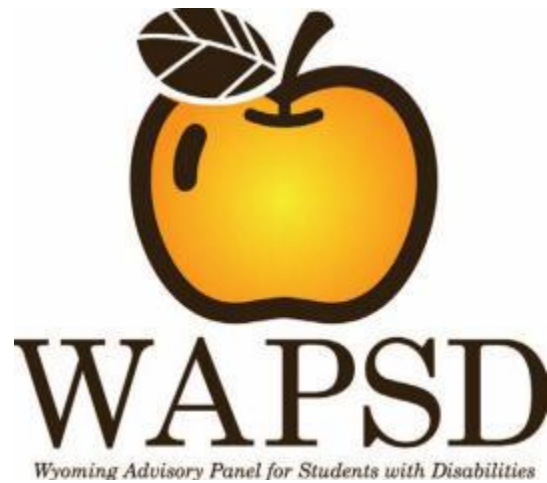




April 16, 2026 WAPSD Business Meeting, Worland Wyoming

Attendance: Jackie Frankson, Katie Schmeltzer, Tanya Barcelona (via Zoom), Kelly Schauble, Deana Smith, Krystyne Ethridge, Kim Sanford, Jami Clifford, Cindy England, Ragen Lathan, Breanna Batista, Hayley Speiser, Tosha Garner, Tiffany Hunt, Ragen Latham, John Balow, Jennifer Duncan

Guests: Drew Aldridge, Department of Corrections

MOTIONS

Administrative:

Minutes for the January 21, 2026, meeting were presented for approval. Deana Smith moved and Katie Schmeltzer seconded that the minutes be approved as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Policy:

Welcome/Opening: Chair Jackie Frankson called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM. There was no public comment.

Secretary Announcements

Jennifer Duncan asked panel members to review their information on the Panel roster and report any changes.

Chair Report, Old and New Business

There was no report.

PIC Update, Krystyne Ethridge

Krystyne Ethridge provided a written report which is attached to these minutes. A copy of the survey questions regarding Extended School Year (ESY) are attached.

SPED Director Update/Legislative Update, John Balow

John Balow provided a written report, which is attached to these minutes.

Balow also reviewed the upcoming cohort monitoring visit during the Fall of 2026 from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and their potential communications with members of the Panel. The Panel's main role is to advise the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on unmet needs of students with disabilities in Wyoming so it's likely that part of OSEP's monitoring will include contacting Panel

members. Balow provided a list of sample questions that may be asked. The focus of the OSEP visit has shifted under the new administration with the functions of monitoring and general supervision being shifted to the state level. OSEP will be looking more closely at the state general supervision model and how and who WDE is monitoring.

Legislative Report, John Balow

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education and School Discipline bills that will continue into the next legislative session. AI is a useful tool, but the human factor still needs to be a large part of utilizing it. School Discipline is an area that will most likely be addressed at the next legislative session.

Professional Development Update, Deana Smith

Deana Smith provided a written report, which is attached to these minutes. John Balow noted that if parents want to attend the Teacher Con SPED tract, WDE would find a way to assist with that cost by providing a code for complimentary registration.

Member Updates

No individual member updates were reported.

DFS Update, Alaria Schnase

Alaria Schnase was not in attendance.

WDH/BHD Update, Ragen Latham

Ragen Latham provided a written report, which is attached to these minutes.

DVR Update, Breanna Batista

Breanna Batista provided a written report, which is attached to these minutes.

Corrections Update, Hayley Speiser

Hayley Speiser provided a written report, which is attached to these minutes.

McKinney Vento Update, Shannon Cranmore

Shannon Cranmore was not in attendance.

UW Update, Tiffany Hunt

Tiffany Hunt provided a written report, which is pasted below.

UW, Special Education Program Update:

- We have two candidates coming to campus to interview for the Wyoming Excellence Chair in Special Education. Both candidates are well established scholars, devoted to special education and service to local school districts. We are excited to welcome them to campus to learn more about their work and interest in the Excellence Chair position.
- We have been given the opportunity to expand the PrePARE Program to students in majors outside the Elementary and Special Education Dual

Major. This means, interested students in Elementary Education, CTE, and other majors on a case-by-case basis will have an opportunity to serve as PrePARE students. During their methods semester, PrePARE students serve as para-professionals in the schools where they will student teach. The following semester, PrePARE students transition into student teaching, already having built relationships with their mentor teachers, colleagues, students, and families. By expanding PrePARE to other degree programs, more students will have an opportunity to engage in a year-long residency experience, while learning more about special education, how to support and work with students with disabilities, and how to effectively utilize and support paraprofessionals.

