



# Wyoming Department of Education

Dr. Jim McBride, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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## MEMORANDUM NO. 2008 - 082

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
Principals  
School Counselors *Jmcb*

**FROM:** Jim McBride, Ed.D. *Jmcb*  
Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction

**DATE:** June 06, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Wyoming Youth Challenge Program

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### IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

Attached is information on the Wyoming Youth ChalleNGe Program which is at risk of closing. This is a community-based program that leads, trains and mentors at-risk youth so that they can become productive citizens in America's future.

Participation in the program is voluntary for at-risk students and has a track record of positive results. However, membership suffers if school leaders do not share word of the opportunity that this program presents. I encourage you to consider the program for those students who are in need of such structured guidance.

Please share this information with your staff and peers. For additional information, please contact Theresa Smith at (307) 836-7503, Paul Holloway at (307) 836-7517, or Tina Kirlin at (307) 836-7518

JM:tl

Attachments



# State of Wyoming Military Department Office of the Adjutant General

5500 Bishop Boulevard  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3320  
(307) 772-5234  
(307) 772-5010 (Fax)

The Honorable Dave Freudenthal  
Governor, State of Wyoming  
200 West 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0110

Governor Freudenthal:

I am writing to ask for your help.

The Wyoming National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is at risk of closing.

As you recall, the ChalleNGe Program is a community-based program that leads, trains and mentors at-risk youth so that they can become productive citizens in America's future.

This award-winning program has been recognized as one of the nation's most effective and cost efficient programs for targeting youth who are at the greatest risk of substance abuse, teen pregnancy, delinquency, and criminal activity.

Wyoming's Youth ChalleNGe Program is located at the National Guard's state training site at Camp Guernsey. Our problem is our small enrollment. The program is intended to serve 200 students per year (100 per semester). Wyoming's program has been averaging about 30 students per class.

## THE PROBLEM:

The Program is funded 60% Federal and 40% State. The funding is intended to be \$14,000 per student (200 students X 14,000 = 2.8 million per year). The split has been \$1.68 Federal and \$1.12 State per year.

Because of our small student population, the Federal program administrators are proposing to fund next year's program at \$346,000 per year. That represents nearly an 80% reduction in Federal funding.

It will not be possible to continue the program if the state funding is also proportionately reduced.

Unless there is some immediate relief, the last ChalleNGe Program graduation will take place on June 15, 2008 and we will need to notify the staff of layoffs beginning May 30th (two weeks from now).

## WHAT WE'VE DONE TO HELP OURSELVES

1) Even with reduced funding and manning (26 FTEs vs 45 authorized), we have placed a priority of recruiting new students into the program. I recently solicited the help of the Dr. McBride, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in marketing the program to public school administrators, counselors, and teachers. Our program staff are making personal contact with members of the judiciary, probation and parole and service providers for at-risk students across the state.

2) I have arranged for the Military Department's budget analyst at A&I (Dawn Agar) to visit the program and validate the MINIMUM amount of money required to operate a small-scale program like Wyoming's. This will be followed up by a comprehensive visit and audit by the Federal administrators in July, 2008.

3) We have contacted our Congressional delegation and the senior military leaders at National Guard Bureau, asking for their assistance in finding a formula which will allow a small-population state like Wyoming to continue to operate its program.

4) We are in discussions with Montana's Youth Challenge Program to accept Wyoming's female clients in exchange for male clients. This should allow significant savings to the program and still allow Wyoming females to receive the benefits of a Challenge Program.

4) I have asked the Wyoming Attorney General's Office to issue an opinion regarding the legality of spending (more than a 40% match) of the state's appropriation for the Youth ChalleNGe Program.

All of these things will take some time....and that is a commodity we don't have given the upcoming end of the fiscal year.

## MY REQUEST

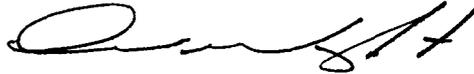
Subject to a favorable Attorney General's opinion, I am asking for the authority to spend five hundred fifty-four thousand (\$554,000) of the state's (\$1.12 million) appropriation for the Wyoming National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program for the next class (July – December, 2008).

That would allow (with \$346,000 Federal Program authorization; and grants from the Department of Education) the Youth ChalleNGe Program to operate for one more semester. By that time, I hope (with the cooperation of the state and federal appropriators) to have established both a sustainable (and larger) student population base and a funding formula that accommodates a Youth ChalleNGe Program operating in a small-population state.

As you know, this is not a request for new or more money.....the appropriation is already in the budget. I am simply asking for authority to spend the state appropriated money in light of the reduction in the federal match.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ED WRIGHT  
MG, WY NG  
The Adjutant General