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# Report on the General Status of Wyoming Public Schools

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**A Report to the Wyoming People and to the State Legislature  
Submitted October 15, 2014**

## I. Introduction

The Wyoming Legislature, after studying the case of *Powers and Hill v. Mead*<sup>1</sup>, opened the question of what should be the proper structure of statewide educational governance. As the outgoing Superintendent of Public Instruction, and having observed first-hand the manipulations of education through ill-conceived and poorly crafted legislation, as well with the hindsight of how legislation can serve – or hinder – the educational opportunities available to Wyoming students, I believe I can offer an informed view and that I can make appropriate suggestions related to this task.

Such a discussion must always begin by considering the Constitutional framework for education in Wyoming. Unless we understand the framers’ vision for education in Wyoming, we risk making Constitutionally offensive policy and governance

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decisions. Article 7, Section 1 sets forth the role of the Wyoming Legislature when it comes to public education. The Legislature is the funding arm of public education tasked to “provide for” the establishment and maintenance of the public schools:

The legislature shall provide for the establishment and maintenance of a complete and uniform system of public instruction, embracing free elementary schools of every needed kind and grade, a university with such technical and professional departments as the public good may require and the means of the state allow, and such other institutions as may be necessary.

As the Constitutional text reflects, the requirement to ensure *funding* for the public schools comes through this provision. Neither Article 7, Section 1, nor any other provision in the Wyoming Constitution, defines or contemplates a legislative role in the *management* of schools. Instead, the framers confined the Legislature’s responsibilities to funding. For example, Article 7, Section 2 is entitled “School revenues.” Article 7, Section 3 is entitled “Other sources of school revenues.” Article 7, Section 4 is entitled “Restriction in use of revenues.” Article 7, Section 5 is entitled “Fines and penalties to belong to public school fund.” Article 7, Section 6 is entitled “State to keep school funds; investment.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Kerry and Clara Powers, on behalf of themselves and the citizens of Wyoming, and Cindy Hill, on behalf of herself and as Superintendent of Public Instruction v. State of Wyoming and Matthew H. Mead, Governor, in his official capacity.* 318 P.3d 300 (Wyo. 2014)

The Legislative function has been stretching to the extreme what I refer to as a “revenue theory.” Those subscribing to this theory believe that along with the responsibility to fund schools equitably, comes the concurrent responsibility to manage the activities within schools. For reasons that will be discussed below, inconsistent, fragmented, and out-of-touch education policies often result when this type of micromanagement occurs.

**The legislatively created structure for education governance tends to confuse responsibility and make the implementation of a unified vision for student excellence all but impossible.**

In our state, the Legislature has created a complicated administrative system separating school construction (School Facilities department), licensing and monitoring of teachers (Professional Teaching Standards Board), and a policy-body that increasingly has become an implementation body (State Board of Education). This structure tends to confuse responsibility and make the implementation of a unified vision for student excellence all but impossible.

I am not suggesting that accountability for the expenditures and the quality of the services rendered by schools is not important. They are. I further agree that this accountability is a legitimate concern of the people through their elected legislative representatives.

This accountability, however, has been all but lost under the existing structure because the responsibilities have been divided leaving no one source of ultimate responsibility. To be effective, there must be a single person

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However, when the Legislature mandates the types of student tests – whether or not consistent with the purpose for which the test was designed; when it mandates the evaluation of teachers – using factors known to be inappropriate for that task; when it assumes control over the content of student learning – though inconsistent with Wyoming values; and when it designs an educational system to delegate federal regulation of our schools – all in contravention of our long standing tradition and Constitutionally provided concept of local control; then it becomes apparent that Legislature has far exceeded its legitimate power.

Therefore, it is the duty of the popularly-elected Superintendent of Public Instruction to illuminate these excesses, to advocate for change, to resist the transfer of power to the Legislature, and to seek a return of the balance of power described within our Constitution.