- We officially have a demo platform for CoIEP. We are looking forward to working with educators in utilizing the system to better their IEP development and specialized instructional planning, while learning from their feedback and experiences to improve the system.

Next Meeting Planning – agenda items, lodging and attendance

June 9-12, 2026 in Sheridan, WY

Tours: Wyoming Girls School
Life Steps
Trio Program at Sheridan College
Renew
Easter Seals

Possible morning tour of Wyoming Girls School, work session in the afternoon for Susan Shipley and Sheila Thomalla to present then a business meeting the following morning. Possibly asking the other entities to present for 20 - 30 minutes rather than doing tours. Other discussions would be by laws, data, membership.

October 13-16, 2026 in Jackson, Wyoming

Advice, Recommendations and Action Steps

Potential Agenda items for June Meeting

Create a standing agenda item for By Laws Review and Membership Review
State Performance Plan/Annual Progress Report Review by Susan Shipley with WDE
General Supervision Review by Sheila Thomalla with WDE
Annual Report

Jackie Frankson moved and Kelly Schauble seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 PM.
Motion carried unanimously.

WAPSD Directors report 4/15/26

USDOE / Federal-

- **Proposed 2027 initial budget:** There is a proposed 3% cut to the Department of Education, shifting toward state-controlled block grants.
- **Special Education:** Core K-12 and infant grants are set to increase by approximately \$589 million. However, dedicated funds for preschool and educator training are being eliminated and folded into general state discretion.
- **Broader Funding:** Title I funding remains flat.
- **Oversight Cuts:** There are major funding reductions for the Office for Civil Rights (-33%) and education research (-60%).
- **OSEP Monitoring:** The OSEP on-site monitoring of the WDE will take place in September. The visit will focus on:
 - General supervision and LEA monitoring and improvement.
 - Data systems, including graduation and drop-out rates, assessment participation, and transition.
 - Fiscal Management, including subrecipient monitoring of appropriate spending and MOE.
 - Dispute resolution.

Legislature:

- Joint Education interim topics will be discussed during meetings on 6/1 and 6/2.
- The priorities are:
 - Priority 1: Educational Basket of Goods
 - Priority 2: Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Programs
 - Priority 3: Virtual Education
 - Priority 4: State Administrative Review
 - Priority 5: Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education
 - Priority 6: School Discipline

Charter Schools:

- There is one charter school application for 2027: WCA in Riverton.

Miscellaneous / Upcoming Professional Development:

- STAR - Federal funds LEA support: June 17-19 in Casper.
- 2026 New SPED Teacher Boot Camp: July 28–29 in Cheyenne.
- Teacher Con: August 3-4 in Casper, featuring an embedded SPED thread.
- New SPED Director Academy: September 8-10 in Cheyenne.

Hearing H-001-26 discussion/ feedback/ implications and advice for WDE from the WAPSD panel on Hearing H-001-26 chrome-

extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://edu.wyoming.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/H-001-26_Redacted.pdf

Open comment/feedback/advisement document: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eJaSe-p2pc_sDwJr19TWgyhT1HrivTkaYbsdxy3mDww/edit?tab=t.0

Here are the key IDEA issues identified and ruled upon in the hearing decision:

- **Child-Find and Autism Eligibility:** The hearing examined whether the District violated its child-find obligations by failing to identify the student as eligible for special education under the Autism category. The Hearing Officer concluded that the District **did not** violate this obligation, noting a lack of consensus among the student's medical providers and insufficient evidence showing how autism, rather than the student's other complex disabilities, specifically impacted their educational performance at school,,.
- **Provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) regarding Needs:** The hearing assessed whether the District failed to provide a FAPE by failing to identify all of the student's needs and appropriately monitor progress. The Hearing Officer determined the District **violated** this obligation by failing to properly evaluate the root causes of the student's severe school refusal and failing to provide necessary related services, such as a tailored behavior intervention plan, causing the student's academic progress to stall completely,,.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Placement:** The hearing considered whether the District failed to provide an educational placement in the LRE. The Hearing Officer found that the District **violated** this requirement by unilaterally pushing for a highly restrictive, out-of-state residential treatment program without first attempting less restrictive supplemental supports, such as intensive in-home Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy and home-based instruction,,.
- **Meaningful Parent Participation:** The hearing reviewed whether the District denied the parent a meaningful opportunity to participate in the development of the IEP and placement decisions. The Hearing Officer concluded the District **violated** this obligation because it failed to adequately discuss the residential placement options at the IEP meeting, unilaterally decided on a specific facility after the meeting, and developed the new placement's IEP outside of the collaborative team process,,.

