for students by only having to learn one system, even if they are taking multiple courses from different districts. This would also make it easier for educators to work collaboratively across districts either while developing and teaching courses or while monitoring student progress.

Evaluation of Proposed Part-Time Model (Phases 1 and 2)
DETF Recommendation: Adopt both models utilizing a phased approach.

CHALLENGES RESOLVED	
Current Challenges	**Resolved by the Model?**
Online Single Course Access	Yes
Brick and Mortar Single Course Access	NA-Students will be able to take brick in mortar classes in their resident district
Reporting Issues	NA-Student reported with resident district
Assessment Issues	NA-Student tests with resident district
VISION MET	
Expanded learning opportunities	Yes
Global educational opportunities	Possible
Access for all students	Yes
UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS 1-15 (Located on pages 16-17)	
Met	1-6, 8-10, 12, 13, 15
Not Applicable	7, 11, 14
Not Met	None

Full-Time Virtual Education

A variety of challenges and priorities pertaining to full-time virtual education were identified and discussed throughout the task force meetings. These challenges included: the complexity of required milestones, lack of seat-time equivalency for online students, lack of opportunity for full-time online students to participate in brick-and-mortar classes at their local schools, and the lack of transparency in reporting created by online students being reported in conjunction with brick-and-mortar students. The task force considered three full-time virtual education models and

selected only one model to move forward. The analysis of the two models not selected are located in Appendix E.

Proposed Full-Time Model
DETF Recommendation: Adopt this model

The current model of distance education in Wyoming operates through the Wyoming Switchboard Network (WSN). Approved WSN programs are based in districts and provide online courses to students statewide or within district only. Students enrolled in full-time virtual education are assigned to grade level appropriate brick and mortar schools within the program district even if they are geographically located outside the district. The WSN houses contact and enrollment information for all approved full-time virtual education providers, a course catalog of currently approved online courses, and links to Wyoming state statutes and policies regarding distance education and online learning.

The revised version of this model would address the challenges defined by the DETF. First, by simplifying milestones to a requirement of 36 milestones, correlating to the weeks of the school year, the task of tracking and reporting milestones will become more effective and efficient. Second, creating a seat-time equivalency will function as both a measurement of student progress as well as serve as a measure of funding in instances where students are actively working in a course but unable to complete the required milestones by the end of the year. Finally, by allowing virtual students to be treated and reported as subgroups within brick and mortar schools and allowing for separate reporting to be generated within the reporting system, the issue of transparency in reporting can be solved.

Evaluation of Proposed Full-Time Model

The revisions made to the Proposed Full-Time Model, would not require an increase in funding. This model is a revision of the model currently used in the state. Districts enrolling full-time virtual students would receive funding through the simplified milestones and a seat-time equivalency system. Seat-time equivalency will be measured by tracking time a student spends actively logged into the LMS and working on the associated coursework.

CHALLENGES RESOLVED	
Current Challenges	**Resolved by the Model?**
Online Single Course Access	Yes
Brick and Mortar Single Course Access	Yes
Reporting Issues	Yes
Assessment Issues	Yes
VISION MET	
Expanded learning opportunities	Yes
Global educational opportunities	Possibly
Access for all students	Yes
UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS 1-15 (Located on pages 16-17)	
Met	1-6, 8-10. 12, 13, 14, 15
Not Applicable	7, 11
Not Met	None

Inform Recalibration: Make Recommendations

Based on the process and decisions described above, the task force has many recommendations to propose with the goal of improving virtual education in Wyoming. Overall, the task force has made recommendations associated with three areas: part-time virtual education, full-time virtual education, and additional programmatic recommendations. Should the Wyoming State Legislature choose to move forward with the task force recommendations, students across Wyoming will have the opportunity to greatly enhance their educational opportunities through the availability of a variety of virtual education courses.