Inherent within our Constitution is a balance of power that is too commonly ignored by the Legislature in its rush to solve all problems, real or imagined, and to manage all systems, large or small, and to eradicate all powers of an Executive Officer elected by all of the people of this

great state. The failure of a Superintendent to point this out, to advocate for the citizens, and to resist federalization of our schools, will be the death knell of the public voice in supervision of public schools. At that moment we will have ceded our control of schools to faceless bureaucrats -- be they in Cheyenne or in Washington.

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I offer the citizens of Wyoming and the Wyoming Legislature a summary and overview of the state of education in Wyoming along with recommendations for regaining our focus on our mutual goal of producing the best students, the best schools ,and ultimately the best citizens in the nation.

We must return to our mission – student learning. The more bureaucratic requirements we heap upon teachers, the less focused their work becomes. Teaching time decreases in direct proportion to bureaucratic requirements. Talk to any teacher in Wyoming. Chief among their complaints are that they are being asked to leave the classroom or abandon planning time to attend an endless succession of meetings, most having little to do with instruction, and their instructional time is too frequently interrupted by endless batteries of tests.

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These are products of top-down thinking. From a common sense perspective, we know that neither Congress nor the Wyoming Legislature will teach a child to read, to write, to perform mathematical functions, or to critically think.

Only professionalism and instructional leadership by our valued teachers and administrators achieve these ends. In my report of [October 15, 2013](#), I outlined the progression of federal involvement in Wyoming education. It persists; and the legislature remains complicit through statutes and policies that encourage federalization.

I encourage the Legislature to examine all advice it receives and every action it takes with the questions: “Will this improve the classroom teacher’s ability to teach?” and “Will this action diminish local control, and will it hamper the identification of great solutions that arise from within the community?”

Above all else, we must ensure high quality instruction and increase the amount of time teachers have with their students. Throughout this report the reader will see that quality instruction and instructional time are the keys to improved student performance. More than in

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any other place, Wyoming tax dollars are most effectively spent on developing best practices and increasing the time that teachers have with their students.

**We must look within to find solutions, honoring those who do the hard work on a daily basis. Only then will we become a national leader in education.**

A repeated theme of this report is that we must listen to Wyoming people about what *they* want from public education, and how *they* define success. I submit this report with the sincere hope that the issues identified here will spur continued discussion and the development, where appropriate, of effective policies. I continue to assert that we, the people of Wyoming, possess all the experience and problem-solving skills required to arrive at solutions appropriate to our schools and fitted to the specific needs of our students. *Outside “experts” and top-down leadership have proven to be of little value.* We must look within to find solutions, honoring those who do the hard work on a daily basis. Only then will we become a national leader in education.

Cheyenne, Wyoming, October 15, 2014

Cindy Hill



Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction

## II. Quality of Education

Let us start by examining the role of each of the major contributors to educational success in Wyoming as only then can we appreciate quality when it appears before us.

### Local considerations

#### Students

Students are both subject and beneficiaries of the educational effort, but too often feel distracted from their work, discounted in educational decision-making, and disconnected from their schools. A recent study by Gallup<sup>2</sup>, concluded, among other things, that a Student Bill of Rights should be adopted by local schools and districts and if necessary by the legislature. These Rights are consistent with attaining educational excellence while keeping students fully engaged, thus enabling them to be successfully launched into adult careers or college.

#### Parents

Parents, especially those of our youngest students, can be effective advocates for the needs of students but are often distracted by numerous demands on their time. Parents need effective advocacy. Where absent, community and statewide parent organizations

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should come into existence to effectively advocate on behalf of students and parents. Parents should be empowered to present their concerns to local boards and those boards should have sufficient authority to react to those concerns. This will create an accountability system at a local level allowing each community to adopt policies and programs consistent with community values and needs. Parents must expect high standards of achievement and demand corrections when the expectation is not met. This applies equally to the students as to the school. It is parents who bear the responsibility to identify systemic or personnel issues and then to require the corrective action. The essential voice of the parents must be present at every step.

