



MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS & PLANNING, INC

WYOMING EDUCATION FINANCE

Summary of “At-Risk” Case Study Site Visits

Submitted to

Wyoming State Legislature

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Introduction

This report summarizes findings reported by various MAP researchers who visited Wyoming schools in the spring and autumn of 2001 and examined programs aimed at meeting the needs of at-risk students. What follows is a summary of each site visit reported by the researcher who visited specific schools. Given the nature of the site visits, including the amount of time allocated to each visit, no attempt was made to independently verify information provided by school district employees. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, the reports are based on opinions expressed by Wyoming school district employees.

Study Methodology

In order to develop a cost-based approach to funding programs for at-risk children, MAP conducted an extensive survey of existing practice in Wyoming schools and school districts. In addition, we conducted a comprehensive review of the literature on programs for serving children who are at risk and looked closely at the ways other states approach funding for at-risk programs.

The initial step in our analysis was to conduct site visits in 30 schools to develop a better understanding of how at-risk children were identified and to understand what kinds of programs are provided for children so identified.

To fully understand how at-risk students are served, we identified a sample that included schools that qualified for the additional \$500 per pupil in funding through the EDY program and schools that did not qualify for the supplement, both in districts that had schools that did qualify for the supplement and in districts where no school qualified for the supplement. We also wanted to look at differences that might exist between large and small schools. The stratification of this purposive sample was:

17 elementary schools

5 schools in districts where no schools qualify for the \$500 for EDY students

6 in schools that qualify for the additional \$500

6 in schools that do not qualify for the additional \$500 but are in districts where some schools do qualify

7 junior high schools

3 schools in districts where no schools qualify for the \$500 for EDY students

2 in schools that qualify for the additional \$500

2 in schools that do not qualify for the additional \$500 but are in districts where some schools do qualify

7 senior high schools

3 schools in districts where no schools qualify for the \$500 for EDY students

2 in schools that qualify for the additional \$500

2 in schools that do not qualify for the additional \$500 but are in districts where some schools do qualify

The specific schools we identified for site visits are listed in Appendix B. We visited 21 schools in April and May of 2001 and visited the remaining ten schools (all of which were small schools) in conjunction with our visits related to the small school and small district adjustments. The interview protocols used at the district offices and in the schools are included as Appendices B and C. The interview write-ups developed by our interview staff are included in a separate volume.

The data collected from our site visits was integrated into our analysis of the current EDY funding program and used as we developed recommendations for revisions to the current funding system.

Sample Schools Visited

Elementary Schools

School Size	Schools in Districts with no EDY Funds	Schools that Generate EDY Dollars	Schools That Don't Generate EDY Dollars In Districts With EDY Dollars
Small	Johnson #1 Kaycee Elementary* Weston #7 Upton Elementary	Big Horn #1 Byron Elementary* Weston #1 Kitty Moats Elementary	Sweetwater #1 Farson-Eden Elementary* Laramie #2 Carpenter Elementary*
Large	Campbell #1 Pronghorn Elementary Teton #1 Rendezvous Campus Uinta #1 North Evanston Elementary	Laramie #1 Arp Elementary Hebard Elementary Natrona #1 North Casper Elementary Albany #1 Velma Linford Elementary	Laramie #1 Deming Elementary Natrona #1 Park Elementary* Crest Hill Elementary Fremont #1 South Elementary*

*The visit to this school was conducted in conjunction with visits for other research projects and is not included with this report.

Junior High Schools

School Size	Schools in Districts with no EDY Funds	Schools that Generate EDY Dollars	Schools That Don't Generate EDY Dollars In Districts With EDY Dollars
Small	Big Horn #4 Cloud Peak Middle*	Big Horn #1 Rocky Mountain Middle*	Carbon #2 Saratoga Middle*
Large	Uinta #1 Evanston Middle Campbell #1 Sage Valley Jr. High	Laramie #1 Johnson Jr. High.	Natrona #1 CY Junior High

*The visit to this school was conducted in conjunction with visits for other research projects and is not included with this report.

Senior High Schools

School Size	Schools in Districts with no EDY Funds	Schools that Generate EDY Dollars	Schools That Don't Generate EDY Dollars In Districts With EDY Dollars
Small	Johnson #1 Buffalo High School	Lincoln #2 Cokeville High School*	Goshen 1 Southeast High School
Large	Teton #1 Jackson Sr. High School	Big Horn #2 Lovell High School*	Laramie #1 East High School

*The visit to this school was conducted in conjunction with visits for other research projects and is not included with this report.

**Albany County School District #1
Velma Linford Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

Enrollment:	359
Ethnic makeup of student body:	254 Anglo, 88 Hispanic, 9 African-American, 4 Asian-American, 4 Native American Indian
Students at-risk:	70%
Title I eligible:	59.2%
Special ed.:	17%
ESL students:	0

How does this school define “at-risk students?”

Linford School follows district policy in defining at-risk students. An “at-risk” student is one who is at risk of academic failure. A student is considered to be “at-risk” of academic failure if the student is not: “1) achieving proficiency on local performance standards, or 2) making satisfactory progress toward high school graduation.”

How does the school identify its “at-risk” students?

Several behavioral factors can lead the school to identify a student as being at-risk: earning a proficiency level of novice on the Language Arts benchmark; reading one or more grade-levels below grade placement; being retained one or more years; poor attendance; one or more failing grades; creating regular disruptions due to aggressive behaviors; rejection by peer group over an extended period of time; failure to maintain satisfactory progress in obtaining credits for graduation; substance abuse; attempted suicide or severe depression; being a victim of violence; dramatic change in behavior; teen pregnancy; dropping out of school; involvement with the legal system, and possibly others.

A student exhibiting one or more of these behaviors is referred for initial review for being at-risk or potentially at-risk of academic failure, which may be conducted by the principal, counselor, or Building Intervention Team (BIT). Appropriate actions are taken or interventions initiated by the teacher and other staff for students found to be potentially at-risk. Students who are identified as being at-risk are referred to the BIT, where interventions are planned, documented, initiated, and evaluated.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

The school has identified approximately 250 students as being at-risk. This includes special education and Title I students.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at-risk” students?

Reading Recovery. A Title I intervention in which 3 trained Title I teachers work all morning with 1st graders experiencing reading difficulties in an intense 20-week, one-on-one program. The principal feels the program has made a “phenomenal difference” in improving reading scores that had been at an unacceptably low level. Teachers work with only 10% of 1st graders at a time, serving 50% of all 1st grade pupils over the course of the school year. The lead Title I teacher sees that the effectiveness of the program is beginning to show on test scores of 5th graders, who started the program in 1st grade and show a 17% gain over last year’s 5th graders.

Accelerated Reader Program. A reading intervention introduced in 1997 as part of an overall strategy to give students more time on reading. Title I paid for training and materials. All Linford teachers participated.

California Early Literacy Learning (CELL) and Extended Literacy Learning (EXLL). In response to Senate File 92, district teachers are being trained in CELL (K-2) and EXCELL (4-6) to “pick up for the regular teacher what Reading Recovery does for 1st graders.” The district is using a combination of Eisenhower Grant, Title I, Title II, special education and district money for staff development. All Linford teachers are participating.

Home Literacy Program. This program, named Backpack, attempts to interest parents in books and reading. The school has had as many as 125 K-2 parents at one/month meetings. TANF grant funds pay the half-time (.48) program coordinator’s \$15,000 salary and buy \$2,500 of equipment and supplies. The coordinator works out of an interior hall closet, loading and delivering backpacks of books/videos to homes. Reading/visual materials are stored in the library.

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF). The purpose of this program also is to get books into the home. The PTA raises money at book fairs (\$1,000 this year), and the RIF Foundation matches this. The PTA holds 2 book-giveaways each year, distributing free books to families.

Partners in Print. Parents are recruited and trained to teach other parents about the importance of reading to their own children and how to read to them. The parent literacy coordinator runs the program.

Summer School. District summer school targets students not performing up to standards. Linford will operate the district’s only elementary summer school, to be funded by district Title I funds and open to any district student performing below grade level.

Math Computation Interventions. Worth mentioning because computer instruction at all levels, district math standards and benchmarks, and ADD, Saxon and other math programs, incrementally added since 1997, have increased the average K-6 scores by 36% over 5 years. Title I funds paid for training and materials. All teachers participated.

Counselors. The district formula for allocating counselors gives Linford 1 counselor. Based on need, the school applied for and received an additional part-time (approximately .5) counselor.

Building Intervention Team (BIT). Linford's BIT team referrals start when a student is getting behind and seek to "get kids access to certain programs." Staff absorbs labor costs.

In-School Suspension (ISS). ISS is a product of the school's Social Skills Program, which was instituted to promote the development of social skills, since the lack of socialization was seen as the underlying cause of many of the school's discipline problems. ISS keeps offenders in school and on task. Staff and the school absorb labor and materials costs

Kindergarten Extended Education Program (KEEP). KEEP is a program to give selected low-performing, non-special education kindergartners extra time and support with literacy skills in an extra half-day of instruction in a smaller class setting. Participation is at parent option. Linford runs one afternoon class of 10 and sends 10 more kindergartners to a morning KEEP program at a nearby school. The half-time teacher's \$15,000 salary and \$2,500 equipment costs are over-and-above the school's base allotment and are paid by the district. The class is held in one of the school's kindergarten rooms, which is otherwise empty in the afternoons.

School Age Child Care (SACC). The City of Laramie pays for this program that serves 20 latchkey kids of two-working-parent families with after-school care. The school provides a small workspace next to the stage, which has access to the gym. Two college students are on duty from 2:45 to 5:30 p.m. daily.

Volunteer tutors. Foster Grandparent and Big Brother and Big Sister volunteers tutor and help students in both enrichment and corrective activities in the classroom.

Adopt-A-School. Local businesses provide cash grants for awards and supplies for various programs.

D.A.R.E. A police officer conducts this once/week drug/alcohol intervention program for 6th graders, funded by district federal drug-free money.

School Code of Conduct. The school discipline plan, detailing teacher, parent and student responsibilities and school action, is spelled out in a Parent/Student Handbook and disseminated to parents and reviewed with students annually.

Overview:

Linford is a Title I school. By local taxpayers' choice, there are no paved roads or sidewalks around the school or in the immediate neighborhood. The nearest painted crosswalk is several blocks from the school on the major thoroughfare that links West Laramie to the main part of town. Railroad tracks, an interstate highway, and state prison grounds clearly define the separation. The school's exterior is plain and bare, while the interior presents an attractive and active education environment. The school has an open enrollment, space-available policy, which,

the principal says, attracts “boundary exceptions” because “People want Linford. We are doing good things.”

Program description:

Linford teaches to state and district standards and benchmarks, and has a working action plan to coordinate planned activities, assignment of responsibility, resources needed, assessments, and staff development.

Reading/writing:

Linford’s goal in language arts is to “identify, implement and assess effective, research-based instructional practices to improve achievement in language arts.” Staff has chosen a variety of approaches and materials to promote activities that reinforce reading comprehension. These include: uninterrupted reading time; Reading Recovery; Balanced Literacy, which carries most of the writing components; Guided Reading; Accelerated Reader; Book-It; Reading Is Fundamental; Readers Theater, and several others.

Math:

In 1997, Terra Nova, WyCAS and other assessments of student math performance produced results that were “at an “unacceptably low level” in math computation and total math scores. This led the school to identify math as an area that needed improvement and set as a goal improvement in student performance in total math. Teachers use computer-assisted instruction in all grades, Saxon math in all grades, AIMS, ADD Math, Math Their Way, and others.

Other:

Computers. Linford has a 28-station computer lab, 1 computer in each classroom, and 4 in the library, all networked. Students also have access to scanners, printers, a digital camera, projection monitors, and the Internet. One goal is to expand technology at the school. This year, only \$3,000 was available for computer upgrades. Next year, the school plans to spend \$9,500 of its \$10,750 general fund capital outlay allocation on computer equipment.

Resources:

Title I. Linford receives a Title I allocation of \$190,000. Designated Title I workspace includes 1 classroom, 1 smaller interior workroom, and 1 small office. The 4 Title I teachers and 4 aides spend much of their days working in regular classrooms. Title I supports a major portion of school initiatives. Many of the other resources coming into the school are from non-district sources. The school’s at-risk student population is “unacceptably high.” “Although we’re making significant gains,” the principal says, “we’re still not where we need to be.”

Staff.

1 principal	1 physical education teacher.
2 secretaries	.5 art teacher, 1 art aide
19.5 regular classroom teachers	.8 Librarian
4 playground monitors (general fund)	.5 nurse
1.4 counselors (3 part-time)	<u>Title I funded:</u>
1.2 music teachers	3.5 teachers, 1.5 aides
.48 parent literacy coord. (TANF grant)	<u>Special education funded:</u>
	4 teachers, 3.5 aides,
	1 speech therapist, .2 psychologist

PTA funds. The PTA funds a Volunteer Coordinator to plan and manage recruitment and use of volunteers. The school has four committees that include parents and community members to help develop its school improvement plan, including the school site council, the PTA, a Climate and Communication Committee and a Social Skills Committee.

Indicators of program quality:

On 1997 tests, Linford students scored at extremely low proficiency levels in both reading and math, which led to the school setting those two areas as its major focus in instruction and staff development. Terra Nova test score for the last two years have shown increases at almost every grade level in reading. The principal credits staff development in Early Literacy and the early interventions of Reading Recovery and Early Literacy as making the difference. Math scores during the same time have increased by 36%. Of all students tested, 63% are reading or performing math at an advanced or proficient level. An indicator that staff is making progress in ameliorating student behavioral problems is the principal's chart of disciplinary trends, which shows disciplinary incidences have steadily declined over the last 4 years.