Part-Time Virtual Education Recommendations

To facilitate access to part-time online courses for all students, the task force recommends creating a platform in which Wyoming students have the ability to easily locate virtual education options and enroll in single online courses should they choose. The task force also recommends a means to increase district participation in developing and offering single online courses and accessing supplemental online opportunities on behalf of their students. The full list of recommendations for part-time virtual education are as follows:

1. Update the course catalog system currently known as the Wyoming Switchboard Network to decrease the complexity for WDE to maintain the course listing and increase the usability for schools, parents and students and districts with online programs (Phase I and II).
2. Develop an online pre-registration system to facilitate the enrollment of students into virtual education classes (Phase II).
3. Remove the Distance Learning Plan (DPL) requirement (Phase I and II).
4. Eliminate the course milestone requirement for single virtual education courses with a student's resident district monitoring progress through the learning management system and reporting the course in the same manner as face-to-face courses. (Phase I and II).
5. Require the district where the student receives more than 50% of instruction to be responsible for administration of all required state assessments and student performance accountability (Phase I and II).
6. Require Wyoming educators teaching virtual courses to receive annual professional development directly related to teaching in the virtual education environment.
7. Provide professional development to educators focused on the development of virtual education courses and online instruction pedagogy (Phase II).
8. Do not require educators to possess a virtual education endorsement with their teaching certificates, but this should be revisited as more educators begin teaching online. (Phase I and II)
9. Make virtual education single courses available statewide to increase access for all students (Phase I and II)
10. Virtual courses are approved by the WDE (Phase I and II).
11. Virtual education courses are taught by Wyoming certified educators that are employed by Wyoming school districts.
12. Virtual education courses are aligned to Wyoming content standards.
13. Develop a state hosted learning management system (LMS).

14. Associated Funding Recommendation: The online course provider district would set a course fee. The fees would be due twenty days after the course begins and the student successfully begins the coursework. If the student does not successfully begin the coursework within the twenty days, the district would pay the course fee. Billing would initiate in the online course district providers and sent to the district requesting access to the course. Funding model resources would continue to be generated through ADM at the resident district. ***The DETF recommends the Legislature provide guidance on how districts should set a course fee or if another approach to funding the courses is appropriate (Phase I and II).***

Table 4 provides a summary of these recommendations comparing which recommendation impact Phase I, Phase II or both.

Table 4: Key Recommendations for Part-Time Virtual Education Models by Phase
<u>Legend</u>: ✓-Included, X-Not Included

Recommendation	Phase I	Phase II
Centralized Online Course Catalog	✓	✓
Online Pre-Registration System	X	✓
Distance Learning Plan Required	X	X
Milestones Required	X	X
Assessment and Accountability Requirements Stay with District Where Student Received 50% or More of Instruction	✓	✓
Required Annual Professional Development for Virtual Education Educators	X	✓

Recommendation	Phase I	Phase II
WDE Professional Development for Course Development and Pedagogy	X	✔
Virtual Education Certification from PTSB	X	X
Available Statewide	✔	✔
Approved Course Development Process	✔	✔
Taught by Wyoming Certified Teachers	✔	✔
Virtual Education Teachers Employed by School Districts	✔	✔
Aligned to Wyoming Standards	✔	✔
State Hosted Learning Management System (LMS)	X	✔
Single Course Fee	✔	✔

Full-Time Virtual Education Recommendations

Given the nature of full-time virtual education, a different set of recommendations are needed. To meet the needs of full-time virtual education students in Wyoming, the DETF proposes making the following revisions to the current virtual education mode:

1. Remove the Distance Learning Plans (DPL) requirement.

2. Provide separate performance reporting related to assessment and accountability for virtual education programs within a district to increase transparency of student performance. This would require a change to the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act since the reporting is limited to schools.

3. Enroll full-time virtual students in the districts where they receive a majority of their instruction.

4. Require the district where the student receives more than 50% of instruction to ensure students take required state assessments and is accountable for those results.