#### Teachers

Teachers, after parents, are those persons most directly responsible for student learning. We need to treat them as professionals, to rely on their professional skills and expertise, to trust that they have the best interest of students as their foremost objective, and to hold them true

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<sup>2</sup> *State of America's Schools, The Path to Winning Again in Education.* Gallup, Inc., 2014

to this trust. They will remain responsible to the parents and to their school administration, but they must have the authority to make professional decisions appropriate for each child. In this capacity, teachers must bear the responsibility of the child's educational progress within the reasonable limits of that teacher's authority. See Appendix A for further explication of the teacher's role in the system.

## Principals

Principals represent the leadership that is critical to a thriving school. Principals have the ultimate responsibility for the educational experience within the school and, therefore, must have the power required to effectively accomplish this task. This includes proper training and provision of resources, but also the proper support to improve the teaching within each building through acquisition of professional development or, when required, the hiring of better teachers. Similar to teachers, the principals must have clear objectives and the means to accomplish the objectives. As such they must not become overburdened with administrative duties, especially if such duties do not directly lead to improvement of the educational experience of students.

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## District Superintendents

District Superintendents bear the responsibility for district performance. They must have direct access to each system within the district. Ultimately, the Superintendent of a district must lead the district in pursuit of board described goals. As such, Superintendents are a primary consumer of data, especially as it relates to legislatively adopted accountability structures. Superintendents currently possess the ability to dismiss or reassign principals who are failing to accomplish educational goals within the vision adopted by the District. If possessing a clear leadership vision and when provided adequate resources and authority, then should the District fail to achieve the goals established by the school board, with the benefit of parental and community input, one will find responsibility is clearly laid at the feet of the Superintendent to take such actions as are needed to fulfill the district objectives.

## School Boards

School Boards are composed of locally elected citizens. Guided by community standards each board establishes district goals and local policy. Under our Constitutional system, the local board possesses ultimate control over the educational program delivered by the district. If provided with proper resources, the local board must be accountable to the community for its successes or failures. It must be capably led and have a clear understanding of its work. It bears the responsibility of hiring leaders of vision and then empowering those leaders with all things needed to accomplish district goals and expectations. School boards should welcome, indeed they should seek, parental and community engagement in discussions around the health of the district.

Generally speaking, our local systems work despite the barriers we have created in Cheyenne or the intrusive regulations that accompany federal funds. But we need to consider how well these systems could thrive if unfettered.

## State level considerations

With the local educational system designed and functioning in Wyoming, it is relevant to examine the role of state-level activity. State level activities rest in many hands – far more than Constitutionally anticipated or permitted. Almost every district relies heavily on funding provided by the state’s School Foundation.

While the equalization of funding is meritorious, it has created a mentality within the statehouse that the legislature must impose restraints and conditions to accompany the funding. The clearest example of this is the requirement that classroom sizes for grades kindergarten through third be at or below 16 students. While most could agree that smaller classrooms are desirable, there is little empirical research supporting this as an effective means to better student achievement. Thus a review of state level participation is always in order.

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### Superintendent of Public Instruction

Under Article 7, Section 14 of the Wyoming Constitution the Superintendent is to exercise general supervision of the public schools of the state. The Superintendent also has such power and duties granted by law. *Powers v. Mead* recently affirmed that the power to prescribe or add to the duties to the office “does not provide the legislature with unrestricted power to eliminate or transfer powers and duties of the office of the Superintendent.”<sup>3</sup>

While this might lead one to surmise that the Office of the Superintendent is the pinnacle of the educational system in Wyoming, and while such a conclusion is supported by the clear language of the Constitution, such a conclusion is not consistent with the current system.