Comments/summary:

Linford is a placement school for 2 to 6 University of Wyoming student teachers each year. Linford teachers appear confident in what they are doing in the classroom. Evidence of the school's emphasis on standards, both academic and personal conduct, show in classroom environment and hall displays.

The principal uses a comprehensive computerized school management and information program, from which he pulled and offered printouts of requested information. As with teachers observed, he seems to have a firm handle on what is happening in his school. There appears to be a completely blended use of resources at Linford (with the exception of special education). Once initiated, a program is available to any student who needs it, and staff seems intent on giving as much one-on-one instruction as possible, with most of it directed to at-risk students. Two other factors are noteworthy: the school's strong parent involvement component, and the school's success in getting supplemental outside resources.

District Interview:

What is the district doing for at-risk students?

District policy and administrative practice promote site-based management, with a strong emphasis on the active participation of parents and citizens on school site councils. The district sets policy for identifying at-risk students, then places responsibility for devising programs for them at the school level. As for district programs, the district is funding a district wide K-12 summer school program targeted at kids not performing up to standards. The district is receiving \$80,000 in TANF grant funds to provide extended learning opportunities for children of needy families; the money may be used for summer school. ACES (Albany County Expelled/Suspended) Youth Program is run off-campus for students who choose to attend. The district puts in \$15,000 for half the teacher's salary. Other funds come from a US Department of Health Youth Empowerment grant. About \$312,000 of general funds goes to support the district's alternative high school. Laramie has 1,297 Title I students, which is approximately 38% of its student population. Title I funding is decreasing. The district is funding supplemental reading for 2 elementary schools that lost Title I funding. Dr. Bryant stated his strong opinion that the state EDY formula hits Laramie unfairly. The district dropped from a \$174,000 allocation to \$18,000.

Comments:

Visiting the district office after spending most of the day at Linford Elementary School confirmed the assistant superintendent's assertion that the administration follows its published philosophy in promoting site-based management. The building was small and quiet inside. Unlike other schools and districts visited, the school principal seems to have access to all the information needed to run his school, and it didn't appear that the district office was pulling the principal's strings or keeping information from him. The assistant superintendent didn't have much to offer in terms of information about programs for at-risk students, but administrative policy puts that in the hands of the principal. It also requires principals to come up with more resources than the district gives him/her if the school is going to help at-risk students. It seems to have motivated the principal and staff at Linford Elementary.

**Campbell County School District #1
Pronghorn Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

This is a school in a relatively affluent area and the staff's definition of 'at risk', when stated, goes beyond economic issues, and incorporates the family and home problems affecting academic progress. In their context, they said the 'environmental effects of lack of opportunity' include divorce, drugs, alcohol, and lifestyles created by 'too busy' parents, those having two high powered jobs, or those with a parent working long hours following the now booming methane industry from Montana, Oklahoma, or Texas. They said that some of the at risk characteristics were 'subtle ones', of the privileged kind. They also had the concern that I heard other places, but more pronounced here, that students not yet identifiable for special education fall between the cracks in the early grades and do not qualify for any special services or funding. They feel this occurs at a most critical time when the gap could still be closed with immediate help.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They use the BIT process that includes teacher referral, standardized testing, 'cum' files, and parent requests. Staff talked about how can 'their little thoughts' and the 'little leaders of tomorrow' be 'kept going' amid emotional/social/ and behavioral problems.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

They identify 8% using the free and reduced lunch yardstick. Using wider criteria regarding at risk of not meeting academic standards, they estimate 15-20%.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

This school had very small classes. A 'compensatory' aide is provided for 30 minutes in each class to help with reading; there was some reference to 'ELO'. There is a mandate from somewhere, and apparently only at some grade levels, that the classroom teacher work with the students having the most problems, and the aide works with the more advanced students. This reverses earlier practices and is a source of some attitude problems. They have a 'behavior aide' who is trained in Boys Town. 'Band time' is used as a way of achieving a smaller class size so that at risk students can receive more individual attention; of course, they miss the band opportunity, though.

Overview:

Pronghorn is in a district with no EDY funds. There are 400 students. Approximately 8-10% are identified as special education. Seventy percent of their students have had pre-school experience, although 50% have 'stay at home moms'.

This school is an incredible facility, somewhere between a museum and an elite private school. It has a music room, art room, and in the center of the school an elaborate library/resource center, with a separate computer lab off of it. Every aspect of the facility is spectacular. I was told it is considered a 'big dog school'. It is also a pilot 'power school' that provides individual student data to parents via the Internet or a phone line. This includes lunch information, attendance, daily grades, and homework due. Approximately one-third of the parents are accessing the information.

The principal had set up the day so that we met with all of the ancillary staff first, then the teachers in small groups, then visited classrooms. We practically had to beg to get some time with him, and he was completely unavailable until sometime after 2pm when we still had teachers scheduled. When he finally met with us he was very cooperative, open, and insightful, but we did not have a lot of time because we were then off to the district interview.

Program description:

Kindergarten had an additional adult for the guided reading parent volunteers, centers, a reading assistant for 30 minutes. Some go to the 'gifted' program for 30 minutes, thus lowering class size. They also used 'peer tutoring' with older and younger students on the basis of an application, a letter from the student, parental approval, and a contract. Although they have this process, they said they had never denied one. There is also a district pilot pre-K in the school, possibly funded through special education, that targets language delayed students identified from Kindergarten screenings. Kinderday is another program of unclear funding, targeting students by teacher referral, and having a classified staffing. Students in Kinderday are not special education or labeled in any way.

Grade 1 classes each had 18 students with six receiving reading recovery. On a grade 5 wall was a chart with the district's four goals for 'Shaping the Vision, 1999'. The first goal was to focus on the needs of at risk students through the identification of and establishment of prevention and elimination efforts. These included special needs, drugs and alcohol, class size reduction, parental involvement, quality school environment, supportive relationship, guidance and counseling, and coordination of community resources. A school building goal is 'respect'.

Reading/writing:

The district mandates guided reading as part of the mandated districtwide curriculum. Guided reading alternates days with basal reading and phonics.

Math:

Math seemed to be less of an emphasis. My notes indicate they only received 45 minutes every other day; this may be incorrect.

Resources:

The district provides 38.5 hours of clerical help per day, 6 hours of technical (computer) help for each school per day, 7.5 hours for kinder day for each school, 8.0 hours for reading recovery for each school, 4.0 hours at risk teacher's assistant in all buildings, 6.0 hours of behavior disorder teacher's assistant, and 10 hours reading instructional teaching assistant in every building for guided reading. Every Kindergarten receiver 1 hour, grade 1 receives 1 hour, grades 2-3 receive 30 minutes; grade 1 also has reading recovery. There are no teachers' unions; and staff are paid well. The school's budget is \$2 million. The principal's listing of staff cited: 1 reading recovery, 2 reading assistants, 2 kinder aides, and 2 behavior aides. 80-85% of the budget is for salaries. Concerns were raised about the lack of salary increases; freezes because of the funds "going to Cheyenne and not enough coming back". No staff I talked with were originally from Gillette. Most seemed to have been attracted there by the district's reputation, interest in upward mobility around Wyoming with Gillette experience, and the high salaries. There was a suggestion to add 2 cents to the sales tax, which is 5.5 cents now.

Professional development:

They have had training in the six traits of reading, as does everyone, to prepare better for the WyCAS; also used is BoysTown, brain-based instruction, and quality schools.

Indicators of program quality:

Their Terra Nova scores are in the 65-70th percentile.

Summary of school:

No matter how small the class size, the staff wanted more aides in the classrooms to provide another adult for splitting into even smaller groups to work. It seems that at risk is a relative concept, and no matter the economic level it is natural for the staff to identify some students as more 'at risk' than others. So, in those settings, 'at risk' seems very different than in very low economic areas.

**Campbell County School District #1
Sage Valley Junior High
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

The two associate principals had trouble providing any specific information to my questions without retreating to file cabinets and consulting others, and I only shook hands with the new, very young principal; he seemed to have delegated the entire task. No one here ever really referenced poverty as a factor. By induction, after hearing about the various programs they described for 'at risk' students, their definition seemed to be students at risk of failing academically due to behavioral or motivational issues, or the lack of reading and math skills.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

At risk students seemed to be identified by test scores, absences, substance abuse, and what they referred to as "willful disobedience".

How many students do they identify by their definition?

Several different teachers estimated 10-15% were at risk of not meeting academic standards.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

They have a grade 7 skills class that is staffed with .25 FTE. There is a one semester developmental reading class for grades 7-9. Grade 6 teachers make recommendations, including a criteria of the student's being at or below the 40th percentile. This class counts as an elective. They work on vocabulary to improve performance on STAR tests, Terra Nova, and Gates McGinity. In grade 7, the students are tested again. They work on reading strategies, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. These include mental maturity, attention and focus. Grade 8 focuses on both fiction and academic reading; grade 9 focuses on academic reading. At this point in the year, there were 20-25 grade 8 students, and ten grade 9 students. In grade 9 there is an academic apprenticeship if they are below the 50th percentile; it is optional for those hovering around the 50th percentile. This was one of the most impressive teachers and programs I saw on my entire trip. I was amazed at her many creative strategies and the obvious interest in reading she was succeeding in developing among these students. She was really incredible. I was also told in the overview by the associate principals that there is a new elective for students between the 40-60th percentile that focuses on reading strategies. I assume that is another description of this same class.

They have a behavior program, which is in its second year, called "boot camp" and it has three levels depending upon student need. Students are in this program due to threats, trancies, or "willful disobedience". It is staffed with two FTEs who include a police office and a retired

military person, who is a certified administrator, as well as one FTE aide. It consists of students having their heads shaved and wearing yellow t-shirts, and has physical training beginning at 5:30 am, tutoring, and community service; the day ends at 6pm. They attend their regular classes during the school day. The first level is by parent referral and consists of one day, and is used as a deterrent. The second level is two weeks and is by administrative referral. The third is ten weeks and is by district board referral and is in lieu of expulsion. They also have "T-school" which is transition school for grades 7-8; grade 9 students with similar profiles have the option of the alternative high school. The transition school is staffed with a certified teacher and an aide, and it is for students who are academically struggling. There are 5-10 students in this program and they are referred by a teacher and or an administrator. They have one FTE compensatory education aide who provides extra assistance on any subject. The aide accepts a referral and coordinates the work with the regular classroom teacher. The aide has 5-6 students per period.

Overview:

Sage Valley is in a district with no EDY funds. It has 813 students. The principal is fairly new and was basically unavailable. One new associate principal and another associate principal in her second year assisted me with trying to provide or access accurate information. Almost any request I made for specific numbers sent them scurrying off trying to find out the answers for me, sometimes unsuccessfully. As the day went on, I felt a disconnect between what I was seeing programmatically and the leadership I encountered, because there are some very creative approaches being implemented at Sage Valley for both academically and behaviorally at risk students. The associate principals took me to lunch to "The Hump", hoping I would not be offended; this is after all in Campbell County. At lunch it started to be clearer for me because they mentioned that the previous principal of five years left to become the superintendent in Douglas last year. They said he did 'very special things here'; one said something about 'operating in a cocoon', and I was not sure what that meant.

This is a wonderful facility that includes a planetarium. The staff come to Gillette from elsewhere in the state or region, especially because of salaries and the district's reputation for being progressive.

There is some mobility of students due to the current boom related to coal and methane.

Program description:

Class sizes are about 20 students. The entire staff of the school is involved with reading. They have done extensive research on reading, and have tried to turn the entire building into a reading environment for the past 4 years, since 1997-98. There are posters with color photographs of lots of people on all the hallway walls of role models, each person reading a book. These include all types of school and community clubs, teams, and groups, such as: the band, the various athletic teams, the mayor of Gillette, celebrities, etc. The photos are very large, big poster size, in color, well done, sometimes humorous, and they succeed in communicating and getting your attention. Sage Valley has systematically been trying to change the culture to one emphasizing reading in everything. This approach has resulted in more student requests for

classics and what they called 'adult' books, and they have added additional funding for book purchases. The public library has also noticed an increase in use among students.

They specifically do not have tracking. They said "we tried it"; they feel 'both types' of students benefit more when there is not tracking. They also say with some pride that scores are higher here than in the other junior high that has an honors program.

They consider the district's standards to be aligned with the state's; they view Gillette as the state's leader, and they indicated they have been working on criterion referenced tests for years. They view their curriculum as 'way ahead', focusing on standards based instruction in the core areas. They are a pilot 'power school' with 70% of parents accessing the Internet for current information about their student's progress, including grades and assignments. It is somewhat of a struggle for teachers to keep up with the posting of all current grades and assignments.

They use computers in English classes for word processing, and power point presentations. There is an elective course in computer skills in grades 7-8. Science classes use the web and the computer labs are used in math and social science.

One of the school's goals is personal management. The referrals are down with students in the halls less and teachers knowing the students more than before. Another goal is professional development.

There are ten minutes of silent sustained reading at the beginning of every class. There are eight full-time special education 'paras', paraprofessionals who are expected to help everyone to relieve the 'stigma' for students if they are singled out. There are three counselors and each stays with the grade level cohort through all three grades in this school. There is .5 psychologist, as well as a nurse.

The changing graduation requirements in 2004 were mentioned by an associate principal, and there is apparently a proficiency being required in foreign language which they will be implementing.

Reading/writing:

As mentioned above, the English program and teachers were exceptional. There is a class in reading literature for grades 7-9. The English department has \$27,000 for computers this year.

Math:

Math and PE alternate all year instead of there being one semester of each. This is the second year there has been a math skills class in grade 7, and it counts as an elective. There were eight students receiving extra math support in this class, and the teacher seemed to be making a difference in their work and motivation. Some students opt to stay in their regular class.