5. Require a set number of milestones for each course. The task force is recommending 36 milestones for a year-long course and 18 milestones for a semester course.

6. Allow districts to collect enrollment fees for brick and mortar courses for full-time virtual education students not enrolled in their district.

7. Remove the enrollment fees districts receive for brick and mortar courses from inclusion in district revenues.

8. Maintain the requirement specifying virtual education educators must be Wyoming certified.

9. Maintain the requirements all courses must be aligned to Wyoming content standards.

10. Maintain the requirement all virtual education providers and their virtual education courses be approved through the WDE

11. Maintain the requirement all virtual education educators teaching Wyoming students are employed by Wyoming school districts.

12. The WDE should provide professional development opportunities to districts and educators to support course development and online teaching pedagogy.

13. Require Wyoming educators teaching virtual courses to receive annual professional development directly related to teaching in the virtual education environment.

14. Do not require educators to possess a virtual education endorsement in addition to their teaching certificates; however, this should be revisited as more educators begin teaching online.

Table 5 provides a comparison between the current full-time virtual model and the proposed major recommended by the DETF.

Table 5: Current and Proposed Full-Time Virtual Model Comparison
Legend: ✓-*Included, X-Not Included*

Recommendation	Current Model	Proposed Revisions
Centralize Online Course Catalog	✓	✓
Create Online Pre-Registration System	X	✓
Enroll Students in District Providing Virtual Education	✓	✓
Assessment and Accountability Requirements Stay with District Where Student Received 50% or More of Instruction	✓	✓
Separate Virtual Program Performance Reporting for Assessment and Accountability	X	✓
Course Development by Approved Online Providers	✓	✓
Require Educators to be Wyoming Certified	✓	✓
Aligned to Wyoming Standards	✓	✓
Employ Educators By Wyoming Districts	✓	✓
Certification for Virtual Education Educators from PTSB	X	X
Require Annual Professional Development for Virtual Education Educators	X	✓

Recommendation	Current Model	Proposed Revisions
Collect Enrollment Fees by Districts for Brick and Mortar Courses for Full-Time Virtual Education Students Without Impacting District Revenues	X	✓
Simplify Milestones= 36 for Year-Long Courses and 18 for Semester Courses	X	✓
Create A Seat-Time Equivalency To Measure Student Progress and Funding	X	✓
Require Memorandums of Understanding	✓	X
Distance Learning Plan Required	✓	X

Additional Programmatic Recommendations

In addition to the recommended programmatic changes identified and described in the part-time and full-time virtual education models, the task force has further recommendations to improve virtual education in Wyoming.

WAVE Committee
To address rapidly changing needs and advances of virtual education and to better serve the needs of future student populations, the DETF recommends the creation of a committee to serve as an advisory body to the WDE and school districts in Wyoming to ensure the successful implementation and improvement of virtual education. The task force recommends the committee to be called "Wyoming Advancement of Virtual Education, or WAVE." This committee will ensure that virtual education in Wyoming will continue to remain agile and advance quality educational opportunities for all Wyoming students. A draft charter for WAVE can be found in Appendix C.

Definitions

It has become clear to the task force consideration must be given to revising definitions of terms related to virtual education and including some definitions not currently provided. The definitions requiring revision include: distance education, resident district and nonresident district, and part-time and full-time virtual education definitions. It is the belief of the task force these definitions should be included in statutes.

Distance Education Definition

The current definition of distance education should be revised to more broadly reflect the possibilities of providing education through many means of technology whether students and teachers are separated by time and space or not. As such, the task force recommends changing the term "distance education" to "virtual education" in all applicable instances. As the proposed revision defines education delivered primarily through technology, this change in term will allow for greater understanding of the scope and versatility of virtual education by defining the virtual education as "the delivery of K-12 education, primarily through technology, outside of the physical classroom as prescribed by Wyoming statute".