The Superintendent is the chief executive of the state department of education and among the primary responsibilities of the Office is supporting the work of the state board of education. As discussed previously, there are many aspects of statewide education over which the Superintendent has no influence, let alone supervisory control. For example, the Superintendent does not select state board

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<sup>3</sup> *Powers v. Mead*, 318 P.3d 300, 313 (Wyo. 2014)



members nor even have a means of suggesting replacement if a board member neglects his or her duties or otherwise acts in an inappropriate way.

Although cloaked with responsibility and answering to the electorate every four years, the Superintendent’s authority has been substantially diminished as will be discussed below.

### Legislature

The other significant Constitutional provisions dealing with education address the role of the legislature to “provide for the establishment and maintenance of a complete and uniform system of public instruction. . . .” Article 7, Section 1. The Legislature is to provide revenues to operate the schools and may tax as necessary to obtain those revenues. Article 1, Sections 2 - 9. The legislature may prescribe additional powers and duties for the Superintendent (Article 7, Section 14). Through judicial interpretation of the Constitution, the Legislature’s duties have been refined to require it provide equal funding for the operation of schools and equalization of school facilities. (Include citation to Washakie county, and Campbell county decisions).

Through judicial interpretation of the constitution, the Legislature’s duties have been refined to require it provide equal funding for the operation of schools and equalization of school facilities.

As will be discussed, the Legislature has become increasingly active in school matters and since 1969 the legislature has expanded its involvement beyond any previous concept of legislative policy making. Notwithstanding a rather steady decline in educational performance since 1969, the legislative actions have yet to be judicially reviewed. As educational governance is now the topic de jour, the time may now be ripe for a Constitutional clarification of the legislative role.

### Governor

The Constitutional role of the governor in education is restricted to approving (or vetoing) legislation, including bills related to education. Nevertheless, as will be seen below, the power of the governor in education has increased through legislative action with no corresponding responsibility place upon the governor.

### State Board of Education, School Facilities Division, Department of Enterprise Technology, Professional Teaching Standards Board

While each of these entities has been endowed by the legislature with educational power, none of these bodies was anticipated by the Constitution and the educational functions of each properly belong to the chain of authority under the Superintendent as discussed below.

## The confusion created by legislative action

In *Powers v. Mead*, the Wyoming Supreme Court said:

While the legislature can prescribe powers and duties of the Superintendent, it cannot eliminate or transfer powers and duties

to such an extent that the Superintendent no longer maintains the power of “general supervision of the public schools.”<sup>4</sup>

Although not provided in the Constitution, the legislature has pared duties and power from the Superintendent and vested those duties and power in legislatively created bodies as follows:

### **State Board of Education**

Wyoming has a long history with a state board of education. For 50 years following 1919, the State Board was appointed and could be dismissed for cause by the Superintendent (subject to governor approval). With the adoption of the Education Code of 1969, the Superintendent’s power was further diminished while the governor’s role increased as the Governor now appoints all members to the State Board other than the Superintendent.

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*Powers v. Mead*

Although the pre-1969 system allowed for the State Board to appoint a commissioner, it provided that the commissioner was subject to supervision by the Superintendent and the commissioner was the person through whom the superintendent interacted with the schools. Ultimately, during this 50 year period from 1919 to 1969, the Superintendent held ultimate authority and power to execute the work of general supervision of the public schools. Interestingly many point to this period of time as the zenith of public education, especially in Wyoming. This alone suggests the Education Code should be thoroughly re-examined.

### **School facilities division.**

This agency was legislatively created to support the equalization of school facilities across the state. Originally the division included the Superintendent as a voting member but from its inception the governor was responsible for the appointments to the board. With the removal of the voting authority, the Superintendent’s role has become primarily advisory to the division. At the same time, the division has acquired additional power such as the duty assigned to the division’s director to join in the approval of school reconfiguration requests, although this responsibility was historically the responsibility of the Superintendent as these decisions often dramatically impact the public education offered in the district. It should be noted that as schools become increasingly dependent upon state funds for school projects, the school leaders are decreasingly likely to criticize actions taken by those in control of the project funding, which in the state of Wyoming primarily rests with the governor and the legislature.