Questions?

Sample OSEP Questions for Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

1. Describe the SEAP role in advising the State on unmet needs of children, and youth with disabilities.
2. Describe the SEAP role in advising the state on rules or regulations related to IDEA.
3. Describe the SEAP role in the development of evaluations and reporting data.
4. Describe the state's process on developing and implementing policies related to the coordination of services for children with disabilities?
5. Describe the SEAP involvement in assisting the State Educational Agency in achieving the full participation, coordination, and cooperation of all appropriate public agencies in the State.
6. Describe the SEAP involvement in assisting the State Education Agency in effective implementation of the State's Systematic Improvement Plan.
7. Describe the SEAP role to the extent appropriate in developing dispute resolution policies and procedures.
8. Describe the frequency and method of meeting with the State Education Agency.
9. Describe the SEAP role in advising the State on its general supervision system.
10. Describe the biggest challenges facing the State in meeting the needs of children and youth with disabilities, and their families.
11. Describe the most important accomplishments of the State in meeting the needs of children and youth with disabilities, and their families.

4/2026: **WDE PD Updates**

- 2026 SPED New Teacher Boot Camp for SPED teachers and those on exception authorization with three years or less experience.
July 28-29, 2026
Little America, Cheyenne
- **SAVE the DATE:** August 3 - 4, 2026
TeacherCon26
<https://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/conferences/teachercon26/>
Wyoming's second annual statewide educator conference will take place August 3-4 at the Best Western Casper Downtown in Casper. Building on the success of our inaugural event, TeacherCon26 brings together three specialized tracks under one roof: Special Education (SPED), Literacy, and Principal Leadership Academy (PLA). Join educators from across Wyoming for this comprehensive professional development experience presented by the Wyoming Department of Education.
- 2026 WDE SPED Virtual Teacher Training
<https://wyominginstructionalnetwork.com/professional-development/currenttrainings/>
- **ASCEND 307** is a multi-year initiative developed through a federal grant awarded to the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE). Its shared, collaborative purpose is to support students with disabilities in developing essential readiness skills for the next phase of life.
Success will be measured by an increase in the percentage of students with disabilities who:
 - Graduate from high school
 - Demonstrate workplace and career readiness
 - Secure competitive, integrated employment

<https://edu.wyoming.gov/parents/special-education/ascend-307/>

WDE Professional Development Resources:

<https://wyominginstructionalnetwork.com/professional-development/currenttrainings/>

<https://wyominginstructionalnetwork.com/professional-development/specialeducationprofessionaldevelopment/>

PHP - WAPSD Meeting Updates - April 2026

Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming continues to grow and strengthen our reach across the state. We are excited to share several updates:

- **Staffing Updates:** Our staff is doing very well and continues to grow in both capacity and impact. We have also continued to strengthen our team to meet growing demand, ensuring families across the state receive timely, high-quality support and training.
- **Training & Support:** Our Family and Community Trainer is excelling in her role, successfully bridging relationships between schools and parents across Wyoming. She has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from special education directors statewide and is currently booked through 2026, providing parent trainings in multiple school districts.
- Ayni and Krystyne spoke at WASEA earlier this week and it was an incredible time of collaboration.
- We continue to see an increased need for training for daycare providers across the state, but have not been able to secure funding to increase early childhood support like we would like to.
- **Conference & Events:** Our Annual Conference is scheduled for September 19, 2026, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Our Keynote Speakers are Chrisine Manning and Dominic Syracuse. Christine Manning will be presenting on behavior supports in the classroom and Dominic Syracuse will be doing a presentation on Caregiver Mental Health (relating to both parents and professionals). We have announced sponsorship tiers and are accepting applications for sponsors and vendors at this time.
- **Looking Back & Moving Forward:** Over the past year, we have:
 - Expanded services to include more parent training opportunities across multiple regions.
 - Strengthened partnerships with schools, agencies, and community organizations.
 - Increased focus on mental health supports for families, especially those with middle-aged children, where the need is greatest.
 - Continued to build capacity by adding new staff and leadership positions, ensuring that families across Wyoming have access to the resources and advocacy they need.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to empowering parents, strengthening family-school partnerships, and ensuring every Wyoming family feels supported and connected.

Wyoming Advisory Panel For Students with Disabilities Parent Input Survey

For assistance in completing this survey, please reach out to Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming, Inc. at 307-684-2277 or phpinfo@wpic.org

* Indicates required question

1. Has your child participated in Extended School Year (ESY) services, or has ESY been discussed or considered by your child's IEP team? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes *Skip to question 2*

☐ No *Skip to question 16*

Section 1: Extended School Year (ESY)

Definition:

Extended School Year (ESY) services are special education services provided beyond the regular school year to help a student maintain skills. ESY is different from general summer school.