Resident and Nonresident District

As the majority of students who attend school full-time online have unenrolled from the district they live in and enrolled in a district with a statewide online program, the terms "resident district" and "nonresident district" defined in statutes have caused confusion and are no longer applicable in most cases. These definitions are mainly confusing because the districts with statewide online programs serve students from across the state and have the responsibilities described in statutes of both the "resident district" and "nonresident district." The definitions located in W.S. 21-13-330(iii-iv) are as follows:

> (iii) "Nonresident district" means the school district in which a participating student does not reside but which employs the distance education program teacher and which sponsors, approves, facilitates and supervises the distance education program course material provided to the participating student;
> (iv) "Resident district" means the school district in which the participating student resides, receives distance education program instruction and where the student's distance education learning plan is filed.

Part-Time and Full-Time Virtual Education Student

The task force has recognized the need to accurately define both part-time virtual student and full-time virtual student. The task force recommends defining a part-time student as any student

taking 50% or less of their courses online and defining a full-time student as any student taking more than 50% of their courses in an online format with a single virtual provider district.

Postsecondary and K-12 Virtual Education System

All seven community colleges have applied and been approved as Wyoming Switchboard Network (WSN) providers as they offer dual and concurrent enrollment online courses for secondary students. However, there is difficulty for these institutions to comply with the statutes and rules requiring development of milestones and submitting courses to the Wyoming Department of Education for approval because of the institution-based differences of college courses. The postsecondary institutions do not have the resources or understanding to align the courses to state content standards or to document milestones. The University of Wyoming has never applied to the Wyoming Department of Education to become an approved WSN provider. With these considerable differences, the task force recommends the postsecondary institutions be exempted from the requirements associated with being an approved WSN provider.

Conclusion

Over the course of seven months the DETF has generated and reviewed a number of proposed changes to the distance education program in Wyoming with the goal of improving the virtual educational and making those opportunities available to all students. Understanding the responsibility entrusted with them, the task force members were diligent in addressing each aspect of Enrolled Act 101 and strove to provide recommendations that will provide Wyoming taxpayers with transparency in the governance of virtual education and limit or minimize any impact to virtual program funding.

Knowing virtual education has the potential to serve students in circumstances where we may otherwise be unable to reach them, the task force understands the importance of an effective program being in place in order to reach as many learners as possible. Keeping this and the inevitable continuous changes of technology in mind, the task force strongly recommends a committee be formed to continue the work of improving virtual education on an ongoing basis and provide for a new agility in meeting the virtual education system demands. It is the goal of the task force to ensure its recommendations support all students in Wyoming have a variety of superior educational opportunities available to them throughout their educational experience.

Appendix A: House Enrolled Act 101

This report has been prepared by the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to meet the requirements of the 2015 House Enrolled Act No. 101, and provide the final report with the recommendations of the Distance Education Task Force.

House Enrolled Act 101

AN ACT relating to the study of distance education for informing recalibration of the education resource block grant model; establishing a task force; establishing duties; requiring reporting; and providing for an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:

Section 1.

(a) For the purposes of informing the 2015 recalibration of the education resource block grant model required by W.S 21-13-309(t), there is created a task force on distance education, chaired by the state superintendent of public instruction.

(b) The task force shall review distance education programs provided by or in cooperation with Wyoming school districts to students in grades kindergarten through twelve (12). The review shall include programs provided under W.S. 21-2-202(a)(xxxi), 21-13-330, 21-20-201 and programs using resources provided by the education resource block grant model. The taskforce shall compile a report containing recommendations for the following:

(i) Programmatic requirements for the delivery of quality distance education programs statewide that provide equal access and opportunity for all students enrolled in a Wyoming school district;

(ii) Guidance to ensure compliance with statewide education standards and student assessment and accountability requirements under W.S. 21-2-202, 21-2-204, 21-2-304 and 21-9-101, including but not limited to data collection requirements;

(iii) In consultation with the professional teaching standards board, professional certification requirements for distance education instructors;

(iv) A review of distance education that can be used to provide greater transparency in accounting for administering distance education program;

(v) Requirements for partnership agreements, if necessary, for school districts electing to collaborate in the delivery of a distance education program;

(vi) Guidance to ensure compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400.