### **Professional Teaching Standards Board.**

This board is charged with monitoring teachers and approving teacher certification. This board was under the purview of the Superintendent through her appointment of the board’s membership. However, this power was diminished by the legislature when it transferred half of

<sup>4</sup> *Powers v. Mead*, 318 P.3d 300, 313 (Wyo. 2014)

the appointments to the governor. It is unclear to whom the board is responsible. Should the quality of the teacher corps in Wyoming come into question, the Superintendent will have no ability to cause this board to improve its accepted standard for teacher certifications. Similarly, while the governor appoints members, the governor has no responsibility for the resulting action or inaction of the board.

It is unclear to whom the board is responsible. Should the quality of the teacher corps in Wyoming come into question, the Superintendent will have no ability to cause this board to improve its accepted standards for teacher certifications.

Capable, professional leadership of the board remains critical but is not guaranteed under this bifurcated model.

### **Department of Enterprise Technology Services (DETS).**

Collection and use of educational data has always been a primary activity of the Superintendent directly or through the department of the education after its formal establishment in 1969. Nevertheless, a new department (Department of Enterprise Services) has come into existence under the sole and exclusive control and purview of the governor. DETS has been granted the status of an educational entity for federal law purposes. It now is the warehouse of educational data and makes decisions on how and where to store the data. It also is in the process of developing a statewide longitudinal data system where educational data may be shared with non-educational entities for purposes not directly related to education. Thus, while it might appear that the Superintendent is collecting, storing and using

Thus, while it might appear that the Superintendent is collecting, storing and using student data, this has become largely illusory as a result of legislative stripping of power from the Superintendent and placing it in the hands of ETS, an agency led by a gubernatorial appointee.

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### **Governor.**

Although discussed herein, it can not be over-emphasized that the role of the governor in education is ever expanding. Even with SF 104 of the 2013 legislature having been ruled unconstitutional, the tentacles of the governor's office now stretch and grasp into nearly every aspect of the educational system. Strangely, however, very little is said by gubernatorial candidates about how they intend to act in the educational realm and very few citizens understand that the choice of the governor will have a dramatic impact upon the educational system. The ever-expanding powers of this office are not well understood and certainly beyond the separation and division of power anticipated by the Wyoming Constitution that clearly makes the Superintendent the person generally supervising the public schools.

## Others.

Private accreditation agencies now are used to replace a traditional role of the Superintendent and State Board. Assessment vendors are retained by the State Board for various purposes. Legislative committees hire consultants and contract for the actual performance of services related to education. In each case, the ultimate responsibility for these activities might appear to belong to the Superintendent but at this moment in time these functions exist with little to no supervision by the Superintendent.

One should question whether this system would survive scrutiny following *Powers v. Mead*, as cited above.

## Managerial framework

Axiomatic to all management theories is this concept: to be held responsible for a task or objective, a manager must have clear direction, adequate resources, and all necessary authority to accomplish the task or objective. As can be seen, this is not currently the situation in Wyoming. At least since 1969, substantial responsibilities have been directed to the governor for access to information, appointments to key boards, and approvals of rules, regulations and other activities. The Governor's role in education is entirely absent from the Constitution. Likewise the Governor's responsibility in education is largely misunderstood by the public, who correctly believe it is the Superintendent who was entrusted with public school systems.

**Axiomatic to all management theories is this concept: to be held responsible for a task or objective, a manager must have clear direction, adequate resources, and all necessary authority to accomplish the task or objective.**

Since 1969, Superintendents cannot rely on working with a state board of his or her own choosing, with a state board that will be supportive of the leadership of the Superintendent, and with a state board that will act as a council of advice to the Superintendent. Indeed, the state board now takes every opportunity to assume even more power. It has in years made a concerted effort to dominate the Superintendent, as most recently evidence by the board's comments to the Cross and Jofus study currently being considered by the legislature. However, the State Board is not found in the Constitution. It has no constitutional basis for its existence beyond the actions of the Legislature as approved by current and former governors.