Please use this scale unless otherwise noted:

1 – Not at all / Very Poor

2 – A little / Somewhat

3 – Mostly / Good

4 – Very Much / Excellent

Please skip any questions that are not relevant to your situation.

2. How well do you understand how a student qualifies for Extended School Year (ESY) services?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Much / Excellent

3. How clearly does the school explain the difference between ESY and general summer school?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Much / Excellent

4. How would you rate your experience accessing ESY services?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Very	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Easy

5. How much have ESY services helped your child maintain skills over school breaks?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Much / Excellent

6. How well did ESY services match your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals?
(An IEP is a written special education plan.)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Much / Excellent

7. How much have the following factors affected ESY services for your child?

Staffing

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Much / Excellent

8. How much have the following factors affected ESY services for your child?

Service Hours

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Not	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Much / Excellent

9. How much have the following factors affected ESY services for your child?

Transportation

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

10. How much have the following factors affected ESY services for your child?

Communication

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

11. How much have the following factors affected ESY services for your child?

Alignment with IEP Goals

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

12. How much have the following factors affected ESY services for your child?

Other

13. Please share any experience you would like to tell us about ESY services.

14. Is there anything else you would like to add about ESY?

15. Has your child received behavior supports at school, or have behavior concerns and supports been discussed by your child's IEP/504 team? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes *Skip to question 16*

☐ No *Skip to question 30*

Section 2: Behavior Supports and Discipline

Definitions:

PBIS = Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (a school-wide behavior support system)

BIP = Behavior Intervention Plan (a written behavior support plan)

FBA = Functional Behavior Assessment (a process used to understand why a behavior is happening)

Please skip any questions that are not relevant to your situation.

16. How promptly does the school respond when behavior concerns arise?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

17. How consistently are Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) followed across classrooms and school settings?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

18. How well does the school reduce the impact of behavior incidents on your child's learning?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

19. If your child had a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), how well was the process explained and completed in a timely way?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

20. When behavior concerns arise, how supported do you feel by the school?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

21. How would you rate the partnership between you and the school in addressing behavior strategies?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

22. In the past year, how often has your child experienced exclusionary discipline?

Exclusionary discipline means a student is removed from class or school (for example, suspension or being sent home early).

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Never ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Often

23. How clearly has the school explained behavior supports, interventions, and special education processes?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

24. How informed do you feel about how your child's behavior support plan is used day-to-day?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

25. When you raise concerns, how seriously do you feel they are taken by school staff?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

26. How comfortable do you feel advocating for your child's needs at school?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

27. What has worked well, or what could improve, regarding behavior supports?

28. Is there anything else you would like to share about behavior or discipline?

29. Has your child experienced or prepared for a transition (such as Birth–3 to preschool, elementary to middle school, middle to high school, or high school to post-secondary), or has a transition plan been discussed by your child’s IEP team? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes *Skip to question 30*

☐ No *Skip to question 40*

Section 3: Transition (All Stages)

Definitions:

Part C = Early Intervention services for children ages birth to 3

Part B = School-based special education services starting at age 3

Transition Plan = A plan within the IEP that prepares students for life after high school

Please skip any questions that are not relevant to your situation.

30. How would you rate the quality of the transition from Early Intervention (Part C) to School-Based Services (Part B)?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

31. How clearly were changes in services and parent rights explained during the transition to preschool?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

32. How well did your previous providers and the new school team work together during transitions?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

33. How well were IEP goals and supports adjusted to meet the expectations of elementary school?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

34. How early and clearly did the school begin discussing graduation requirements and credit options?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

35. How confident are you that the transition plan prepares your child for life after high school?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

36. How well has the school connected you to adult service agencies or community resources?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

37. How consistently are self-advocacy and independent living skills taught in your child's program?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Much / Excellent

38. Which transition has been the most challenging for your family, and why?

39. Is there anything else you would like to share about transitions?

Section 4: Priority Identification

These questions help identify the highest priorities.

40. Which transition has been most difficult for your family?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Birth–3 to School-Age
- ☐ Elementary to Middle School
- ☐ Middle School to High School
- ☐ High School to Post-Secondary

41. Which area do you believe should be the focus of the members of WAPSD (Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities) to be this year?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Extended School Year (ESY)
- ☐ Behavioral Supports and Discipline
- ☐ Transition Planning

42. Is there anything else you would like members of WAPSD (Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities) to understand about your family's experience?