Resources:

There was some concern among teachers about the reduction now in 'competitive salaries', about how they compare to the sheriff's, other districts' and states'. There was a concern about "what is the truth regarding teachers' salaries and the district's budget". This was especially clear and poignant when described by a self-described 'veteran teacher' who was being 'bought out' at 106% of his salary. There were questions raised about the level of 'professional support', about premiums for insurance going up and absorbing the raises that would come, concern about 4% of the teachers being beginning teachers. I was told that the district does not have funds 'hidden away' and are 'living on cash reserves'. They would like a COLA every year and to have the external cost adjustment 're-addressed from time to time'. The district has four 'school resource officers' (SROs), who are funded by a police department grant. They teach relevant lessons in various classes, including DARE and substance abuse in health and PE, and constitutional rights in social studies.

Professional development:

There has been professional development to include vocabulary strategies and incorporate reading into classes, especially with the use of the sustained silent reading and the use of the extended response prompt on the WyCAS. The district staff development office has provided training for all teachers on the 'brain and mind', teacher expectations/student achievement, 'TESA', qualities of teaching and learning, learning for all, trends in teaching, and cooperative learning.

Indicators of program quality:

The Terra Nova overall math was at the 62 percentile and reading overall was at 65 percentile.

Summary of school:

Sage Valley had some very impressive programs targeting students at risk of failure due to behavioral or motivational problems or the lack of reading and math skills. The relatively new associate principals were cooperative but generally had to search out the information I needed. The programs were creative and very impressive, though, and I saw the most outstanding and creative teaching I have seen in any Wyoming school. Teachers were really trying to motivate these junior high students, keep them committed and interested in learning, reading, accessing information, school, and their futures. I was also impressed that these programs appeared to have been evolving due to the serious implementation of a standards based program and the impending graduation requirements. Their seems to be a commitment to accountability for each student's progress, although I had concern that these new administrators may not be able to keep it all going.

District interview:

The superintendent had his ESL teacher with him, and he suggested that he understood that ESL was the agenda for the meeting. He said that ESL was like a 'big black hole'. His approach to ESL would be to bring all students into one school and have the state provide transportation costs. They feel their ESL population is large, growing, and unpredictable. They have 24 students in one elementary, one at a high school, three at another high school, three at the junior high, and two at Wright. Last year there were 20 students and this year there are 33. They have received 12 new students in the past two weeks. They have a growing Pakistani community that is more educated, along with a Spanish-based community that tends to be less educated, illiterate and/or non-English speaking. They feel a 'moral imperative' to instruct these children at a cost of \$60-75,000, rather than the MAP formula's amount of \$10,672. The superintendent feels the actual costs should be reimbursed, and then the district should be willing for the state to maintain oversight of the programs. They consider these students to be at risk because they have a demonstrated lack of proficiency, using compensatory education assessment criteria. They are identified using home language surveys and are enrolled in a 4-8 weeks English language learning lab. When they meet ESL standards they are placed in classes with accommodations until they can meet the assessment criteria. They stay in the program with 3-10 students and have a 1-3 hours reading and language block (BIC-basic language). They focus on their homework and receive academic support. The district funds compensatory aides to assist in the academic and language support. The superintendent also seemed to contrast the state criteria to provide evidence and list services against the best standard of practice or what he called a 'Cadillac', and said it was hard to take advantage and provide a 'Cadillac program'. In conclusion regarding ESL, he felt that "ESL programs should be funded at actual cost because students and needs are easy to identify, it is easy to demonstrate proficiency in four to six years, and it is easy to establish standards for admission to the program." He felt that with these criteria and programs held accountable, staffed with certified teachers trained in ESL, it should be funded at cost. I asked about using Title I funds and he said that they cannot be used for language acquisition, only for reading and math. After the ESL discussion, he sort of dismissed the teacher. We were not sure if the whole exposition on ESL was mainly for her benefit.

They overqualify students for at risk students, beyond 'compensatory' education. He does not want to use special education funds and criteria so that "we don't label kids who don't need to be labeled", not giving them "an LD label just to get extra services".

He said they define at risk as not achieving standards, but he questioned how big the gap had to be and felt that emotional and social issues were important whether students were achieving or not. He feels that most identified at risk students with academic needs come from economically disadvantaged homes. He raised the question of how to deal with having one more student over a given cut-off point, who would trigger extra funding, and thought there should be criteria established to qualify, a number threshold set, and some type of cost containment included. He also raised an issue of aides' salaries.

He was somewhat critical of the MAP funding formula, at first, but later said that he thought it was fine as long as ESL actual costs could be fit in, and if the MAP formula were funded as had been the plan. He also thought that a smaller class size would 'cover it'. They need

more compensatory aides to provide more assistance to support teachers and students with remedial reading and to unravel problems. Despite his general support, he feels formulas are too arbitrary, that the services should be funded, and that the board should set a priority for at risk students.

After all of this, I was able to ask some questions. The 'compensatory education services' he referenced include: boot camp, jump start (kindergarten), compensatory education aide, and 'ELO' (early learning intervention and extended learning opportunity). He said it is a local after school program that reinforces material from classes. At risk students need 12 hours a day, should never be at home; they should be at school from 6:30 am until after school.

He thinks salaries should be re-calibrated, and he was concerned about comparing entry level salaries to staff with 20 years experience; he has 300 people at over \$42,000 and said that 80-87% of the district budget goes to staff. He concluded by saying he liked MAP 3, but the legislature forced the changes that created MAP 4.

**Goshen County School District #1
Southeast High School
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

Enrollment:	110
Ethnic makeup of student body:	109 Anglo, 1 Hispanic
Students at-risk:	45%-67%
Title I eligible:	50%
Special ed.:	12
ESL students:	0

How does this school define “at-risk students?”

An at-risk student is a student who has any kind of academic problem. “We’re a small school,” the principal says, “so when a teacher perceives a problem, we look at that student as being at-risk.”

How does the school identify its “at-risk” students?

The first step in the identification process is an informal meeting of the principal and teacher. They discuss what can be done to address the problem. First, the teacher will talk with the student’s parents, next with the counselor. If that doesn’t correct the situation, or if the issue is more serious, the next step is to convene the Building Intervention Team (BIT). This will involve the principal, all the student’s teachers, the counselor, the nurse, and anyone else who can contribute to the purpose of the meeting.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

At any one time, there may be 20 to 30 students identified as at-risk.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at-risk” students?

Once it has identified an at-risk student, the BIT looks for resources within the building. There are few available, so teachers attempt to accommodate the students with no added assistance. The art teacher says she “probably get(s), percentage wise, more at-risk kids because they get pushed into art.” She adds, “There are not enough electives. Art class is a babysitter. From 15% to 20% of high risk kids are a problem. Some are very good in art. At-risk students are not athletically inclined, so they get less attention.” The business teacher says, “At-risk kids probably get more out of my classes than most classes.” Being able to hook up his Smart Board to students’ computers is a particular asset to at-risk students, he feels. He adjusts his Personal Finance course, a required senior subject, for at-risk students to give them skills that are useful at their level.

The school Respect Committee submitted to the district a plan for a Required Assistance Program for at-risk students, with a budget of \$4,000 for an hourly tutor to work with at-risk students. The request was denied, so the committee has only its “\$1,200 to \$1,500” of drug-free program money to fund its projects. “Cyclone-of-the-Month” is a monthly student recognition event that recognizes students for good deeds and rewards them with a free meal, movie pass or sweatshirt. The committee also buys planners for students to help them get organized. Having lost its request for a tutor, the committee is promoting the inclusion of an item in the budget to pay teachers to tutor after school and on Saturdays.

A district program to which Southeast students have limited access is NovaNET. Students work on computers at noon to make up work in-lieu of attending summer school and repeating classes. It is funded by an ELO (Extended Learning Opportunities for Children) grant from the Department of Family Services for at-risk and homebound high school students who need credit recovery. The program is intended to serve students at home, but since it requires a 56k telephone line and a home computer, which few of the students who would need the program have, it is operated at the school. Southeast has 3 slots available.

Southeast will offer a summer school program for students who failed a class, the district assessment level tests, or the WyCAS. Of the students who get “letters of invitation,” staff estimates 30% will attend.

Overview:

Southeast High School, Southeast Junior High School, and Southeast Elementary School occupy the same building. The principal reports that the wing given to the high school is insufficient for the number of classes offered, and already, according to staff members, the school doesn’t offer enough electives. Space is so limited that two teachers have no classrooms and must “float” from one vacated classroom to another. One floater is a science teacher, who pushes his equipment cart from class to class. When experiments call for water, he carries it from the science room. The school has no computer lab. The special education resource room is currently a former utility room—a small, windowless interior space one-quarter the size of a regular classroom. Electrical boxes on the cinder block walls are padlocked for safety, furniture is stacked to gain floor space, and, while adequately lit, a floor fan is required to exchange air with the interior hallway. The business teacher uses the elementary school’s former library for his classroom. It is spacious, but one windowed wall, exposed to let in sunlight, can also let in intense heat. The library and cafeteria serve all three schools. There is a gymnasium at each end of the building. Junior high students use the older one in the high school wing. High school students use the newer one on the elementary school side. A bond proposal, going before voters in August, would fund replacement of the older gym with a larger gym, upgraded weight room and wrestling room. Brian Grasmick serves as principal of all three Southeast schools and Le Grange elementary, a small school some 20 miles south.

Program description:

The district aligned its curriculum with state standards, concentrating on reading, writing, and math. Action plans developed by Southeast staff guide school instruction. Teachers use text

series to supplement district materials. The district buys the first set of books for a subject area; the school pays for additions out of its own budget. Staff development is a component of the school's action plan. The district provides some staff development activities. Other workshops and programs teachers want to attend must relate to the school action plan.

Reading/writing:

The K-12 Southeast School Reading Committee developed a coordinated reading action plan for each of the three levels to meet goals for improving reading comprehension and writing. The Writing Committee set a goal that requires 7-12 teachers to assign writing projects each quarter to every student in every class and to assess all papers on the six traits of writing. Teachers use a literature-based language text series. For slower students, the plan is for them to stay after school or take the assignments home. Using a list and money she got from special education, the librarian purchased high-interest, low-vocabulary books to stimulate interest in low-performing readers. She has also purchased Accelerated Reader's audio collection, and has over 100 tapes for struggling readers. With K-5 Title I funds, she purchases elementary level books that have crossover appeal to junior and senior high students. Each year, she holds a book fair that nets around \$1,000 for library purchases.

Math:

District schools are now using Saxon Math as a K-12 supplemental series. Next year, the district will keep Saxon for K-5 and introduce McDougal Littell's *Passport to Mathematics* series in grades 6-8, Holt, Rinehart and Winston's for 9-12, and Glenco for pre-algebra and advanced math. The district will purchase the new texts.

To compensate for the lack of a computer lab, the school succeeded in getting the district to fund purchase of 25 laptop computers. The laptops, which are maintained by the librarian, are loaded onto 2 carts and wheeled to classrooms on a signup basis. The program gets mixed reviews. Some teachers say it works well; others say laptops are more beneficial to high-performing students than at-risk students because they are more difficult to use. The school is wired, but apparently the system does not reach laptops throughout the building. The computers are only one year old, so there is no record on durability. Math classes have no calculators for graphing.

Other:

Art. Fine arts credit is a graduation requirement. The art teacher says her budget is decreasing every year. She needs funds for field trips to museums and art shows. Her kiln is giving off toxic fumes, so, instead of replacing it, she is getting a new fan next year. She says the school is losing kids and that one-half the graduating class will not go on to college. She had just lost an at-risk student who was a discipline problem, but very artistic. She is encouraging him to complete his graduation requirements through home schooling.

Agriculture Education. The Ag. Ed. teacher has developed a highly regarded program, annually qualifying students for state and national competitions. The district funds his students'

state level activity, but his petition for district money to take 12 students to this year's national competition in Louisville, Kentucky was denied. He is planning to raise the \$10,000 through fundraisers. Nearly 100% of his students will go to 2- or 4-year colleges.

Resources:

Southeast High receives no Title I funds. It does receive some benefits from the elementary school's Title I allocation through books purchased for the common library. Teachers complain that the school budget and classroom supply budgets are too small. One teacher claims, "We have the same building budget we had in 1993," and another that, "Extracurricular activities, such as football, suck up the dollars!" They cite their district city school counterpart, Torrington High, as having money for graphing calculators and tutors for after school and Saturday classes. According to one teacher, most of last year's school supply budget came from teachers using their classes to norm tests for a publisher. Staff used this money and other amounts generated through teacher initiatives to purchase items not in the budget.

In addition to the \$1,000 to \$1,500 the Respect Committee gets from drug-free schools funds, the Reading Committee and the Writing Committee get operating funds from Titles II, IV, VIb and Perkins. The principal didn't know how much each received.

Staff.

.8 principal (all 3 schools)	.4 music teacher
17 teachers	.8 art teacher
1 nurse	1 secretaries
1 librarian	1 clerical aide

Special education funded:

1 resource teacher, 1 aide, .33 speech therapist (the district does not have a psychologist)

Indicators of program quality:

No test results were offered or located that could speak to the issue of program quality. The strongest indicator was the statement by the district assistant superintendent that "Eastside is our best (high achieving) school." There were many indicators that the school's program quality is undermined by an inadequate budget and competing priorities. Staff seems to be looking at curricular needs, while the district focus is more extracurricular. The assistant superintendent admitted, "Athletics sometimes gets more than its share."