*Powers v. Mead* stands for many propositions, but none more important than the Constitution expects and demands the Superintendent be possessed with the power to supervise the public schools. Since 1919, and more directly in 1969 (and many times since) the legislature has diminished the superintendent's powers and corresponding ability to accomplish the

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Constitutional duties and responsibilities. This is contrary to the holding in *Powers* and almost completely explains the governance issues currently under examination. Contrary to the clear Constitutional role of the Superintendent, powers and duties, responsibilities and authorities, are routinely stripped from the office of the Superintendent with little thought to the overall supervisory role that is clearly described in the Constitution.

Until the legislature reviews its role and returns the proper power and authority to the office of the superintendent, the parties within the system will continue to struggle with the question: Who is in charge of our public schools?

## Future

To improve Wyoming's educational system, a return of power and authority consistent at least with the 1919 legislative model, should be enacted by the legislature, or ordered by the courts. This necessitates a complete review of the Education Code and the respective roles described therein.

Once this is accomplished, a Superintendent can then be elected by the people of Wyoming who can effectively impact the education of Wyoming students. The electorate can then select the candidate who will possess a vision of the well-worn, and yet difficult, path towards success that includes establishing high expectations for students and parents, who will support of local vision and control, who possesses an appreciation of quality teaching, advocacy for adequate resources for districts in terms of materials, facilities, and curricula, who will encouragement of superior leadership at each administrative level in every district and who will have an effective voice to advocate for these goals.

### III. Suggested Innovation

The suggestions of the October 15, 2013 report of the Superintendent remain relevant and should be implemented. The current focus, however, seems directed towards education governance. In that regard, the Superintendent of Public Instruction proposes the following suggestions:

- The Constitutional system that served us well through 1969 should be reviewed. Deviations from that system - which have yet to survive a Constitutional scrutiny by the courts - should likewise be considered.
- Clarification of the respective roles of the Superintendent and the ancillary boards and commissions should be accomplished by returning to the elected official the power and authority to effectively engage these boards and commissions in a uniform and consistent manner that enables a State educational policy to be developed and consistently implemented.
- The Legislative role in policy making should be re-examined and returned to proper funding of schools. While appropriate to articulate state goals in education, the

mechanisms for achieving these goals should be left to the state agency and local boards. Measurement of the progress towards achievement of goals should be the focus of the accountability systems, but the system should encourage collaborative solutions shared within the state rather than outside intrusion of remedies or methods of only questionable applicability and value to Wyoming.

- Effort should be made to educate the public on the organizational structures of education and to encourage local participation in resolution of local issues by empowering local boards with all authority needed to accomplish educational objectives.
- Appropriate time to accomplish change should be anticipated and consistency in standards and goals should be maintained throughout this time

## **IV. Conclusion**

Educational Governance in Wyoming is in a confused and sad state almost exclusively as the result of legislative meddling and the inane distribution of power and authority. This legislatively concocted structure is inconsistent with the ultimate responsibility specified by the Constitution. As the legislature examines the broad structure of education governance, I urge it to closely re-examine its own role.

## **APPENDIX A: SUCCESSFUL INSTRUCTION**

## Successful Instruction:

Research confirms that excellent teachers impact student achievement. In fact, teachers account for 30% of the variance of achievement. The only other aspect of education that matters as much as the talented, expert teacher is the student (50% of variance). This includes the home, peers, and school, including the school leadership, each component having only 5% of variance (Hattie).

What teachers care about, know, and do powerfully affects learning. “We have poured more money into school buildings, school organization, reduced class sizes, new examinations and curricula, and parent involvement,” says Hattie, while “the answer lies in the person who gently closes the classroom door and performs the teaching act, alone with students during their 15,000 hours of schooling.”