Section 2. Commencing June 15, 2015, the department shall provide monthly progress reports on the work of the task force to the legislative service office. The legislative service office shall provide the reports to the appropriate legislative committees to ensure the progress reports are incorporated into the 2015 block grant model recalibration process. Not later than October 15, 2015, the department shall provide a final report documenting the recommendations of the task force to the legislative service office for distribution to the appropriate legislative committee.

Section 3. This act is effective immediately upon completion of all acts necessary for a bill to become law as provided by Article 4, Section 8 of the Wyoming Constitution.

Appendix B: Task Force Membership

Appointed Task Force Members

Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow is chair of the task force and appointed the following fourteen voting members in March 2015:

- Brent Bacon, *WDE Chief Academic Officer*
- Senator Stephan Pappas, *Laramie County Senate District 07*
- Representative John Freeman, *Sweetwater County House District 60*
- Aaron Carr, *Niobrara County School District No. 1 Superintendent*
- Shon Hocker, *Big Horn County School District No. 1 Superintendent*
- R.J. Kost, *Park County School District No. 1 Curriculum Coordinator*
- Brian Farmer, *Wyoming School Boards Association Executive Director*
- London Jenks, *Hot Springs County School District No. 1 Technology Coordinator*
- Scott Mecca, *Albany County School District No. 1 Teacher*
- Julia Cook, *Park County School District No. 6 parent*
- Denise Miller, *Natrona County School Dist. No. 1 Technology Instructional Facilitator*
- David Picard, *Wyoming Connections Academy lobbyist*
- Nicole Tiley, *Wyoming Virtual Academy Head of School*

Ex-Officio Distance Education Task Force Members
- Mike O'Donnell, *Wyoming Attorney General Special Assistant*
- Nick Bellack, *Professional Teaching Standards Board*

WDE Consultants to the Distance Education Task Force

- Rob Bryant, *Director of School Support*
- Laurel Ballard, *Student & Teacher Resources Team Supervisor*
- Alicia Kerns, *Digital Learning Consultant*
- Lori Kimbrough, *Digital Learning Consultant*
- Jed Cicarelli, *School Foundation Team Supervisor*

Appendix C: Proposed Wyoming Advancement of Virtual Education (WAVE) Charter

Wyoming Department of Education **Wyoming Advancement of Virtual Education** **Charter** **Draft September 15, 2015**	
Committee Name	Wyoming Advancement of Virtual Education (WAVE)
WAVE Advisor	Chief Academic Officer, WDE
WAVE Chair	State Education Technology Director
WAVE Membership	WDE Digital Learning Consultants Business Manager from the SFDAC Technology Director Virtual Education Teacher Technology Instructional Facilitator School District Superintendent School Board Member Curriculum Director Principal School Counselor Virtual Education Provider Parent of Virtual Student WDE Data WDE Finance Virtual Education Student Business and Industry Higher Education Membership will be determined as nominations from the different associated groups with a membership term of three (3) years Membership is preferred, but as best as can be obtained. Staggered membership terms

Meeting Schedule	Meet at least quarterly with virtual meetings unless a face-to-face is necessary	
Subcommittee Needs	Subcommittees can be formed to address specific topics	
WAVE Mission	WAVE will advise districts and analyze information to ensure the implementation and improvement of virtual education in the state is agile and continuously advances educational opportunities for all Wyoming students. WAVE committee reports to and makes improvement recommendations to the School Finance and Data Advisory Committee and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.	
Decision Making Approach	WAVE will aim for consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, decisions become consultative to the WAVE Advisor. Consensus - Everyone has had a chance to be heard and the will of the larger group has become evident. Everyone can live with the decision and agrees not to speak poorly of the decision. Consultative - Input is given to the team leader, and the team leader will make the decision.	
Expected Results and Measures of Success	**Results**	**Measures of Success**
	Developing solutions for continuously improving Wyoming's virtual education system	Recommendations to the State Superintendent for improvements to Wyoming's virtual education system are enacted.
	Evaluating the effectiveness of Wyoming's virtual education system	Annual report to the State Superintendent and Legislature on the effectiveness of Wyoming's virtual education system