Comments/summary:

The teaching staff is working under very difficult conditions. Lack of adequate space for basic instruction dictates that student learning and teacher morale will suffer. There are plans to add a teacher next year, which means one more teacher must "float." If the August bond issue passes, it will consume the district's entire bonding capacity and delay the building of additional classrooms for years. Several teachers are raising substantial amounts of money to make their programs work, and rural Yoder doesn't seem like a place where it would be easy to raise

money. As for at-risk students, staff seems willing to go the extra distance to help them, but there are few resources to work with, and, it seems, a lack of district commitment to the need. When I asked the principal why Torrington High can hire tutors and buy graphing calculators and Southeast can't, his answer was that "It's the numbers." Torrington High has 500 students. Southeast has 110, yet receives the same per-student budget allocation as Torrington, with no kind of small-school adjustment. In 1993-94, his budget was \$125,000. When the district ended its supplanting of Title I funds, he was forced to make up losses at the elementary school from his existing budget. District reformulation reduced his budget, first to \$65,000, then down to the current \$42,000. From this, he must fund athletic programs that take between \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year. "The money," he said, "doesn't trickle down to small schools."

District Interview:

What is the district doing for at-risk students?

The office of special education, including the social worker, serves only students who have an IEP. These services are available to all district schools. For at-risk students the district provides NovaNET, an Internet-based, self-paced, interactive curriculum for secondary and adult learners, which the district provides on a limited basis to students who are homebound or who need credit recovery. The school identifies its at-risk students and selects those to receive a license to participate. Funding for the licenses comes from an ELO (Extended Learning Opportunities) grant administered by the Department of Family Services. The district is allocated a total of 16 licenses, 3 of which are assigned to Southeast High. The district also provides funding to individual schools for their at-risk programs, such as Torrington High's peer tutors and substitute teachers for Southeast High if the number of its in-school suspensions gets high enough to require extra supervision. The district also funded a 2-day at-risk workshop for teachers. Teachers can apply for money to go to other workshops by putting it into the budget when developing committee plans.

How do you allocate funds to schools?

Schools annually submit a school improvement plan, identifying what they are doing, what they need to do better, and prioritizing those needed improvements. The district looks at each plan, decides "which grant can fund what, and what needs to change." Schools get a general fund operating budget allocation based on student average daily attendance. Southeast gets \$41,656 for the entire K-12, to cover supplies and equipment. The district buys new textbooks; each school buys replacements. After keeping 20%, the district passes on to schools funds from Title I, II, IV, VIB, and Perkins Grant. Southeast Junior and Senior High received a combined total of \$9,953.74 from these sources. Title I brought in \$1,156,819.42, and class size reduction \$240,915.40, funds for which Southeast High did not qualify.

Comments:

When I went to my scheduled exit interview with the Southeast principal, he and the district superintendent were discussing strategy for the superintendent's presentation to Southeast parents that evening. It was the superintendent's job to sell the pending bond issue by explaining

why the money would be used to build a new gymnasium, wrestling room, and weight room instead of additional classrooms. Some years ago, a district-wide evaluation committee decided the next project at Southeast should be to tear down the older gymnasium, the old original school, which sits behind the current school, and build a new gymnasium. The second phase, to add classrooms, would now be postponed years because the gym project would take 100% of the district's bonding capacity. The administration seemed to be counting on the strength of the building committee's recommendation to counter possible questioning of the proposal by citizens attending the meeting.

Both the principal and superintendent were friendly and jovial. Rather than answer questions about funding Southeast High, but both assured me that "Marc (Assistant Superintendent Marc McClanahan) will have all of that!" The assistant superintendent wears many hats and seems to have most of the day-to-day administrative responsibilities for running the district—if not permanently, at least while the bond issue was pending. The assistant superintendent cited a few figures from the published budget, but none explained why funding for Southeast High is so limited or at-risk programs so few. His comments on these subjects were that "The district does not attempt to allocate categorized money in foundation funding to respective categories," and, "Athletics sometimes get more than its share." He is leaving the district at the end of this school year.

**Johnson County School District #1
Buffalo High School
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define “at risk” students?

Students were considered at risk by the principal and school counselor because of poor grades, especially in their core classes, and they also consider poor results on the Terra Nova for incoming students. They will convert to WyCAS when these new scores become available.

How do they identify their “at risk” students?

Students that are not keeping up on their grades, especially in core classes, are a major focus. They do not use Free and Reduced Lunch counts because these are artificially low – only about 16% of the population and do not reflect the real “at risk” students. The Terra Nova test scores were not really considered as much as students that “dropped out” of specific core courses in areas such as math, English and science. They keep track of student performance with a software program referred to as “Tree Mott” and the teachers use a grading machine at the school site to monitor student progress. They also keep track of office referrals and core class drops. There was significant concern expressed from staff members about substance abuse – students that have gotten involved, sent to rehabilitation and seem to have a lack of supervision at home.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

There were about 350 students at this high school. They indicated that 27% of the 10th graders, 30% of the juniors, and 32% of the seniors need extra help. The 9th grade was seen as a problem, but they don’t have a full set of grades for these students to give a specific percentage; however, the counselor and some staff see this percentage as increasing dramatically – perhaps as high as 50%, more students are seen as failing as the new test scores become available. Graduation requirements have been increased. They will now need to offer an English 4 class and a Math 3 class to deal with this change.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at risk” students?

This school is a beneficiary of a 20/1 teacher to student ratio. The school provides a strong traditional schedule, however they also offer strong applied technology programs, and they have a local Vocation Education Preparation agreement in place to address this need. They have about \$40,000 in Carl Perkins funds to keep this program in operation.

The school has instituted a new “credit recovery program,” an offering which allows students to pick up dropped courses and get back on track. The program, which utilizes TANF funds, is funded for one year, and they are looking for additional funding to keep this going next year. The school counselor also tracks these students.

The district has initiated a new Alternative Education program that is made up of 22 students that were pulled back off the streets. These students must be at least 16 years of age. However, the school administration did not regard these students as Buffalo High School students.

Overview:

Buffalo High School is in a small district that generates no EDY funds. About 99% of their students are white, English speaking students. There are 350 students attending the school and about 16% qualify under the Free or Reduced price lunch programs. The staff feels that this is not a very good indicator of need however because many of their students do not take part in this program. There are 25 regular FTE and two Special Education teachers. The school building is an attractive 3-story facility that seems modern and functional. Most teachers had their own classrooms. There are a number of well-equipped vocational programs including a traditional shop, a full CAD lab, an Applied Technology Lab, a Business Prep program, a wide range of Farm Management offerings and a Video Media class. Staffing also includes a dean, a counselor, a librarian, social worker and an activities director.

Program Descriptions:

This school runs a traditional 7 period high school schedule for students. This includes strong college preparation offerings in area such as English 9, 10 and Lit. Algebra I & II Geometry & Trig, Pre Calculus, Spanish 1 & 2, French I & II, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

The administration indicated that about 90% of the students go on to college. There are also applied Math I & II, Applied Tech, Applied Chem. and Life Science courses that are offered for non-college bound students. Extensive offerings of applied education courses are part of their curricular offerings, and a wide variety of well-equipped technical programs round out the master course schedule.

English:

A typical high school English program operates at this school with upper level classes being offered in literature, College Composition, CP English Shakespeare Myth. Core classes in English have the most “drop” related issues.

Math:

Principal and Activities director expressed some concern about the large size of the math core classes some beginning with over 20 students in the class. They indicated that there were issues over the numbers of students that were dropping from these offerings. This seems to be happening at an increasing level.

Resources:

The principal was not fully cognizant of the total school operations budget because personnel cost are controlled by the district. However other categories of funding at the school added up to about 2.1 million dollars, which included \$250,000 for sports programs, \$67,000 for the Library, \$68,000 for guidance, and \$166,000 in school administration.

Carl Perkins Federal Funds were used make program improvements in Voc. Ed. Preparations, however those teachers are funded by the district.

There was some realization that they were benefiting from small school funding but actual amounts were not known at the site. The Superintendent indicates that they are receiving \$506,000 district wide for small schools, about \$100,000 in small district funding.

The district has worked to increase teacher salaries and has adjusted the base salary so the beginning base salary was up to \$27,395 this year.

Professional Development:

The district controls most staff development funds; the superintendent indicating that about \$300,000 is allocated at the district level. There is only a couple of thousand dollars allocated at the school site.

Indicator of program quality:

The school provides a wide range of educational options given the relatively low student population. The quality of its academic classes provides many students to obtain the opportunity for collegiate preparation that seems to be a general expectation for most students at the school. There has been recent pressure due to increased graduation requirements that staff reports is making it harder for students to successfully complete the required course work. In addition, the district has developed additional programs that are in response to an increasing “at risk” population which is characterized more generally as students with unstable home lives, no parental supervision, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of interest and motivation to do well in school. This school continues to send about 90% of its graduating seniors to college or junior college. In addition, they have several vocational education agreements in place to provide vocational options to non-college bound students. There is significant utilization of computer labs in this school, with full technology labs situated throughout the school, not only in the library but also in the “tech prep” areas, businesses classes and actual class offerings such as Web design, PageMaker, and Intro to CAD.

Summary of School:

This school runs a fully comprehensive program that is impressive given the relatively low number of the students attending the school. Class sizes are maintained at around 20 to 1. There is a full range of activities and extra curricular activities, including a sports program, music offerings like Choir and Band, and art offerings such as Ceramics and Sculpture. There is

a variety of administrative support staff available and a number of the teachers provide extra curricular program support.

There are district professional development programs budgeted for staff development. Teachers and administrators are concerned about lack of student motivation and increased levels of students dropping from classes. These problem students have not been characterized as “drop outs” from the school. However, the district now has enough population of these individuals to house an “alternative high school” program in the district.

**Laramie County School District #1
Arp Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

They use both free and reduced lunch and academic measures.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They use teacher recommendations regarding the students "not performing" in the room, students "not quite qualifying for special education", free and reduced lunch. They also use the Phelps readiness test.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

From 60-70% are defined as economically at risk. On the Phelps, they have scores of 33% below the 10th percentile in Kindergarten; results that the principal calls "a little bit scary".

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

EDY services include trainings for parents, a second social worker, emotional support on academic work including management and parenting with love and logic. They provide informal assistance to teachers, and are in classrooms once a month for "bullyproofing". They provide peer mentoring and 'caring kids clubs'. They use relaxation and imagery techniques, anger control and coping skills in groups of 15 students. The district is providing \$100,000 of Title I for one year to "look at school readiness". There is a six week preschool readiness summer school, that has the 84 lowest students. There is a summer school for students below the 38th percentile on Terra Nova. The district provides transportation to the one site on the south side.

Overview:

This is a Title I school wide school; Title I services are provided to every student. There are 35 classroom teachers, 13 regular education classrooms; the principal has been here 12 years, and in the district 30 years. There has only been a turnover of five teachers in 12 years. I think their budget is \$4.7 million, out of \$90 million. The maximum class sizes can be: grades K-2 with 22 students, grades 3-4 with 25 students, and grades 5-6 with 28. There are five 'trailer parks' and their renters migrate; these have 315-350 students. There is a focus from the superintendent in the past 4-5 years of implementing standards and redirecting funds into the instructional program. There is concern that over time, standards based instruction and high stakes testing will produce stress and affect results. There is approximately 13% mobility.

Program description:

They have Title I in grades 4, 5, and 6. There were concerns that teachers are not able to teach "whole kids", but that teachers also need to be able to teach their own "strengths" and have "some flexibility". In primary there is .5 aide; they have literature all morning; 3 days they have 'comp ed' for 30 minutes. Two days they have "Jostens", computer lab, and learning lab. There is extended day for grades 4-6 that is instructional and academic. It is based on teacher recommendation and is for 1 hour per day for three days. It is 'part of the Title I teacher's job'. There is another Title I teacher in the primary grades doing pull-out in small groups under six. We were told that, "a lot wouldn't be happening without Title I". Students are assigned to classes from May 1-15 using current teachers groups of A, B, C, D with math and English language arts grouped separately. Classes are balanced academically and by gender. There are education assistants in grades K, 1, and 2 paid by Title I; in grade 3 funding is by a federal class size reduction grant, and an officer serves grades 4, 5, and 6. There is a Title I lab and a Title I computer lab. The principal estimates his time on at risk to be between 25-35% and 10% of his time is for coordinating at risk programs for the district.

Reading/writing:

They use SOAR to Success; they also use Houghton Mifflin. They also have 40 minutes of accelerated reading, with 85-92% correct on quizzes being a cut-off for moving on to the next level. This helps to ensure that students are reading in their "zone" of comprehension, or what they call zone of proximal difficulty. Getting these scores or above on the book quizzes allows them to progress to the next level and provides a more difficult book list from which they can choose. This program produces status reports so that the teacher can monitor each student's progress. Teachers can also customize the tests so they can include other books or change the tests. There are 70 titles and 135 per disk. They do not allow re-testing on a book. They also use running records for pre and post in grades K-6, and in grades 4-6 they use "silvioli". The entire school is involved in this program and hallway walls have contests, prizes, and posters and lists of students achieving various levels. They also use guided reading. In K-1, they spend \$400-800 per year on little paperbacks that the students can keep; this is important because they said that the students often have no books in their homes. They use collaborative literacy and 6 certified trainers, reading recovery. On the grade 1 reading inventory, they have 15-25 students in the lowest quartile, and they identify two students who receive 1:1 assistance 45 minutes daily for 18 weeks; they track their progress through grades 3-4. They considered it to be "extremely costly". They also have the SOAR program, and CLIP. In grade 2, teachers 'clipped' one student in the first semester.

Math:

They use Saxon math and accelerated math. They are buying scanners so they will get test results faster and will not have to wait for WyCAS results. They have crosswalks to Terra Nova that provide practice tests that they use. There is Title I support in grades 3-5 depending on need. There is a Title I Jostens lab 2-3 days per week for acceleration and evaluation. There is a school wide STAR math program.