Wyoming Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division (BHD) Updates

To: Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities

From: Ragen Latham, Senior Administrator, Behavioral Health Division

Date: 4/16/2026

Subject: Updates

Updates

- Part C Differentiated Monitoring and Support (DMS)
- Part C recently updated the Parent Procedural Safeguards in both English and Spanish and provided training to providers on these safeguards, ensuring they thoroughly understand them and can communicate them to families.
- Part C The Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 Part C grant application for July 1, 2026, is available for review. It can be accessed via the URL below.
 - <https://health.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/PartC-FFY2026-GrantApplication.docx.pdf>
 - The public comment period for the grant application is 3/23/2026-4/21/2026.

- Part B/619 recently completed provider training reviewing the Wyoming Department of Education Procedural Safeguards, ensuring that providers thoroughly understand them and can communicate them to families.
- The EIEP program is updating our website to include an online Part C referral form, further integrate the One Before Two screening website materials, and make the website more parent-friendly.
- [Wyoming Early Childhood State Advisory Council \(ECSAC\)](#)
 - The Wyoming Early Childhood State Advisory Council (EC-SAC) is charged with developing a high-quality, comprehensive system of early childhood services and supports that understand and improve the well-being, health, and success of young children and their families. Paramount to this work is the platform to ensure statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide range of early childhood programs and services in the State, including child care, Head Start, IDEA preschool, pre-kindergarten programs and services, and the Wyoming Preschool Development Grant
- [Wyoming's Rural Health Transformation Program](#)
 - Funding under this program is intended to support priorities such as:
 - Chronic disease prevention and behavioral health;
 - Sustaining access to care in rural communities;
 - Innovative approaches to care delivery and payment models;
 - Workforce development
- Wyoming Department of Health budget - Exception requests were approved to include funds for guardianship and an external cost adjustment for the Early Intervention and Education Program for the biennium, in the amount of \$21,268,372.00.
- Crisis Coordinator position within BHD
 - BHD is working on process mapping for children involved in mental health systems

- Upcoming changes with the [Care Management Entity](#) (children's mental health waiver)
 - Qualifications for Children and /Youth to be Served by the Care Management Entity
 - Children and youth between the ages of 4 and 21
 - Meets the definition of serious emotional disturbance or serious mental illness
 - Meets at least one Medicaid criteria for inpatient psychiatric hospitalization
 - CASII composite score of 20-27 (between ages of 6-20) or a score of 18 or > on the ECSII (ages 4-5)
- Legislative Update - Bills of Interest for BHD
 - Enrolled Act No.: [SEA No. 0033](#)
 - Rural Health Transformation

Sincerely,

Ragen Latham

Senior Administrator

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Program Update

Prepared by: Breanna Batista, Transition Consultant

Date: April 15, 2026

Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) Expansion

Through the DIF grant, we are able to provide increased attention for transition services to partnering districts across the state. The DIF grant, which has approximately two years left of its five-year cycle, has been expanded into two more districts around the state. It is already established in Park County School District #1, Albany County School District #1, Sweetwater County School District #1, recently expanded to include Carbon County School District #1, and will soon expand to school districts on the Wind River Reservation as well. Our Carbon County DIF Navigator started about a month ago, and is becoming integrated to identify needs and plan programs and transition services to address those concerns. Through DIF we can extend Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) down to age 10 (otherwise ages 14-21 in non-DIF districts). With this, we have partnered with the elementary schools in Park County to begin integrating early career exploration into 5th-grade classrooms via "Career Clusters."

Summer Programming Development

We are partnering with NWC, LCCC, and Achievable Beyond Limited Expectations (ABLE) to provide summer camp workshops to address the transition needs of students with disabilities. This includes helping students prepare for their driver's permit test, career exploration, college tours, work-readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. We are finalizing plans for day and overnight camps across the state and plan to disseminate this information to schools in the coming weeks. DVR covers the cost for students to attend these camps, and we offer different options to meet the needs of students.

Current Program and Service Updates

We have DVR Counselors and Navigators who collaborate to provide five core services to students with disabilities. These services include:

- Career exploration
- Post-secondary guidance
- Work readiness training
- Work-based learning experiences
- Instruction on self-advocacy

Every school district has a counselor and navigator assigned to their school, who can come into classrooms and do group activities, or meet with students 1:1.

