



Wyoming Department of Education

Cindy Hill, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Hathaway Building, 2nd Floor, 2300 Capitol Avenue

Cheyenne, WY 82002-0050

Phone: (307) 777-7675 | Fax: (307) 777-6234 | edu.wyoming.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - JULY 18, 2014

Visit edu.wyoming.gov/press for contact details

DISTANCE EDUCATION GRANTS AWARDED

CHEYENNE - Four school districts and two community colleges in Wyoming have been awarded grants from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to fund improvements to their distance education programs. The total of all grants awarded is \$248,086 and each grant gives the recipients extra funding for developing new online courses, professional development, and maintenance of their distance education system.

“There is a great need to increase the availability and quality of distance education programs in our state,” Edward Olson, Distance Education Consultant at the WDE said. “With these sorts of programs students from around the state can take classes that would otherwise be unavailable to them, such as advanced mathematics, foreign languages, and even art.”

“In the past Wyoming students have been limited by geography, distance, and teacher availability in terms of the classes they can take,” Olson continued. “With the technology we have today, there’s no reason we can’t overcome those limitations.”

Those receiving grants this year are Campbell County School District #1, Fremont County School District #24, Natrona County School District #1, Niobrara County School District #1, Northwest Community College (NWCC) in Sheridan, and Laramie County Community College (LCCC) in Cheyenne.

SCHOOL DISTRICT GRANTS

Campbell County School District #1 will be receiving its grant funding for additional content design and creation of a keyboarding class, and professional development to attend an online learning conference. The grant will also help offset the cost of the Campbell County virtual school including course management software, records keeping, milestone tracking, daily operations, and other vital functions of its distance education program.

Fremont County School District #24 will be using grant funds to implement its program, “Why Not Wyoming: Tailored Virtual Learning,” which will include the design and creation of a number

of online-based courses in the English and language arts, Math, Music, Physical Education, and Art. The grant will also fund efforts to support the program, such as the creation and maintenance of related web sites and professional development, to provide blended learning opportunities and increase resources for instructors, students, and parents.

Natrona County School District #1 will receive a grant to fund comprehensive professional development training on its online system including management, supervision, and delivery of distance education. The grant will also fund stipends for Natrona County teachers to take supplemental distance education courses.

Niobrara County School District #1 is receiving a grant to fund training of teachers and administrators to increase the effectiveness of its various distance education tools. Such training and professional development will include new teacher training, face-to-face professional development, best practices for online instruction, and how to effectively teach math and writing online. Niobrara County's grant will also provide funding for membership in distance education support groups, and attendance at conferences.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRANTS

NWCC in Sheridan is receiving a grant to increase the online availability for dual enrollment high school student of introductory courses for a its Human Services Degree that includes Counseling Ethics, Counseling Skills, Case Management, and Drugs and Behavior. The grant will help to increase access to distance and post-secondary education opportunities, provide curriculum development opportunities for college and high school faculty, and provide a collaborative opportunity for college high school faculty to align curriculum.

The grant for NWCC will also help provide professional development and maintenance and operational needs surrounding its distance education program. These programs provide preparation and training activities that lead to effective, cutting-edge facilitation of online and web-enhanced courses. The goals are to strengthen communities through ongoing student and instructor engagement, and provide ongoing curricular and technical support.

LCCC in Cheyenne will also be using grant funds to create new online courses for dual enrollment high school students in the human services field. Courses to be designed and created using the grant funds include Orientation to Human Services, Case Management, and Ethics for Helping Professions.

For more information please contact Travis Hoff at (307) 777-2053 or travis.hoff@wyo.gov.