Resources:

The said that the teachers' raises will all go to health insurance. Wyoming's teacher salaries are 41st or 42nd in the nation. There is no income tax and a low tax base. They feel the psychologists and social worker have no privacy and "work in closets". Generally, there is no room for any new programs or facilities; people just have to 'work in closets'. There is an art room. The head social worker is .10 at this school. She has a case load of 56 students; 20 have IEPs and the remainder are Title I. There are TANF funds for K-7 summer school to that they said would 'free up' Title I funds. There is Even Start for ages 2-5. They have federal class size reduction in one room. There is a social worker who is .35 Title I, .55 special education, and .10 district funds. She is in a portable but moving 'into a closet'. They say that district funds for at risk students are 'carved out'. There is an education assistant who is certified, but they tend to resign often because the salaries are low; 'they make more at McDonald's'. If they had more EDY funds they say they could use more space (there are 40 special education students in one room and a speech closet with 40 students); they would like to have a parents' option for preschool connected to the school to allow for focus on literacy for two years and be onsite with the staff. They would like to do a better job with young parents who have young children, more contact with parents through community outreach, and more professional development regarding academically at risk. District funds are allocated on a flat based system of student enrollment; Title I funds provide academic opportunities.

Professional development:

They can now have seven staff development days in two years, no more than five in one year. ASCD's 'writing with power' is used as well as six traits of writing. There is a district coordinator of staff development, as well as input from the principal and subject area coordinators. The district controls staff development funds. At the school level, there are Title 2 and Title 6 funds of \$5000 and these line up with the action plan for math, English language arts, and parent involvement. These are for all students, not just at risk. They have had .5 day on standards based instruction, Praxis, Arizona visits to 4-5 schools, teaching smarter and harder, and two workshops on alignment with WyCAS.

Indicators of program quality:

They use STAR, Renaissance advance learning, and Terra Nova is used in grades 2-6. The principal was concerned that, "IQs are 85-95 but the students do not qualify for special education and are, therefore, losing 10-15%" of the instruction because of their deficiencies. The district performance assessments in math and writing are in grades K-6. In social science there are four pilot assessments for the state test. In science, there are performance tests in grades 3-5 for district and state tests. The principal says the scores are higher on criterion referenced tests. They said the writing performance scores are not as high. They told us the math scores are the highest in the district. They said in language arts, they are 'almost at the top'; however, they indicated they are the third "most needy school in the district". The said they "haven't been caught" yet by the Title I adequate yearly progress, but "mathematics will catch them" because they are in the 70th percentile. They indicated that they have changed the data collection process.

Two years ago they switched from ITBS. They test the first week of every semester with a pre test and post test (STAR reading). These scores are required for summer school decisions.

District interview:

The district staff in attendance kept increasing as the meeting progressed and apparently, as they came to understand our interests. The director of support services, including maintenance, planning, transportation, and nutrition was there. A data person was also there, along with the assistant superintendent for human resources and the assistant superintendent for instruction. I may have missed one or two as they came in and out.

How does this district define "at risk" students?

They identify students at risk by their academic standing regarding grade level standards.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They send deficiency notices for English language arts and math, and due to the impending implementation of the graduation requirements in 2005, they are adding social science and science.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

The principal said 65% were at risk; the same number as Title I students.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

They said in the 26 elementary schools, there used to be 11 tutors funded by compensatory education. They have a fourteen page list of interventions for at risk. At grade 1, there is the CLIP program. The main concentration of programs was at the secondary level, grades 7-12. These included: extended day (6/5ths), summer school, achievement centers, Saturday school, Triumph High School, CBOE, drug counseling, security guards, mental health services, ACE, Focus, education station, pre-K summer school with 72 students attending, ADT, and transitional courses at the junior high.

The summer school is a 2-4 week session. At the high school level, they said they increased from 60 students in 1999 to 91 students in 2000. They are expecting 165 in junior English, 138 in sophomore English, and 131 in algebra this year. In grades 7-9, there were 422 students in 1999, and 348 in 2000. In elementary, there were 342 students in 1999, and 316 in 2000. They said they expect from 340-350 this year.

At ARP Elementary, there is the coordination of English language arts focusing on writing as a district intervention, using the six traits of writing to set expectations at each grade level. They are also working on exemplars.

Resources:

At risk budgets are handled centrally and human resources handles the staffing. Equal funds are provided to everyone for the "standard needs". They indicate that the district program in schools is provided with the same base for all schools, and that Title I is additional.

If there were additional resources they said they would like to have programs for: teen parents with support systems to keep them in school, transportation, child and infant care. They would like to provide more developmental help with preschool, day care, and an all day kindergarten; they also need facilities for preschool. They would provide additional literacy intervention with CLIP to have students reading by grade 3. They also would like more staff development planning and time for all days, rather than half days. They would like to provide sustained training on standards based classrooms, interventions, and more focus on secondary schools.

They indicate that have a district reserve goal of 8%, and cash flow problems from July through the first two weeks of August. One of the district staff said they are 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'. They said that in the last budget reduction, they had eliminated the 'add-ons'. They also said they have had to spend an extra \$3 million on major maintenance, and had to cut building materials and maintenance funding.

They were concerned that the new funding system has no external cost adjustment. In an earlier study, they had made cuts from \$750,000 down to \$250,000. They indicated that insurance and health costs have increased by 30%.

With the extra EDY funding, at the district level they reinstated summer school when the funding 'came back'. They think it will double this year.

They are building a third high school for grades 9-12. They have plans to replace an elementary school that utilizes a basement and has no gym.

They indicated that enrollment is declining by 152 students.

Indicators of quality:

They said that according to the Phelps, one third are not prepared to enter school.

Professional development:

Professional leave is apparently part of the negotiated contract for which teachers can apply. They can use half of it each semester. The focus has been on standards based classrooms through school improvement plans; other funds are set aside.

Summary of district interview:

We came away thinking they had used their extra EDY funding generated by some schools in the district to reinstate mainly secondary programs. They said these programs had eliminated or cut in an earlier budget shortfall. There seemed to be some hesitancy among the district staff, and new people kept being recruited to join the meeting.

**Laramie County School District #1
Deming Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

Enrollment:	214
Ethnic makeup of student body:	84% Anglo, 8% Hispanic, 3% African-American., 4% Asian-American/Pacific Islander, 1% Native American Indian/Alaskan Native
Students at-risk:	75
Title I eligible:	23% (49-50)
Special ed.:	42
ESL students:	0

How does this school define “at-risk students?”

Students falling behind are referred to the Building Intervention Team (BIT). BIT plans interventions for all cases. Eligible students are referred to special services but not included in the at-risk count. Teachers also meet with the students’ parents to suggest how they can help.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

The BIT has identified 75 at-risk students.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at-risk” students?

Several program components benefit at-risk students although they were not implemented specifically for that group. Teachers cite Guided Reading as one of their most effective tools in working with at-risk pupils. Math software programs also help these students succeed. STAR programs identify pupils at-risk in reading and math, and teachers use this data to plan appropriate programs. The one element of the school program most directed to at-risk students is the part-time tutor, whose assignment is to work with “low-end” readers.

Overview:

Deming is a small primary school. It is paired with grades 5-6 Miller School, which Tony Crecelius also serves as principal, to complete a K-6 program for the two-school community. The school lacks space to use for instructional purposes, other than its 10 regular classrooms, 1 resource room, and library. Small group instruction takes place in the halls. Class size reduction, the principal says, “used up the space.” Class sizes, including kindergarten, are running from 20 to 23 and up to 25 students.

Program description:

Three years ago, the district decided not to adopt new reading texts and to use, instead, benchmarks and standards. The money saved was given to schools to purchase leveled readers, classroom library books, and Accelerated Reader materials and training. The principal and staff set two goals for Deming School: “reading and math”, with more resources directed to reading. Reading, writing and language form the morning block; math, science and social studies the afternoon block.

Reading/writing:

To give primary teachers time for one-on-one reading instruction, the two education assistants, the tutor and the resource teacher assist teachers on a rotating basis. Some small groups of pupils work in the classroom, special education students go to the resource room, while others remain in the classroom; some students are dispersed to the computer lab, the library, and, because of space limitations, to the halls. The tutor’s assignment is to work with “low-end” readers who have been tested and recommended by the teacher. Sometimes, the tutor works with small-groups in the classroom; other times, her workspace is the hall outside the classroom.

Emphasis on writing begins with the introduction of journal writing in kindergarten and continues through 4th grade. All teachers are trained in Guided Reading and Accelerated Reader. STAR Reading assessment is used in grades 2-6 to determine what benchmarks to address; teachers then design appropriate lessons and determine what materials to use. Currently, no one on staff is trained in CLIP (Collaborative Literacy Intervention Program), but next year, a trained teacher will join the staff and will train other teachers in the program. Basal texts are available but not used much. Chapter books are used throughout the grades. Primary teachers are reported to have purchased a considerable amount of classroom reading materials with their own money. These library books, thematic lesson kits of readers and videos, and software programs are basic to their instructional programs and are loaned to fellow teachers. In grade 4, reading, writing, and English form a language arts block.

Math:

Teachers do not use textbooks. Lessons are developed to meet standards and benchmarks. STAR Math results are used to assess students and identify benchmark targets in grades 3-6. Student math journals are an important part of math at all grades to teach how to read and write math problems in preparation for the WyCAS. Grade 4 teachers say, “...probably half the time we’re writing.”

Other:

Computers. The computer/library education assistant uses the lab’s 14 computers to test grades 1-4 pupils in STAR reading and grades 3-4 pupils in STAR math. She also administers Accelerated Reader tests throughout the year. One 1st grade classroom has 11 computers, which are heavily used, and another 40 computers are distributed throughout the other classrooms. To

replace and add computers, the school relies on money it gets from the Deming Parent-Teacher Organization and district matching funds.

Resources:

Deming receives no Title I funds or any other categorical funds, nor does it receive any EDY funds. The district does give the school an additional \$7,000 to pay the tutor portion of the tutor/secretary's salary. The principal did not know how much the district pays for staff development to train teachers in reading program strategies. Deming's budget gives each teacher \$1,100 for supplies.

Staff: With the exception of the added funding for the tutor, staffing for Deming follows the district allocation formula.

- .5 principal
- 1.5 secretaries
- 10 classroom teachers
- 1 education assistant (library/computer lab)
- .5 physical education teacher
- .4 art teacher
- .3 nurse
- .2 social worker
- .45 music teacher
- .38 tutor

Special education funded: 1 teacher, 1 education assistant, .4 speech therapist, .3 psychologist, .1 occupational therapist

Indicators of program quality:

Latest WyCAS results show Deming students performing at district level in reading and above district level in writing and math.

Comments/summary:

Deming School is an older building, functioning well at capacity. Its staff has created a pleasant and stimulating atmosphere. The planned use of hallways for instructional areas, last resort though it may be, is probably the weak link in the school's educational program. Without chairs, tables, writing materials and surfaces, and reference displays, the halls offer a limited and uncomfortable learning environment--particularly disadvantageous for at-risk students who are frequently assigned there. No programs aimed specifically at at-risk pupils were identified. Space limitations, alone, could prevent accommodation of any additional special programs, if those programs required space. Instead, the needs of at-risk pupils are addressed with those of other pupils.

**Laramie County School District #1
East High School
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

The emphasis in all the programs we observed was high school graduation.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They use a BIT referral process for any student which provides a process for the "struggling child" to have interventions selected. Interventions are tried before the special education coordinator tests them. Twice as many students are referred to her as qualify. Eighty percent of those she ends up testing qualify for special education. There are staffings before the BIT process that include the principal, student, parent, and teachers.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

About 46% of the grade 10 students are at risk in English language arts and math (276/600). They estimate it is the same for grades 11 and 12 but they have not calculated those grades.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

They have an achievement center that provides tutoring. It was set up to provide a way for students to make up deficiencies from junior high and to reduce failure rates. It provides "credit recovery" through skills remediation, is standards based, is an upgraded study all for students who are behind in their classes. About 140 students have been referred to this center that is housed in the library; 67 in English, 49 in math, and 25 in various other subjects. Eighty-five are still working and 15 have completed their work. Forty credits have been earned this year. They have had 4500 "sign-ins", a duplicated count. It is staffed with .5 FTE English language arts teacher and a full-time tutor. The tutor is a retired military person with a master's in counseling and he makes \$12 per hour. They were both very committed, impressive, and were wonderful with the students, who all choose to be there. The program consists partly of computer stations attached to "NovaNet"; the curriculum and programs are very structured and sophisticated, monitored by the center staff and the "sponsoring" teacher. NovaNet costs \$55,000 per year, and is a subscription service from Arizona that has available 22,000 hours of instruction. It started at "Triumph" with 25 portals for the district. It has an entire high school curriculum, each course with a pre-test, a module, and prescriptions based on test results. It "had to be sold to the staff", partially due to "Carnegie units" and especially related to the standards based instruction and graduation requirements, and "the superintendent, assistant superintendent and the state department of education backed us." Staff became convinced when teachers with master's degrees took the course finals on the NovaNet program and could not pass.

They track time on lessons, and successes and failures. They provide diagnostic information to the student as to progress, prescription exercises to achieve mastery, re-testing. About 80 of the 140 are involved in NovaNet. Those who do not make it go to "Triumph", CBOE, or they drop out of school.

There is also a career center, and an "ACE" program which is a school within a school with about 80 students being identified in grades 9-10. It had been in the school before, but had been cut out because of funding, but was now reinstated. Most students are students having to work, teen parents, helping with family incomes, or students who just do not make it in the regular structure. They can earn four credits. The program is an entire year, broken into 5 week segments, with the four core subjects separated for better student focus and concentration. All morning is spent on math when they are in their math part of the year. The math class uses Carnegie math; they have no homework.

There is also extended day English which provides .5 credit during the lunch hour for seniors who need to make up an English credit to graduate. This program is coordinated with the English teacher and expands on reading and writing, ACT practice. It is not for "low functioning" students; the teacher said four of the seven were headed for college but had to work, some full-time, to pay for cars, insurance, rent. The assessment is writing, speaking with clear standards and criteria. There is also a multicultural literature course that also counts as English credit.