Appendix D: Distance Education Task Force Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Intended Outcome	Statute or Rules Impacted
1.	Create a committee to meet at least quarterly to advise districts and analyze information related to virtual education	Continuously monitor and improve virtual education in Wyoming and act as an advisory panel to Wyoming districts.	Need statute created
2.	Change language from distance education to virtual education	Update terminology to match the evolving world related to digital learning.	Update W.S. 21-2-202 (a)(xxxi); 21-13-330; 2008 Wyoming Session Laws 204-05
3.	Define virtual education	Clarify the difference between students taking courses online asynchronously from other types of technology related learning.	Update W.S. 21-13-330(i)
4.	Define part-time virtual student and full-time virtual student	Provide a consistent definition to be used in programmatic and funding requirements related to students taking online courses on a part-time basis.	Need statute created or defined in rules
5.	Develop an accessible centralized online course catalog that is simple to use and update	Allow schools, parents and students to quickly ascertain which courses are available, the prices for courses and which district is offering the course.	No additional legislative action necessary
6.	Create a pre-registration system to initiate student enrollment in online courses taken on a part-time basis	Provide an avenue to facilitate the process for schools to quickly begin the enrollment process for students to take supplemental online courses.	No additional legislative action necessary

No.	Recommendation	Intended Outcome	Statute or Rules Impacted
7.	Implement a state hosted learning management system (LMS)	Provide a centralized platform for districts to offer online courses for students and track performance.	Need ongoing maintenance appropriation of $250,000.00 per biennium
8	Remove Distance Learning Plan (DLP) requirement	Track student progress and course completion through the LMS instead of creating a separate document for tracking.	Update W.S. 21-2-202 (a)(xxxi)(D); 21-13-330(i-v); Chapter 8 and 41 Rules
9.	Provide assessment performance reporting for full-time virtual education students separate from brick and mortar students	Determine performance of virtual education students and programs and allow the WDE to better understand the supports needed for school districts housing full-time virtual education programs.	Update W.S. 21-13-330(g)(ii)
10.	Enroll full-time virtual education students in districts providing more than 50% of their instruction, which may not be the district where they reside.	Eliminate Memorandums Of Understanding (MOU) between districts related to full-time virtual education and ensure the district providing a majority of the instruction for a student is accountable for the performance of those students.	Update W.S. 21-13-330(f)(iii- iv); 21-13-330 (g)(iii), 21-13-330 (h); Chapter 8 and 41 Rules
11.	Utilize a pay a per course fee for districts accessing part-time virtual education courses	Allow for a simple funding and billing process to encourage districts to provide additional virtual education opportunities.	Need statute created and revise Chapter 8 Rules
12.	Eliminate course milestone requirement for part-time virtual education students	Simplify the funding and billing process related to part-time virtual education students.	Need revision of Chapter 8 and 41 Rules