New standards, new tests, and more training do not guarantee great teaching. What guarantees great teaching is engaged, enthusiastic teachers who have deep content knowledge, effective classroom management and genuine care and attention to each unique student (Amato).

Research says that great teachers:

- adapt instruction to students' abilities and interests
- habitually create opportunities for thinking and analysis
- use specific and timely feedback to guide students' thinking
- extend students' knowledge
- are passionate and curious
- know their content, hence, can make lessons uniquely their own
- balance their content with the diverse students before them
- use students' variety, energy and inquisitiveness to tailor their teaching
- afford students ownership of their learning through self-selected inquiry projects
- adjust to each individual classroom full of students as well as to each individual learner
- respond to their students automatically
- respect their students and demonstrate care and commitment to them
- show their passion for learning and their unwavering belief in the potential of each unique student
- seek from their students deep understanding and application of knowledge



Great teachers are the critical factor in building great schools, the single most powerful influence on student learning. Therefore, teachers need:

- meaningful, self-selected professional development that is timely and relevant, not faculty meetings that “force-feed new mandates, withering away teacher autonomy and morale” (letter)
- assessments that are reliable and instructionally supportive
- data that is meaningful
- collegial sharing--school, district, statewide and nationally
- strong pre-service with deep content instruction and extended student teaching
- autonomy to make instructional decisions in conjunction with colleagues, including selecting materials and pacing lessons
- freedom from bureaucratic distractions, including unrelenting changes and tests
- guidance and encouragement to sponsor student academic activities and classroom inquiry
- fewer learning goals
- guidance and support to encourage parent involvement
- guidance and support to create classroom esprit d' corps
- guidance and support to use positive, specific feedback in oral and written form

### **What is the Principal's' Role?**

Since the school and principal account for only about 5% of student achievement, what is the role of an effective principal (Hattie)? Classroom observations can be beneficial, but principals cannot use observation alone to improve teaching, especially when they come armed with a template, rubric or checklist. There is no such thing as a universally effective set of teaching strategies (DuFour). Besides observation, then, effective principals affect student learning when they:

- reduce bureaucratic requirements
- create a climate of psychological safety for teachers and students
- focus on student learning
- assure teachers are not pulled out of classrooms to comply with top-down professional development or for any other reason
- avoid rigid scripted lessons or curriculum
- eliminate distractions
- express appreciation for teacher expertise
- increase their own knowledge of what constitutes effective teaching by observation
- share with other teachers what their colleagues do
- use the data to allow teachers to decide what works

Principals cannot improve learning by observation alone. They cannot improve teaching by micromanaging instruction. Therefore, principals should avoid scripted programs that convey negative messages. Scripts and rigid adherence to both materials and curricula imply that teachers are incapable of making instructional decisions. The unintended consequence of constantly buying teacher-proof materials and tests is high teacher turnover because teachers infer that they are not valued enough to plan their own lessons. Their professional development is often less about growing their capacity as professionals and more about training to use commercial programs and tests. The national standards and testing movement also conveys a negative message to teachers, implying that teachers do not know how to teach the right stuff (Hattie).

Since no one program can meet the needs of all students, teachers must not be hamstrung by adherence to one-size-fits-all approaches. There is no scientifically-researched evidence that one program applies successfully to all students, especially the learning divergent and the gifted students (Cooter). It is the teacher, not the program, that is the ultimate driving force in improving instruction.

Wyoming policy and lawmakers also must guard against pushing the brightest and best educators out of the door of the classroom by “hijacking teacher time” (Strauss). Expert teachers urge leaders at all levels to: avoid giving them menial administrative tasks that seek to comparatively measure teacher efficacy in the classroom; avoid administering tests that narrow curriculum and steal time away from authentic student tests; and avoid making deterministic assumptions that the most effective means to an end can be externally defined, controlled and measured in a standardized manner (Garan).

Since teaching is an art and a science, teachers must have the time and authority to plan, collaborate, reflect, research, confer with students and parents, and better themselves so they can meet the individual needs of students.

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