Our partnership with Transfr VR to bring career exploration into classrooms using virtual reality is currently our most widely used resource with schools statewide. Students can explore over 150 in-demand occupations such as veterinary technician, web designer, welder, cosmetologist, and more. This platform also has over 330 in-depth simulations where students can learn and practice skills aligned with their career interest (ie. how to measure blood pressure as part of the healthcare pathway). There are also currently two micro-certification options (Construction Laborer and Mechanical Industrial Maintenance Technician) that include 20-hours of instruction

to build recognized competencies, foundational skills, and knowledge. Lastly, Transfr VR is working on developing work readiness soft-skills simulations to offer as well. If anyone is interested in learning more about this, I can send them the product catalog and get them in touch with the VR Navigator assigned to their area, who can give a demonstration.



WDOC EDUCATION

NEWSLETTER



3rd Quarter | FY 2026

Adult Education, College, & Vocational Programs

From Mrs. Speiser,

Greetings from the WDOC Education Team! I am delighted to share the inaugural quarterly WDOC Education Newsletter. Our aim is to showcase the exceptional work the agency is doing in education to support our mission, as well as to celebrate the achievements of our staff and students.

What's New?

DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM

We live in a technology-based world, and technology evolves rapidly within a year, let alone within the 5, 10, or 20 years a person is incarcerated. Our goal for this program is to help people learn to interact with and proficiently use a variety of technologies. The program will address an array of topics, from sending a text message or a professional email to interacting with the kiosks and going through the TSA line at an airport. There are five instructors: Jeremy Closs (WMCI), Brian Knight (WHCC), April Paulson (WSP), Jessica Troftgruben (WHCC), & Crystal Zerbe (WWC), who will virtually facilitate the program across all five facilities via Zoom and other tablet programs. Mr. Closs, Mr. Knight, and Ms. Troftgruben are commended for their outstanding work in developing and organizing the program content. We plan to launch the program on or around April 1st. For additional details, please see the digital literacy flyer located on page 5.

FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAM

Sandra Toolen, Education Manager at WWC, has taken the initiative to start a financial literacy program at WWC. The program will follow the [Control Your Money](#) book by New Readers Press. Students will learn how to create a balanced spending plan, choose the proper insurance policy, apply for loans, understand credit reports, use credit cards wisely, follow electronic banking procedures, and much more. The course is estimated to take 40 hours to complete and may be offered virtually at other facilities in the future.

TABLET PROGRAMS

- CareerEdge: CareerEdge powers the HireWyo site, which connects students with career preparation and exploration resources available through the Dept. of Workforce Services (DWS). By integrating Career Edge and HireWyo with the WDOC tablet platform, incarcerated individuals will be able to access workforce resources, explore job opportunities, and connect with the DWS prior to release, helping support a successful transition back into the community. All program work completed by students while incarcerated is transferred to their HireWyo profile upon release.
- ServSafe: Students are now able to complete the ServSafe Food Handler training and certification via the tablet platform. ServSafe is nationally recognized and widely accepted across the United States. Developed by the National Restaurant Association, it complies with FDA food safety standards, making it a trusted credential for employers and health departments.

Highlights

- Digital Literacy program launch
- Financial Literacy program
- New tablet programs
- Plumbing students graduate
- UW students perform
- Education statistics

THE HEADLINES

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." — Nelson Mandela

First Cohort of Plumbing Students Graduate!

Recently, the WMCI Plumbing program reached a significant milestone: its first cohort of nine students completed the program! This intensive course spans approximately six months, during which students accumulate 800–1,000 hours towards their apprenticeship. They learn to plumb a house from top to bottom and participate in mock interviews with some of Wyoming's plumbing employers, such as Mechanical Systems Inc. and GW Mechanical. The WDOC is always looking to make new connections with industry employers and connect students with employers prior to release. Gary Rickard, the Plumbing Instructor, is continually enhancing the program by incorporating elements of framing, electrical work, and HVAC—skills essential for increasing marketability and success in the field. The second cohort of students is currently enrolled and enthusiastic about the course.



University of Wyoming Students are Rockin' & Rollin'

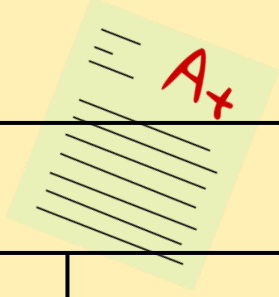
A group of the University of Wyoming (UW) Prison Education Program students, known as the Pen-Atonics, demonstrated what they learned from a recent music class taught by Dr. Tiger Robison, an Assistant Professor for Music Education at the UW. The group performed a concert featuring ten songs, incorporating a mix of guitar, bass, drums, and keyboard, for an audience of approximately 50 WMCI staff and inmates. They added their own flair to hits like: "Wagon Wheel" by Darius Rucker, "Semi-Charmed Life" by Third Eye Blind, and "Shine" by Collective Soul. They even performed an original song they wrote, titled "Reckoning." The group did a fantastic job, and the performance was well-received by those in attendance. The cohort has a songwriting class with Dr. Robison during the Spring 2026 semester and look forward to more opportunities to perform for the facility.