They also have peer tutoring. And, there is a "GRADS" program for teen pregnancy.

The summer school has been expanded this year. It is remedial and focuses on "recovery credit", costs \$60 which is reimbursed if the student earns a "C" or better. They explain that the cost contributes to student commitment and provides more of an obligation for the students to complete the session. They have increased the offerings from four to nine classes: three levels of English, math, social science and science.

There is a special Linda Mood Bell reading program for students who somehow never really learned to read; students receive .5 elective credit for participating from 7-7:50 am. A regular elementary teacher is .5 FTE funded by the district. She was very impressive.

There are 20 minutes of mandatory sustained silent reading at the beginning of second period.

Overview:

East High School does not generate EDY funds but it is in a district with EDY funds. It has 1500 students, 120 teachers, 170 special education students. About 86% are white, with 10-14% being Hispanic.

Program description:

They are just beginning to implement standards based instruction. The NCA goal is focusing on at risk students. With grade 20 students going to be affected by the graduation requirements and standards implementation, they wanted to have programs in place and not be in the process of inventing them.

Resources:

A federal grant funds the "E-team" which is a group of 15-20 upper class students focusing on conflict resolution and peer counselors/tutors. They work with incoming students, new students and provide tours.

There is a Perkins and state funded counselor in the career center who also works on IEPs and gives the ASFAR. There is .5 counselor for IB, and .5 for drugs. there is also a social worker and a psychologist.

Indicators of program quality:

They use the WyCAS and Terra Nova. They also use STAR placement "growth tests" for reading in the fall and in January. They also administer the ASFAB, vocational and interest aptitude battery. The counselor had analyzed the grade 10 data. There were 55 students at 29% or below, 14 had grade points above 2.0, 18 had IEPs, 11 were in ACE, 3 dropped out, and 9 had grade points below 2.0. Over 600 students are admitted in grade 10; less than 400 graduate on time, and one half of those students go to college. Some who "drop out" go to Triumph; some go to the Job Corps. Of 67 English referrals this year, 14 completed the semester credit, 23 dropped out, 16 are still working on it, and 14 are "doubtful".

Summary of school:

When we arrived we met briefly with several assistant principals and learned that our entire schedule focused on special education personnel and services. We really have no idea how they came to that plan. We quickly re-focused them to our purpose, and they were quite responsive and changed the schedule. We never did meet the principal, although we learned that he was retiring at the end of this year.

Their emphasis on graduation as an outcome, but a meaningful one which was tied to standards and learning, was impressive. Every program we observed and discussed with teachers seemed to be addressing a problem of their at risk students, and was designed and implemented with skill and attention to student needs. This seemed to be a no-nonsense place, a maze of a building, very large and spread out. The hallways were quiet and clean, students in the hallways always seemed intent on going somewhere with some urgency and maturity, everyone was helpful, and we did not observe anything of real concern among students or in classrooms, other than an uninspired approach to a lesson on the periodic table that had most students quietly doing other things.

**Laramie County School District #1
Hebard Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

Enrollment:	221
Ethnic makeup of student body:	53% White and Other, 41% Hispanic, 3% Native American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2% African-American, 1% Asian-American/Pacific Islander
Students at-risk:	“All”
Title I eligible:	151 (65% at beginning of the year)
Special ed.:	28
ESL students:	17

How does this school define “at-risk students?”

An “at-risk” student is any “student whose education is being affected,” i.e., negatively affected by any condition or circumstance.

How does the school identify its “at-risk” students?

It is a given at Hebard that all its students are “at-risk.” To identify students who need extra assistance, the school relies on the Building Intervention Team (BIT), and has a highly evolved BIT process. Referrals may come from a teacher or parent. A team of teachers, the social worker and the principal plan interventions, which the teacher and/or specialists implement. The BIT team, which was called the “At-Risk Committee” last year, meets weekly with teachers to document problems and assess interventions employed to assist students in becoming academically, emotionally, and behaviorally successful.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

By the school’s definition, all Hebard students are at-risk. Applying the “not performing to standard” definition, nearly all students qualify. On norm referenced tests, most students fall below the 50th percentile in reading and math.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at-risk” students?

Using the school’s definition, one could logically say that all programs are provided specifically for at-risk students. The school has implemented a number of programs to boost reading and math achievement for lower performing students.

After school guided reading group. A tutoring program conducted by the Title I staff to provide extra support for identified 3rd-6th graders. Teachers use SOAR training to help students catch up.

Before school 2nd grade math group. A tutoring program staffed by 2nd grade and Title I teachers to provide extra support for identified 2nd graders who are struggling in math.

Before school 3rd-6th math group. A similar program conducted by the Title I staff for struggling intermediate grade students.

After school intermediate homework club. A team of intermediate teachers provides tutorial services for students who choose to attend.

Lunch academy. Held during lunch recess for students to get caught-up on reading or math work they missed. Attendance is voluntary or by teacher referral.

Buddy program. On referral of the BIT team, this program pairs a student with an adult for 15 minutes a week to give them continuing contact with a caring adult.

Behavior lab tutor. A staff member is available for students who are repeat offenders, students for whom regular discipline methods have not worked in the past.

CLIP (Collaborative Literacy Intervention Program). This program identifies “at-risk” students early in grades 1 and 2 and provides individualized instruction to eliminate the need for retention and to accelerate performance to grade level.

Jump Start Kindergarten. A 5-week summer program, funded through the consolidated grant, for any child entering kindergarten next year who shows to be at-risk on a screening tool. Hebard will house the program for children of ten district schools. The \$30 application fee is “refundable upon successful completion of the program.”

Head Start. A collaboration program between Hebard and Head Start for entering 5-year-old students who will attend Hebard. Curriculum is aligned with readiness benchmarks. Of 32 Hebard area children eligible for Head Start, 13 are attending. Hebard provides a kindergarten classroom for the half-day program.

ESL. Hebard has 1 district-funded ESL teacher. Four of its students are from the Hebard attendance area, 13 from other district school.

Overview:

Hebard is a Title I school. After conducting a five-year longitudinal study, the school learned that 90% of its incoming kindergartners did not attend any type of structured preschool and that the developmental age of entering kindergartners ranged from 11 months to 5 years 2 months, with an average developmental age of 3 years. This led to the collaborative agreement for a Head Start class at Hebard. This is only the second year of operation for that program, and only about one-third of children eligible to attend did so. Of this year’s kindergarten students, only 42%--including those who attended Head Start—had any structured pre-school experience. A district kindergarten readiness assessment revealed that 63% of this group was still not ready for kindergarten.

Program description:

The Hebard staff tries to tailor programs to its students and is constantly on the lookout for approaches that work with low-performing students from low-income families. To get the necessary time for one-on-one instruction time, the school follows a plan that calls for staff mobility and flexibility. When identifying training goals, staff included poverty and minority issues to fit the standards and benchmarks as an area of collective need. Now, the staff sees the need “to develop common strategies in each K-6 classroom.”

Reading/writing:

Hebard uses a variety of reading approaches and programs, and schedules Title I staff, educational assistants, and use of the compute lab to get one-on-one instruction time. The primary reading block structure puts at least three adults into every K-3 classroom. Grades 4-6 use SOAR to Success. All grades use Guided Reading and chapter books. Journal writing is started in early grades as part of basic reading/language/writing instruction and carries through all grades. When writing was added to the school’s reading and math goals, the Six Traits of Writing standard was adopted also. The school’s primary specialist, hired with class size reduction grant funds, provides 30-minute one-on-one instruction for kindergarten and 1st grade students as an early intervention strategy using Guided Reading. A Reading Recovery specialist, hired with Title I money, provides one-on-one instruction to 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders.

Math:

WyCAS results for the past three years show Hebard students are making some progress in math, but fewer than 10% are performing at the proficient and advanced levels. Math has been a staff development target for the last three years, and remedial math help is a school wide objective. The Title I teachers offer before-school math tutoring for intermediate grade students who voluntarily attend. Title I teachers work with low performing math students in all grades, some on a pull-out basis, some within their regular classrooms. All teachers use journal writing in math, as well as reading, to develop student thinking skills and to prepare them for the WyCAS. Primary grades use *Math Their Way* and *Box It and Bag It* math programs; intermediate grades use Visual Math; and, all grades use the Saxon Math series.

Other:

Computers. The school has 52 computers--20 in a lab, the rest in classrooms.

Resources:

Hebard received a Title I allocation of \$192,440 for this fiscal year. For basic staff allocation purposes, Hebard is a “2 unit school.” This entitles the school to 2 teachers, 1 education assistant and 1 social worker. The school opted to fund an additional assistant (tutor) with its Title I money.

Class size reduction. Hebard receives PL 106-554 funds to pay the salary of one additional primary teacher.

Parent Involvement Coordinator. Hebard PTO raises money through fundraisers to pay for half the salary and supplies of a parent coordinator. A school Title I matching grant of \$3,183 pays the other half.

Staff. The following staff listing does not include Head Start personnel:

.5 principal	1 class size reduction funded teacher
1 secretary	<u>Title I funded</u>
10 teachers	2 teachers
1 ESL teacher	2 tutors
5 educational assistants	1 social worker
.5 parent coordinator	<u>Special education funded</u>
.33 strings teacher	1.5 resource teachers
.33 band teacher	.5 speech therapist
.5 music teacher	.33 occupational therapist
.5 art teacher	.33 psychologist
.5 P.E. teacher	

Indicators of program quality:

If school readiness tests tell a large part of the story, then recent school initiatives should contribute to gradual increases in student performance scores. Staff planning in response to student assessment data is a movement toward that goal. A survey of 7th graders shows that former Hebard students are holding their own, with more than half earning A's and B's. Plans for a kindergarten jump-start summer program, completion of another year of Head Start, and focused resources and staff development activities are indicators that the school is looking for answers to Hebard's problems. The principal's staff development survey identified areas where staff is well trained as well as areas where more training is needed and forms the basis for planning new staff development activities.

Comments/summary:

Although Hebard is a low-performing school, staff is upbeat and energetic. The principal seems determined to find approaches that work and not let her staff become complacent with low performance of at-risk students. There is a good feeling about Hebard. It is an older school, but it has aged with care. Students are active but self-controlled; teachers seem to like their students and what they are doing. The principal is keeping a student assessment database, some historical data on changes in the community and the school's efforts, as well as surveys of student and parents.

**Laramie County School District #1
Johnson Junior High
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

At risk students are defined as not meeting grade level standards.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

All referrals go to a non-special education team, the 'BIT team', that remains involved through the process and in the follow-up. The school has had different colored lunch tickets that identified free and reduced lunch students but they are trying to implement an automated system that would not publicly identify students.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

Approximately 68% are identified as low socio-economic status. One estimate was that about 20% are not meeting grade level standards. They use grade 6 teacher recommendations, test scores in math and reading, the Stanford Reading Test, Gates McGinity, and running record.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

They say they have implemented "lots of programs". They listed the following and described some, more than others: 'Time to teach'; 'Bully proofing' that includes peer mediation and conflict resolution; it has been provided to 95% of the students; 'extended refocus' (ER) is an alternative to out-of-school suspension, it is by referral and the principal, students go for a day and vote on whether they are doing 'thoughtful work', it is also used by "state family services"; "ISS" is in-school suspension and it is staffed two hours a day with a social worker who helps them with "thinking skills", students have to "earn their way out", and they "hate it and do not got back often". There is a "gold card" program that has 70-100 students per grade level and "students must have at least a 'C' to participate"; there is a 'transitional 7, 8, and 9' class that is a training to work back into mainstream classes, students who do not qualify for special education 'but can't survive mainstreamed', and it focuses on behavior and socialization in the first weeks and provides 'corrective thinking'. There are 15 students in a class; there is also OSS which is a community service component that cuts time by half and includes eight agencies. They say they "constantly collect data on the effectiveness of the program." They also have after school detention and a 'lunch academy'. Summer school is offered for a reimbursable fee of \$60 per class. One student was signed up so far with a May 4 deadline for June 11 classes. It provides 'makeup credits' and is a remedial/recovery model. Last year was the first time a fee had been used and they enrolled about 100 students; about 30 were free and reduced lunch students who also had to pay in advance.

Overview:

Johnson Jr. High is a school that generates EDY funds. It has 850-900 students. About 24% are Hispanic by surname, but they indicated that over 50% "self identify" as Hispanic. African Americans account for 10% of the students, and 2% are Asian. They described it as "not a typical Wyoming school". There are 87 professional staff. The principal has been at Johnson for three years; she came here from Gillette and is leaving to be an assistant superintendent in Torrington next year. She has tried to have everything she has brought in be 'research based', and says she has 'many balls in the air'. She has been frustrated in that she has been 'unable to move the English department' effectively, even though she taught English. She has presented at regional and national NCTE conferences.

Program description:

Students are grouped heterogeneously, with no tracking, and by using random assignment. About 10% of each class is in an 'honors program', and the students have the same curriculum with extra expectations and projects which include 'vertical learning'. They identified 20% as special education by meeting criteria.

They described administrators being willing to explore, research, and use articles to help push the staff and school, but they described a staff preferring the status quo. She wanted to make sure there was time to teach, school wide discipline processes, research based classroom practices, an understanding of poverty and its implications for learning, and students reading at least one book per semester.

Reading/writing:

Programs include accelerated reading and the six traits of reading and writing. They indicated they have had less growth with reading and writing, than with math. There is a pilot program for guided reading with 18 students. They also have 'DEAR', drop everything and read, for 20 minutes a day. They are trying to change the culture of the school from one of students being called a 'school boy' if they are carrying books, to one in which everyone carries paperbacks and reads constantly. They have accelerated reading for 15 minutes at the beginning of the class period. For the accelerated reading, they have bought classroom sets of books and have increased use of the library. They have spent \$2500 on historical fiction and novels (360 books), which are required for social science. They indicated they need more library books related to science.