No.	Recommendation	Intended Outcome	Statute or Rules Impacted
13.	Fund full-time virtual education students using a simplified milestone and attendance model	Allow districts offering full-time virtual education programs to receive funding for students who are progressing through their coursework as well as students who need additional time to complete their coursework.	Update W.S. 21-13-330(h) and Chapter 8 Rules
14.	Change the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act to allow for separate reporting of virtual education programs within a school.	Provide greater transparency and accountability on the performance of virtual education programs. Providing an avenue for parents and students information to assist in determining if the virtual education programs are right for them.	Update W.S. 21-2-204
15.	Allow districts to collect course fees for brick and mortar classes taken by full-time online students.	Removes one barrier preventing full-time virtual education students from taking brick and mortar classes (such as welding or band).	Need statute created
16.	Remove tuition for brick and mortar courses for full-time virtual education students from inclusion in district revenues.	Removes one barrier preventing full-time virtual education students from taking brick and mortar classes (such as welding or band).	Update W.S. 21-13-310 (a)(ix)
17.	Maintain the requirement specifying virtual education educators must be Wyoming certified.	To ensure the minimum level of qualifications for virtual education educators matches the qualification for brick and mortar educators.	No additional legislative action necessary
18.	Maintain requirement all courses must be aligned to Wyoming content standards.	To ensure all Wyoming students receive instruction aligned to Wyoming Content and Performance Standards.	No additional legislative action necessary

No.	Recommendation	Intended Outcome	Statute or Rules Impacted
19.	Maintain the requirement that all virtual education providers and courses must be approved through the Wyoming Department of Education.	Ensure that all virtual education providers and their courses meet requirements detailed through state statute and Chapter 41 Rules.	No additional legislative action necessary
20.	Maintain the requirement all virtual education teachers teaching Wyoming students are employed by Wyoming school districts.	Ensure Wyoming school districts maintain the ability to hold educators accountable, direct work as needed and prevent negative accreditation impact.	No additional legislative action necessary
21.	Provide professional development from the WDE to districts and educators to support course development and online teaching methods.	With an increased need for virtual education educators, it is imperative to have easily accessible and relevant professional development opportunities available.	No additional legislative action necessary
22.	Require Wyoming educators teaching virtual education courses to receive annual professional development directly related to teaching in the online environment.	Ensuring all educators teaching virtual courses have professional development to support their ability to teach effectively in a rapidly evolving environment.	Need statute created

No.	Recommendation	Intended Outcome	Statute or Rules Impacted
23.	Do not require educators to possess additional virtual education endorsements in addition to their teaching certifications.	Allow for more educators to become involved in virtual education instead of limiting it at this time.	Need statute created
24.	Remove postsecondary courses from the K-12 virtual education requirements.	The postsecondary system operates differently and needs to be addressed separately from the K-12 programmatic and funding requirements.	Need revision of Chapter 41 Rules
25.	Make courses available statewide	Provide access for students to take virtual education courses.	No additional legislative action necessary

Appendix E: Analysis of Full-Time Virtual Education Models Not Recommended by the Task Force

Proposed Full-Time Enrollment Model 1

Proposed Full-Time Model 1 would require the formation of a statewide school district and would emphasize the importance of incorporating non-credit courses (supplementary electronic educational resources) and professional development opportunities into the statewide credit-bearing virtual course offerings.

This model would include those vendors currently providing K-12 full-time enrollment opportunities for Wyoming students, as well as providing a course catalog and registration assistance for additional part-time course enrollment opportunities. This model would continue the current approval for all providers and for all courses offered as well as requiring a cap to be set on the course loads for both teachers and students participating part-time.

Evaluation of Proposed Full-Time Enrollment Model 1
DETF Recommendation: Do NOT adopt this model
This model is NOT recommended

The description for this model located in Generate Solutions section above on page 19 varies from the information here which includes changes as the DETF evaluated the full-time models.

This model would include those vendors currently providing K-12 full-time enrollment opportunities for Wyoming students, as well as providing a course catalog and registration assistance for additional part-time course enrollment opportunities. This model would continue the current approval for all providers and for all courses offered as well as requiring a cap to be set on the course loads for both teachers and students participating part-time.

The DETF discussed significant increase in funding that would be required by the Legislature to implement this model. If this model were to move forward, a cost-based funding model for virtual education would need to be explored further.