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

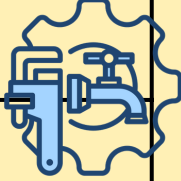
July 1, 2025–Present

Adult Education Programs



Program	# Students Served	# Students Currently Enrolled	# of Graduates	% Achieving Gain on Assessment
High School Equivalency	285	155	44	65%

Career & Technical Education Programs



Program	# Students Served	# Students Currently Enrolled	# of Graduates	Completion Rate
CAD	9	3	4	67%
EWC/CWC Comp. Apps/Tech	46	16	0	0%
OSHA 10	104	10	89	95%
Plumbing	20	9	9	82%
EWC/CWC Welding	40	10	23	77%



Note: Programs with a 0% completion rate have gone an extended period without an instructor. Consequently, no students have completed these programs in the current fiscal year.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The following programs are 4-year (Bachelor's degree) programs in collaboration with the University of Wyoming. The WWC cohort will graduate in the summer of 2026 and the WMCI cohort will graduate in the summer of 2027. Based on the data below, projected completion rates have been provided.

University of Wyoming Prison Education Programs					
Location	# Students Served	# Students Currently Enrolled	# Students Released Prior to Completion	# Students Dropped Prior to Completion	Projected Completion Rate
WMCI	20	19	1	0	100%
WWC	20	6	7	7	46%

The following programs currently have their first cohort of students enrolled in this fiscal year. As a result, there is no completion data available to report at this time.

New Programs				
Program	# Students Served	# Students Currently Enrolled	# of Graduates	Completion Rate
EWC Math	19	19	0	N/A
EWC Webpage Design	13	13	0	N/A
Digital Literacy	6	6	0	N/A
Financial Literacy	3	3	0	N/A
ServSafe	1	1	0	N/A

WDOC DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM

ENHANCE YOUR DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

WHAT IS DIGITAL LITERACY?

Digital literacy (DL) encompasses a range of technical skills necessary for navigating and interacting effectively in a digital world. These skills include basic computer operation, effective use of software, understanding and utilizing online platforms, and the ability to manage and create digital content. Furthermore, critical thinking, information evaluation, and ethical considerations are crucial components of digital literacy alongside technical proficiency.

PURPOSE

WHY IS DL IMPORTANT?

Digital literacy is crucial in today's world because it empowers individuals to navigate, understand, and engage with technology effectively. It's not just about using devices, but also about critical thinking, communication, and online safety. Being digitally literate enables people to access information, participate in online communities, and succeed in education and careers.

ELIGIBILITY

WHO CAN ENROLL?

Anyone eager to enhance their digital skills is invited to enroll! There are no restrictions based on sentence structure or educational attainment.



**TO ENROLL IN THIS PROGRAM,
PLEASE CONTACT THE FACILITY'S
EDUCATION DEPT.**

PROGRAM

VISION AND MISSION

Vision: To empower justice-involved individuals with the essential digital literacy skills necessary for successful reintegration into a technology-driven world, fostering self-sufficiency, and reducing recidivism.

Mission: To provide comprehensive and accessible digital literacy training through secure and up-to-date technology, enabling incarcerated individuals to confidently navigate digital platforms, access educational and vocational opportunities, and prepare for employment and communication in modern society.

PROGRAM GOALS

✓ ASSESS DIGITAL SKILLS

Each student will undergo a digital literacy assessment using the Northstar Digital Literacy program to identify specific areas that require enhancement.

✓ INTERACT WITH TECHNOLOGY

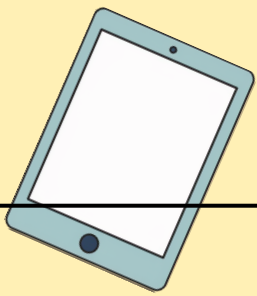
Students will explore how to engage with a variety of technologies, including desktop computers, tablets, cell phones, laptops, and kiosks. Additionally, students will acquire insights into different types of connectivity options.

✓ INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Students will acquire skills in utilizing Google Workspace, virtual calling systems, email, and various online applications.

✓ NAVIGATE A DIGITAL WORLD

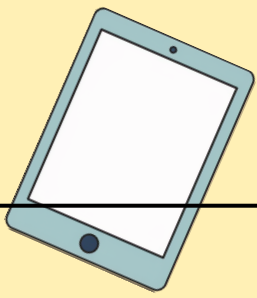
Students will acquire essential skills to thrive in a digital world, including: interacting effectively with social media and online shopping platforms, enhancing their cybersecurity measures, navigating technology within airports, restaurants, movie theaters... and more!



