



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2008 – 121

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Jim McBride, Ed.D. 

DATE: August 29, 2008

SUBJECT: **Essential Information Collected Over the Summer**

PLEASE SHARE INFORMATION WITH YOUR STAFF

With the beginning of the school year quickly approaching, I want to offer a few observations and reminders that may be helpful to you and your staff.

1. Frequently in my conversation with district administrators, I find that they haven't seen or don't know where to find school data. In the next few days, before your staff is too busy with back to school issues, please encourage them to visit our web site at www.k12.wy.us. To find school data information, choose the "Popular Items" pull down menu and click on Data Collection and Educational Statistics. Click on "Every Student Counts – State Report Card," and your district or school to access more information. The amount of information available to you is amazing! If you have any problems, please contact Tim Lockwood at 307-777-6387.
2. I will be publishing the **Education Summary** again this year; we plan to mail it out by September 15, 2008. This year we will report 11th grade writing and junior class ACT scores and participation percentage in addition to 5th grade reading and 8th grade math. As you know W.S.-21-3-110 xxix [pg 306 of the 07 Education Law Book] requires participation. The Legislature gave WDE adequate funds to pay for each and every student to take either ACT or Work Keys. Please make sure you are using your ACT data to guide class schedule development for your seniors.
3. Last year I sent several memos to you about school security. **WeTip** was mentioned in a number of them. I've attached a recent report. As you can see, some districts have bought into the program and some have not. This year, we have sent out brochures, posters and district contact sheet. They arrived in mid August directly from WeTip. Sups Memo 2008-107 (the only one we sent out that week) requested that districts distribute these items. It also asked you to

send in a contact sheet so WeTip could know who to contact in the event of a tip. Currently, 75% of the districts have sent in their contact sheets. This covers 92.61% of the state student body. The other districts are in some condition of partial compliance. Every student, every parent, every staff member should have 1-800-78-CRIME or 1-800-78-27463 stored in their phone. As mentioned in the memos, reporting criminal information is 100% anonymous. Also, please take a few minutes to complete the reporting information contact sheet. It takes only a few minutes and it's done for the year. If you have any questions or need the form, please call Bruce Hayes at 307-777-6198.

4. At the end of last year I received the single best study I'd seen all year, "**Community Service as an Alternative to Suspension, A Practical Program Toolkit.**" I can only say Wow! We received our copy from the University of Arizona, Professor, Kris Bosworth and Director Jean Ajamie. They can be reached at the University at P.O. Box 210069, Tucson, AZ 85721-0069. There is also additional information at Serviceoptions.org. It's absolutely worth a look.
5. Job Corps and Youth Challenge Program. You have undoubtedly heard that we are getting a Job Corps. It will be located in Riverton. Please support the concept and project and ask for the support of your staff and community. Similarly, the Wyoming National Guard operates a completely volunteer, resident Youth Challenge Program. The National Guard can work in conjunction with you as an alternative placement while students address their problems and continue to work on academics. For those who stay [about ½] their success rate has been very good. We are working on the logistics so you can keep the ADM and simply pay the Guard or local district for the education portion. This is a work in progress but contact Joe Simpson at 307-777-7674 for more information.
6. The rules and regulations for distance education, Section 5(a) of Senate File 70, state that "prospective distance education providers shall submit a letter of intent to the Department applying to add its distance education programs to the Wyoming Switchboard Network (WSN) by May 1 to be considered for the succeeding school year." The Department acknowledges that the rules and regulations were released after this date creating a scenario where districts could not meet the deadline for 2008-2009. As such, no courses will be evaluated for introduction to the WSN for this year, with the exception of those districts that have in the past offered distance education courses and were already scheduled

prior to the legislation being enacted. The original intent of the May 1 deadline was to ensure prudence and to allow districts adequate time to plan, research, prepare, conduct professional development and training, and orientate staff to the program towards a seamless addition in their district. This is a transition year for state-recognized distance education processes on its way to full implementation and waivers to permit otherwise will not be considered.

7. Picus Study on the Wyoming School Use of Resources. I've had an opportunity to review this draft study [required by legislators]. The study is extensive and makes many points, however, one point that teachers constantly make to me, the study validates. One key additional point is the number of electives being offered. Essentially, the study [and I] will recommend a very careful review of electives and an effort to keep core curricula classes to the size of the funding model [16 students in the elementary and 21 for high schools.] Reducing the number of electives and having those teachers teach a smaller core class is one recommendation. The theory is more; smaller core classes will improve student achievement. Picus and Associates also did a summary research article on "Doubling Performance." We will place that article and the Study on our web site as soon as we possibly can.

8. National Child Identification Program
This fall we will be introducing you to the National Child Identification Program. This is a very effective program sponsored by the Cowboy Joe Club through UW and the American Football Coaches Association. An ID kit will be provided for children in the fall of the upcoming school year. The kit includes collection information for both DNA and finger prints [a current school picture is also recommended] and the entire package remains with the parents so there is no invasion of privacy or release of personal information. We hope that parents never need to turn a single kit over to authorities but national statistics suggest otherwise. Over, 50,000 kids are abducted annually by non-family members and another 450,000 children run away - - many of those go missing permanently. Please consider having every child participate - this is easy, important, and for the younger kids fun! Bruce Hayes (307-777-6198) will be coordinating this project for WDE.

Thank you for sharing this information with your staff and WELCOME BACK. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER GREAT YEAR! I look forward to working with you and encourage you to contact me if you ever have questions.

JM:rew
Attachments