CHALLENGES RESOLVED	
Current Challenges	**Resolved by the Model?**
Online Single Course Access	Yes
Brick and Mortar Single Course Access	Not Directly Addressed
Reporting Issues	Yes
Assessment Issues	Yes
VISION MET	
Expanded learning opportunities	Yes
Global educational opportunities	Possibly
Access for all students	Yes
UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS 1-15	
Met	1-3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15
Not Applicable	7, 11, 14
Not Met	5, 9

Proposed Full-Time Model 2

A second potential full-time model was discussed. In this model, each school district in Wyoming would have the opportunity to house a "Virtual School." The virtual school would be treated the same as any other school. There was also discussion about potentially making these schools a different type of alternative school. This model could solve many of the reporting and accountability concerns brought forward to the DETF.

Evaluation of Proposed Full-Time Model 2
DETF Recommendation: Do not adopt this model
This Model is NOT Recommended

This model would resolve many of the identified challenges, however, the DETF discussed the fact that an increase in funding would be required by the Legislature to implement this model. Previous requests for creating new virtual schools estimated the increase of funding to be approximately $2 million for a three school configuration (elementary, middle and high school). If additional districts created their own virtual schools, there would be significant increases in funding required by the Legislature.

CHALLENGES RESOLVED	
Current Challenges	**Resolved by the Model?**
Online Single Course Access	Not Addressed
Brick and Mortar Single Course Access	Not Directly Addressed
Reporting Issues	Yes
Assessment Issues	Not Addressed
VISION MET	
Expanded learning opportunities	Possibly
Global educational opportunities	Possibly
Access for all students	Yes
UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS 1-15	
Met	1-4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15
Not Applicable	7, 11, 12
Not Met	5

Attachment G:

Report on ETA Account Expenditures Related to

Implementing and Building Agency Capacity to Support the

Statewide Education Accountability System

Education Testing & Assessment (ETA) and State System of Support (SSoS) Expenditures					
Funding Source	$ Available	Expenditure Amount	Purpose	Remaining Balance	Notes
4602 - ETA (one-time appropriation ends 6/30/16)	$1,000,000	$25,000	Alternative Schools TAG 2015 Laws, Chapter 179, Section 5	$975,000	Travel only for those not part of gov't entity (partially expended)
4602 - ETA (one-time appropriation ends 6/30/16)	$975,000	$25,000	Assessment Task Force 2015 Laws, Chapter 179, Section 6	$950,000	Travel only for those not part of gov't entity (partially expended)
4602 - ETA (one-time appropriation ends 6/30/16)	$950,000	$190,200	Consultant Contract 2014 Laws, Chapter 26, Section 206, Footnote 5(a)(i)(A)	$759,800	Technical expertise for Phase 1 & 2 of WAEA (encumbered; partially expended)
4602 - ETA (one-time appropriation ends 6/30/16)	$759,800	$265,000	WyCEL ECHO Project 2014 Laws, Chapter 26, Section 206, Footnote 5(a)(i)(A)	$494,800	Support for Phase 1 & 2 of WAEA (encumbered; partially expended)
4602 - ETA (one-time appropriation ends 6/30/16)	$494,800	$88,000	WASA Statewide PLC 2015 Laws, Chapter 179, Section 6	$406,800	Support for Phase 2 of WAEA (encumbered)
4602 - ETA (one-time appropriation ends 6/30/16)	$406,800	$132,000	Consultant Contract 2015 Laws, Chapter 179, Section 6	$274,800	Strategic planning for SSoS (encumbered; partially expended)
4602 - ETA (one-time appropriation ends 6/30/16)	$274,800	$120,000	Technical Support 2015 Laws, Chapter 179, Section 6	$154,800	Technical expertise and support for SSoS (planned)
1327 Teacher & Leader Quality	$95,000	*	WAEA - Phase 2	*	Holding for additional expenditures related to Phase 2 of WAEA
1328 School Improvement	$957,000	$500,000	NCA Contract (1 yr)	$457,000	Encumbered
1328 School Improvement	$457,000	*	State System of Support	*	Holding for additional expenditures related to SSoS