CURRENT TABLET PROGRAMS

ALL TABLET PROGRAMS LISTED BELOW ARE AVAILABLE AT ALL FACILITIES.

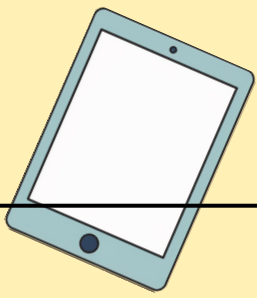
<u>Project Gutenberg</u>	Project Gutenberg is a pioneering digital library that offers over 70,000 free eBooks, primarily focusing on older literary works whose U.S. copyrights have expired. This vast collection includes a variety of genres and formats like plain text, HTML, PDF, EPUB, and MOBI, making classic literature accessible to everyone. For general use.
<u>Reading Horizons</u>	Reading Horizons offers structured literacy programs tailored to various educational needs, including foundational literacy for K-3, intervention programs, and reading instruction for older students and adults. Used for Adult Ed. and ESL.
<u>ReadTheory</u>	ReadTheory is a literacy and reading training program. The solution automatically recognizes the student's reading level and matches them with the appropriate text and questions. For general use.
<u>ServSafe</u>	Food handler training and certification testing. Contact Ms. Speiser for license key.
<u>TABE</u>	TABE® is the most comprehensive and reliable academic assessment product in adult basic education. Educators use TABE testing to provide a solid foundation for effectively assessing the skills and knowledge of adult learners. Required assessment for Adult Ed. program.
<u>TED Talks</u>	TED Talks features the best talks and performances from the TED Conference, where the world's leading thinkers and doers give the talk of their lives in 18 minutes (or less). Look for talks on Technology, Entertainment and Design -- plus science, business, global issues, the arts and more. For general use.
UW Library	Serves as key centers for learning and discovery, supporting the educational, research, and outreach needs of the university community. For Pell programs.
<u>Vista Higher Learning</u>	Discover the only online learning environment created specifically for language and literacy. Used for Pell programs.
Zoom	Video conferencing platform. Used for UW program, Adult Ed., Digital Literacy, and connecting students with community providers and resources such as employers and Department of Workforce Services.



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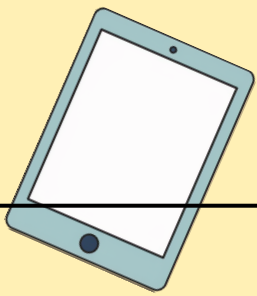
<u>iCEV</u>	iCEV is a comprehensive online platform for Career and Technical Education (CTE) providing digital curriculum, industry certification preparation, and data management tools. It covers various subjects—including agriculture, business, health science, and STEM—featuring multimedia lessons, pre-built projects, and assessments. Used with Title I: N&D students.
<u>iCivics</u>	iCivics is a nonpartisan educational platform dedicated to reinvigorating civic learning through interactive and engaging learning resources like games, lesson plans, and digital simulations. For general use.
<u>IXL Learning</u>	IXL is a digital learning platform that offers personalized educational content across subjects like math, language arts, science, social studies, and Spanish for grades K-12. Used in Adult Ed. program.
<u>JSTOR</u>	JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary sources. Used for the Pell programs.
<u>Khan Academy</u>	Khan Academy offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower learners to study at their own pace in and outside of the classroom. For general use.
LexisNexis	Legal research app. For general use.
NCCER Testing	Training and certifications for the construction industry, including HVAC, plumbing, highway work, electrical, carpentry, welding, and others. Used for Welding and Plumbing programs.
<u>Northstar</u>	Northstar Digital Literacy helps subscribing organizations to provide constituents with tools to master the digital skills needed to work, learn, and participate fully in daily life. Used for Digital Literacy program.
<u>PandoApp</u>	Pando App delivers content like sermons, worship music, devotionals, podcasts, and other spiritual growth content directly into the hands of incarcerated people all over the country. For general use.
<u>Premier Virtual</u>	Premier Virtual is a comprehensive platform designed to facilitate virtual and hybrid job fairs, as well as other recruitment events. For Re-entry.



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<u>Khan Academy</u>	Khan Academy offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower learners to study at their own pace in and outside of the classroom. For general use.
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<u>Reading Horizons</u>	Reading Horizons offers structured literacy programs tailored to various educational needs, including foundational literacy for K-3, intervention programs, and reading instruction for older students and adults. Used for Adult Ed. and ESL.
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