They are adding guided reading for science and social science with the substitute teachers are being paid by Title I, but they indicated they need more half days.

Math:

Programs include the Wyoming Triad, hands-on Math, and AC/AR. They indicated they have had more growth with math. All grade 7 students are in a districtwide 'bridge' math class, funded by Title I, that has a cap at 18 students, but is generally from 12-15 students. It focuses on

'before pre algebra'. The math skills lab is for students who are below the 40th percentile on the Terra Nova and cannot qualify for special education; it has 40 students or 15% of grade 7. It is daily and is a project based and enrichment activity. STAR math and reading tests are given within a week of a student's arriving at Johnson.

Resources:

They have a Title I budget of \$150,000 with a staff of seven. About \$80-85,000 is discretionary and funds the parent coordinator who translates, staff doing developmental work in the summer on math problems of the week and for journal packets. They had Title I funds for three years for targeted assistance for AC/AR, math manipulatives, technology for grade 7, and dream writers for English language arts, and computer programs. There is a Title I funded skills lab, a Title I education assistance in English language arts and other classrooms, a Title I tutor in math classrooms, and a full-time social worker. Their Title I school improvement plan includes guided reading and reading across the curriculum, and they indicate they could use more paid planning time within school days or the school year. Title I staff were frustrated that organizationally they were housed with the computer department, and there was not contact with any districtwide Title I. They said they 'hated being there', organizationally attached to the computer department.

There was concern that the BIT process had been a rubber stamp for special education but that it was being improved and becoming a process for taking issues to a committee. They indicated that poverty issues are more severe every year with more emotionally disturbed students and quite involved cases of autistic students. It was estimated that 50% 'would qualify for something'.

There are seven special education teachers and one more next year; there are 80 re-evaluations a year. There are 13 education assistants. There is a psychologist three days per week who focuses on testing, not counseling.

They indicated they need a full time social worker, but they share with Triumph now; the social worker provides assistance with anger management, grades and truancy. There is a Title I social worker who talked about 'corrective thinking', re-focusing, group referrals, errors in thinking, closed thinking, asset building, problem solving, conflict, poverty, drugs, alcohol, and prison. The social worker runs groups of up to seven students on anger management, grief and loss, social skills, keeping friends, handling feelings, and a 'girls group' that deals with 'cutting' and suicide. She does 'real' therapy with six students. Students are self referred, or parents, teacher or counselors refer them. The social worker has 250 contacts per month. There also is assistance from "Southeast Mental Health", especially for grade 7 students and parents needing assessment or group work.

There is special education counseling provided for the four self-contained classes, and a behavior lab. They have counselors for grades 7, 8, and 9 focusing on registration and counseling regular education. There is a behavior lab that has 42 special education students who work to get into a transitional mainstream. There is also a .5 student assistant paid by drug and alcohol funds.

Title 2 and Title 6 have provided grants for a technology stipend, but not specifically related to 'at risk'.

If they had more funds, they indicated they would like more social workers and counselors and to reduce class size lower than 22, especially for reading problems. They talked about their success in quickly getting assistance from grant programs, but also about the problems of the grant ending and not having the means of continuing the programs. They would like teachers' time to help write grants, which they consider necessary for 'survival'.

They also mentioned the Wyoming Reading Achievement Project, and a UW Future Teachers' project, as well as this being the first year of the UW (PDS Schools) program which requires four years teaching in a Title I disadvantaged school. These teachers were here doing their practicum. The UW (PDS) site is considered 'a Godsend', allowing more outreach. The interns 'want to be here'; she considers them to be young and energetic.

They have 325 computers.

There is a full time nurse in every secondary school.

Professional development:

They have one staff development day at the beginning of school, and in October there is a statewide meeting. They have 2.5 days of district focus on standards based classrooms. They also have after school planning sessions, and they also employ subs. There has been state staff development at the three junior highs on 'every student is a success, when every student is a leader'. They have assistance from the Northwest Regional Lab. They are working with the youngest teachers who are more receptive, providing continual training on classroom management, and other areas to provide incentives to keep staff at Johnson and, as they put it, not have them "go off to Candy Land". They are also a professional development site for the University of Wyoming, funded through a teacher quality enhancement grant, and a professor is on staff full-time at Johnson with about six people. These extra adults in the building add a lot of energy.

There are "book study groups" that have discussed "From Rage to Hope", "Quality School", "Kids in School Reform", and "Understanding Poverty" in trying to consider 'differential instruction' for their students. They also have 'book talks' during prep periods. They are trying to build greater teacher ownership and move to challenging work that engages the students. They have also had training on 'learning styles', and training on how to use data from the 'STAR' test (pre/post or 'growth' test) for reading and math, and how to apply individual test results in refining a student's program. They said the data were hard to collect, that it had to be done 'by hand' and that they were difficult to access. They had a Title I funded training on 'project based learning' with a goal that all teachers will be using that approach.

There has been a 'coalition of leaders' trying to change the focus by using results of assessments to help teachers. They say, though, that some are 'not in tune'. It was said that many are long-time teachers 'doing the same things that don't work on a daily basis'.

They have six days of training in accelerated reading for English teachers and two special education teachers, focusing on the correct use, timing, and training issues.

Parent Involvement:

For five hours a week, a parent coordinator works on parent involvement focusing on language problems at home with translation, making home calls, offering food, setting up classes in neighborhoods on English language and math skills. They sent two or three parents to the National Parent Involvement meeting in Denver. They have had three or four workshops for parents on developing assets to be successful (28 attended), and on 'how to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk'. They have had other programs on the curriculum, and a community piece with garden projects, flowers, nursing homes, adopting clean-up areas, planting trees, and working at the elementary school. There is a web page for group information for parents. The social worker (Title I) has had meetings in the neighborhoods on standards. The principal has had meetings in the neighborhoods, too.

Indicators of program quality:

They indicated that about 42% of the students read at grade level. They are aware of research that students have only seven minutes a day of reading. They have doubled the number of library books being checked out. They use the STAR tests for reading and math, Terra Nova, and WyCAS.

Summary of school:

They were unaware of any special EDY allocation and were surprised at the figure of \$500 per student.

**Natrona County School District #1
Crest Hill Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

Crest Hill defines "at risk" students, beyond the 10% qualifying for free/reduced lunch, as students at risk of failure because of social and emotional problems, stemming often from divorce and single parent families. They specifically did not cite what they called 'real learning problems', but seemed greatly concerned about the effects of family problems on their students' achievement. There is also a slight subtext about the more hidden and lurking inward or outward violence; I have guessed it related to Mathew Shepard at UW in Laramie and/or Columbine. No one said that, though. They had had a 6th grader commit suicide the year before.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

Students are identified through the 'building intervention team' (BIT); this was a fairly uniform practice and a standard answer in all the districts I visited. Here it was the main answer, although the guided reading program is implemented with daily testing to monitor reading progress.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

The principal did not provide information about this but was eager for me to talk with the grade 5 teacher who maintained the NCA statistics and what they called the 'book'. She estimated that 20% of the students were below their grade level reading and math standards, although the teacher felt the data were of limited use in monitoring progress because the 'under 10 rule' of cell size prevented them from knowing enough detail about test results.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

Through the NCA process, they are beginning to study various test results and many other indicators of school and student performance, although their programs are only in the infancy of becoming standards-based. Each teacher, much to the principal's frustration, is fairly entrenched in her own particular programmatic approaches. The principal longed for the Title I school-wide vehicle and process that he used at North Casper to develop coherent and aligned programs for students, especially those 'at risk', and he did not view this school as having a significant number of classically defined 'at risk' students. Many services they identify for students 'at risk' are funded by special education, and I found this to be true almost everywhere I visited in Wyoming. Special education funding seemed to be stretched to be an umbrella to provide the social, psychological and counseling services needed by many 'at risk' students.

Overview:

Crest Hill does not generate EDY dollars, and is in Natrona District which has EDY dollars. There are 432 students; I was told that 10% qualify for free/reduced lunch. There are 27 certificated staff. Approximately 85% of students from the surrounding neighborhood, and about 60 students are from other neighborhoods. The students are predominately white. The principal has been there three years, being transferred from North Casper Elementary, which is a Title I school. He had been there as a teacher and principal for a total of 10 years. He told me all about his Title I experience when he took me to lunch.

Program description:

Crest Hill has a class size goal of 19 students. Currently there are 22 students in grade 1 (the CLR teacher spends one-half time in grade 1 in the morning). Grade 2 has three teachers due to a federal class size reduction grant for 44 students (about 15 per teacher). Grade 3 has 20 students with grades 4-6 having 22-23. There are also two Montessori classrooms with grades 1-3 having 26-27 students, and grades 4-6 having 16 students.

They are in the final monitoring phase for the North Central accreditation. Their school improvement goal for the year is language arts.

Each teacher is equipped with a cordless mike and the classrooms all have speakers in four corners to project and protect the teacher's voice and enable children to attend better.

Approximately 10% of the students are identified as special education. Math uses a pull-out; grades 4-6 use inclusion.

The school consists of a variety of approaches and programs that have evolved with each teacher over the years, so there is a lack of school vision, coherence and alignment. The principal has been challenged by the many different programmatic emphases, and the lack of a Title I-type change vehicle to focus staff and program effectively.

They have 22 clubs for students to join.

Reading/writing:

A balanced literacy framework is used with what was called "a little bit of everything". There is a 'building-wide emphasis on reading comprehension and listening comprehension'; the latter being the only one in the state. In grades K-1, all teachers are trained and use guided reading. They test every day, so groups change frequently (50% are above level 44 at this date). Grade 3 uses "circ" integrated reading which includes fewer volumes and more concentration on a piece of literature. Grade 4 uses literary circles. Grades 5-6 use a blend of basal and literature. They also use sustained silent reading for 15 minutes per day and there is some use of accelerated reading. Teachers estimate that 20% of students are at risk of reading below grade level.

For writing, they use the six traits of writing, and parents started a writing center which each class uses one to two times per week. It reduces class size, but some concern was expressed that it tends to remove writing from the other curricular areas.

On the WyCAS, grade 3 writing is at district average or below; in grade 5 writing, 86% of the students are in the top two quartiles.

Math:

In math, there is “math our way”, and again the principal characterized the program as a “little bit of everything”. According to staff the “students are naturally high in math”.

The University of Wyoming has seven student teachers located at the school, and teachers found them to be very helpful additions to the staff. In grade 1 there is a .5 education assistant. The principal also identified an enrichment specialist who spent her time 2.5 hours on the playground, 2.5 hours in the writing center, .5 hour in special education, 2.5 hours as an office assistant.

The facilities are extensive, and remodeled or new. There was an art room and a music room. There are 120 computers in the school purchased with \$500,000 from a district challenge grant so there are four to five IMACs in every classroom, as well as a computer lab with 25+ MACs

Professional Development:

There is \$2500 per school with \$625 allowed for any one teacher. The focus this year was on reading and listening comprehension. The district has four half days for professional development.

Resources:

Special education funding provides a counselor for one day per week to work individually with 14 students through a contract with the central Wyoming counseling center. There is also a school psychologist for two days per week, a social worker for 1.5 days who works on a crisis basis with anyone. There are also two resource teachers who provide pull-outs in math. Title 6B funds FM units that are wireless microphones in every class for sound amplification. A teacher familiar with research on central auditory processing issues in special education brought this approach to the attention of the staff and they have adopted them in all classrooms. Every teacher has a wireless mike around her neck and uses it when conducting large group instruction or when talking to the entire class. There are some Eisenhower funds. In addition, there is a large school allocation of \$15,000-\$17,500, one FTE provided through federal class size reduction in grade 2, funds from the superintendent’s initiative which has reduced class size from 25 to 22 in grades K-3 and from 28 to 25 in grades 4-6. There is also one education assistant for the two Montessori classrooms.

Indicators of program quality:

Because the class sizes are so small, the WyCAS data are not too useful with cells having under 10 students. The district eliminated the SAT 9, and this is the third year of what they call the “growth test” which is published by NWEA. My understanding of NWEA from my previous position is that it allows them to create a test that meets the district’s standards from an item pool. It is used as a pre/post in spring and fall. Benchmark assessments at different grades for different subjects are also used. They indicated they miss the SAT 9, and they seemed to talk of it longingly. When I asked for clarification they indicated their preference was due to the utility they saw in the longitudinal data.

Summary of school:

This school has many resources in staff, facilities, and equipment. The district and the school have a declining enrollment, and there are district budgetary problems. There were negotiations going on with the union during the days my visit, but the issues involved were not raised at this school.

**Natrona County School District #1
CY Junior High School
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

The criteria they cited were: one or more failing grades, absences, free/reduced lunch, and attendance.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They generate an "official" list twice a year for the principal using all the information available to them in the collaborative teams. On a daily and weekly basis, they do what they call a "thumbs up, thumbs down" ritual on every student to decide if special attention is needed regarding their academic or social progress. They also use the "BIT team" process.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

They indicated that the free and reduced lunch definition included 19-22% of the students; however, this school also broadened the definition to include "academically at risk", which was often attributed to family and home problems, not "learning problems". The number most frequently given for "academically at risk" was 25%.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

The principal had sent a memo to all staff announcing my visit and clarifying the answer to this question for them. So, it was almost comical as every single person gave me the same answer. The answer was that the collaborative team model, supported by district funding, reduced the teaching load from six to five classes, reduced class size, and provided collaborative team "meeting time" every day. This was the main vehicle they used for providing additional services to "at risk" students. This was all part of the board's and district's support of the "middle level initiative" at CY. It was described as "all political" but everyone seemed keenly aware of needing to be accountable for this privilege and support the district was providing for their school-wide collaborative approach. More specifically, though, they then have one person on each team identified as each student's liaison and if they receive a "thumbs down", the liaison teacher contacts the student's parents about any issues. There was also a process by which an envelope was sent home to every parent every week for their review and signature. It included all daily and weekly missing assignments, grades, absence and tardy information. It was not uniform in every grade or every collaborative team, but was often targeted at grade 8 students. There was some frustration that parents often did not sign or use the information. Again here, most of the services identified as "special education" were available to students who were "at risk" or "in crisis". These included groups and programs provided by the social worker, the education diagnostician, and the counselors. The school nurse was also an integral part of the services to "at risk" students.

Overview:

CY does not generate EDY dollars, but is in Natrona District which has EDY dollars. CY has 700 students, approximately 19-22% qualify for free and reduced lunch. There are 53 certificated staff. Approximately one third of the students are from other attendance areas, and that number is maintaining or increasing.

Program description:

The school has been moving gradually toward a flexible block schedule for about seven years. It started with one team of four teachers at grade 7. There had been an increase in discipline problems occurring at lower grades and the staff wanted different results with students. This approach allows “collaborative teams” to meet every day to monitor students' progress. The core teams are responsible for at risk students. At the beginning and end of the semester, teams analyze students and identify those that are academically at risk, or those who no longer need to be monitored. Some teams do a “thumbs up, thumbs down” assessment every week on every student. The criteria are: one or more failing grades, absences, free and reduced lunch, attendance. Each core team has a teacher who is the liaison for each student.

I was told that the more personal approach that the collaborative teams has provided has increased the parents' perception of safety from 68% to 81%, the office referrals for discipline have decreased from 1600 to 700. These changes have also resulted in no bells ringing, and passage times varying, which the principal indicated was the main factor is discipline problems decreasing. The principal said there just were not the number of students in the hallway with time on their hands to create problems. Now, the principal feels the students' time in the hallway is purposeful and shorter.

Student assignments are within the core teams and they are tracked by math subjects, and by advanced or regular pace in English (although they say the curriculum is the same). In grade 7, the parent and student choose; however, in grades 8 and 9, placement is by teacher recommendation.

Staff talk about more personal problems of students, hygiene, eating disorders, sexual activity, parents in prison, open enrollment enticing parents to move students from school to school and blame teachers, more absences, mobility, promiscuity, legal problems, and younger parents unprepared for parenting. The nurse goes to students' homes to bring them to school. She said she had only had one case in her years of making home visits that she was unable to find a student and bring them to school, and that was this year. She said they were always willing to come.

Reading/writing:

Teaching staff think 25% of the students are at risk of not meeting standards. The reading teacher considers 10% of her students to be at risk. The reading class has all new IMACs.

Math:

One half of the sign-offs from parents are never returned. Collaborative teams make tutoring available every night.

Resources:

Their collaborative time is provided through the middle level initiative awarded by the district's board. They evaluate the climate with behavioral measures and have a slightly smaller class size of 15.

Computer equipment is generally old, including the computer on wheels (COWS). There is a also keyboarding lab with IMACs, and it is for all students.

The central Wyoming counseling center contract provides a counselor for 3 days per week.

The library is open from 7:15 to 3:00 pm for students to have additional help, and somewhere to study.

There is a homework club that provides tutoring after school. There are also flex schedules that provide small classes for enrichment and correctives, including homework and study time. This elective takes the place of their music period or special education.

There is a parent advisory group that is partially funded through the state parent organization by a grant for four activities over the calendar year, and they are joined with the parent education network which is related to a federal grant. Parent involvement occurs through parent teacher conferences, as well has in grade 8 a weekly packet is sent home for signature with missing assignments, grades, absences, and general information. This has eliminated students' anonymity.

Professional development:

There is a budget of \$63,000 which provides \$16,000 per team. They are in the process of tying it to standards, but said they "aren't there yet". The priorities are determined by the school improvement team and must be tied to standards. CY is in year 5 of its NCA accreditation. The school improvement goals are improving math computation (through connected math in grades 7-8), and respect for self and others. Staff indicated the district does an excellent job of providing professional development.

Other resources:

The counselor, to his dismay, mainly now does test coordination. He is also the BIT chair, which is an IEP-type process for students at risk, but unrelated to special education, where those working with the student meet together to consider more effective strategies.

Special education funding provides for the Central Wyoming counseling .6 of a social worker (which is 2 days per week), and 4 psychiatrists. There are also SAIL funds (federal drug and alcohol funding) which is another day for 1:1 related to making and keeping friends, anger management groups, grieving, academic success, study skills and strategies for improving grades, and girls' self-esteem.

There are also challenge days that are whole days talking in groups. This may be district funded through the challenge grant process.

A breakfast program feeds 40 students, although there is some embarrassment in participating in the program at this age. Staff said more students would participate if there were some privacy.

There is an educational diagnostician who does psychological and achievement testing. She is certificated, not clinical. She sits in on team meetings, supervises special education to determine disabilities, need for IEPs or testing. She also sits in on contracts for behavior or crisis intervention.

Eisenhower provides \$5500.

Indicators of program quality:

The district is moving to adopt state standards. The principal indicated that the WyCAS data is "reasonable, but not great". There is a building generated proficiency report that is provided to parents four times per year with grades and standards information.

MCREL has been providing assistance to CY.

Summary of school:

If there were additional funds, the principal said it "sounded corny" but since there were so many students who were bussed, he would like to be able to work with them between 2:40 and 5pm. They could also use more counselors for non-academic issues. They would also like to have more resources for students in the math center.

If they had more resources for at risk students, CY would make sure students attended school, provide transportation for after school. Staff repeatedly said that students are "bright, there are not learning issues". Staff facetiously suggested that extra funding would be used to provide dormitories, because the students' home environments were considered to be a major problem with the at risk students. They would like to have discretionary funding for classroom aides, as they had with compensatory education, when IEPs did not necessarily specify aides.

District interview:

The district is 94% white, and 4% Hispanic.

How does this district define "at risk" students?

They identify students as making progress and/or in danger of not graduating. They have "look fors" and "at risk lists" at the building levels, with each building have its own methods for monitoring their programs and reporting. They have not made these uniform in the district.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They have aligned state and district standards in the four core areas; they use standards, and WyCAS.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

They identify 44% of the students at the elementary level and 34% of the students at the secondary level if every free and reduced lunch student were at risk. They identify 34% as at risk.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

Elementary programs include Success for All, Reading Recovery, and Saxon Math and all have Title I support with general fund.

Secondary programs include: Rebound which is an alternative secondary program that re-attaches dropouts with individual self study by re-enrolling them in "packaged courses"; A2S which is a grade 5-12 alternative to suspension and is voluntary, students are sent to a special program that is a supervised study hall; Roosevelt is a small alternative high school with 100-125 students; A Plus which is a computer curriculum with the core secondary subjects; Midwest school which is 44 miles north having grades K-12, and providing an intimate alternative setting; a problem based learning center with an alternative philosophy and core curriculum skills; and a counseling contract of \$235,000.

The summer school for grades K-12 is remedial and costs \$10 tuition, and is also funded with general fund for \$200,000. It is optional, counselor referral, or court ordered. My notes indicate that 75% of the students attend (1000+ students and 386 classes); there is also a voyager summer school with 64 students that I think is funded by TANF; and driver's education with 104 students.

With the EDY impact funds, they said they can continue to offer the small school environments (like North Casper), and provide all the same resources that Crest Hill has. These include resource allocation, facilities, special services, infrastructure, class sizes in the "high teens", maintain neighborhood connections, and cover major maintenance costs including \$200,000 for playground equipment. Eight social workers are paid by Title I.

Staff development has focused on improving achievement among low socio-economic students, various at risk issues, low readers, developing more benchmark assessments in grades 4, 8, and 11 that are aligned with state standards. They have renewed rubric use across and

within the classrooms, and focused on standards based curriculum in classrooms. The district has brought Ruby Payne to present training regarding understanding and educating children of poverty and their academic needs, NeverStreaming (Elk Grove) which provides a waiver to allow quarterly screening with assessments to identify at risk, special education, and early intervention. The NCA and school improvement model has helped establish priorities, provide staff development with a parent component, and parent education. Special education training is separate.

They also talked about trying to retain and attract high quality staff, how to effectively use the "growth assessment" with low socio-economic students, and how to define program effectiveness with these students. They were also struggling with the question: is it OK for the education for at risk students to cost more? The assessment director told me that Dale Carlsen also provides assistance to the district.

They use a Title 6 innovative grant for mini grants, and Title 6 for full day preschool focusing on reading. They also have board priority grants of \$500,000 for innovative programs focusing on student needs that they characterized as "breaking the mold and bringing equity". Those funded included: rebound, A2S, success for all. There are also challenge grants for technology. The board is also looking at the effect of choice in the district, and whether it causes more segregation, and how it impacts neighborhoods.

LEP funding is \$12,000 and provided by certificated staff. The district office has one FTE administrator overseeing at risk programs at the secondary level. There is also a middle level initiative position. They said all of the block grant increases "went to salaries".

At North Casper, I encountered deep suspicion of the district office staff regarding the negotiations that were reaching a peak the three days I was in Casper. At the two other schools, the subject was only touched upon. They had to do partly with first year teachers' "contracts", as well as other issues. I came away impressed with the commitment this management team had to the needs of at risk students, the resources they were providing, the choices they were making, and the creative programs they were funding through the various competitive district grants.

**Natrona County School District #1
North Casper Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

They seemed to use the definition of "generational poverty" to mean at risk of achieving academic standards.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They indicated that their free/reduced lunch students total 91%, but they monitor students' progress very systematically in reading and math, and know on a daily basis where each student is.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

By the "academically at risk" definition, which may be attributed and/or exacerbated by family and home problems and poverty, they considered all the students to be "at risk".

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

They are a small school, and that environment is part of their services they identify for "at risk" students. They feel they have been allowed to continue to operate with this smaller environment, which provides support within this neighborhood community of generational poverty. Their math and reading programs provided extra support for students identified as not meeting standards, basically on a daily basis.

Overview:

North Casper generates EDY dollars, and is in Natrona District which has EDY dollars. There are 161 students; 91% qualify for free/reduced lunch, and 27% for special education (43 students). There is high student mobility which they said is down to 53% from 76% last year. There are 20 ESL students, and the demographic mix is 89% white and 11% non-white. About 17% are bussed from other neighborhoods. Teachers said that most students move many times around the district. The principal is in her third year; the previous principal was transferred to Crest Hill. There are six FTE classroom teachers. Class sizes are smaller than other schools in the district; they have K with 21 students, grade 4 with 25, grades 5 and 6 with 23. They indicated that in Natrona County, primary grades usually have 25 students and upper primary grades usually have 28 students. Declining enrollment is evident beginning in grade 4 which had only 15 students; this conflicts with the above numbers.

On the day I was at this school, the district was to make an announcement about the budget negotiations that were occurring with the teachers' organization. The negotiations had

been ongoing throughout my three day visit, and were on the front page of the local paper every day. It was said that the district had a \$4 million deficit. The teachers were having a difficult time that day, and although they were professional about it, most everyone I talked with had something to add about their distrust of the district office, the budget issues, etc. One of the announcements was expected to be that their principal would become half-time and work her other half-time at another small school. She seemed very popular with the staff and they were concerned about such a change, and so was she. She also had a four month old baby and was having sick baby problems that day and ended up having to make a trip to her child care and bring the baby back to her office for our interview.

I was told that in grade 6, only one student who had parents who had not been incarcerated. I was told the offenses are vandalism, shoplifting, as well as more serious issues. The staff describe an atmosphere of violence in the parents' communication and behavior at school, including assaults, drunkenness, and drug use. They said the "meth" use in this county is the highest in the U.S. They feel that students lack appropriate socialization. Staff go in pairs for home visits. One teacher told me that 'half of the class is on anti-depressants'; she also said that students are increasingly angry and vulgar.

Program description:

This is a Title I school-wide school. The Title I school-wide process has shaped their decision making about programs, especially since SAT 9 scores put them into a warning stage; two years ago they did not meet their growth targets for adequate yearly progress. The principal was credited by staff as having the vision of the school-wide power of working together, instead of failing a child all the way through. Previously, they said they had used a lot of pull-outs. They considered test scores and student performance, and after much searching and analysis they chose their math and reading programs. Their methods included Internet research, and their criteria included poverty and costs. They said they talked with "gurus", made school visits, studied the National Research Council's Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Your Children, and MCREL materials. The principal has received enough training to be a trainer in Spalding I so she can be a resource person to the staff. Each teacher rated the programs they were considering, and one said she could not 'buy in' so the principal helped her find what she called a happy placement. The principal states the building philosophy as being consistency for kids and direct instruction.

They define their program as using research proven materials. Although they have no special funding for it, they indicated they are implementing the Every Child Succeeds model.

Reading/writing:

They have had two years of training (45 hours) in Spalding reading which is their reading program. Reading Recovery is also used, and there is testing follow-up through grade 5 on their progress. There is collaboration on the commitment to reading recovery as a piece of every child next year. Tutoring is available before school, after, and during lunch. The teachers monitor progress, use assessments for measuring, and instruction is adjusted to fill in gaps. Education assistants help with the demand on the teachers due to the mobility of students. Education

assistants were mentioned as very high quality; teachers helped select them and they received the same training together with the teachers.

Reading Recovery training was also school-wide, and is used for emergent readers who are at risk in grades 1 and 2. The reading recovery teacher is one half day. In grade 1, all students receive an observation survey (6 components), the district pre/post, and a kindergarten ranking. These are used as cross-checks. They also do sustained silent reading for 15 minutes every day.

Math:

Saxon math is used; it was chosen after a pilot, research, and visits.

Resources:

Title I provides a child development specialist for SAIL. There are Title I aides half-time in each class. They have been trained in Spalding and in Boys Town. They also have an Even Start demonstration grant, which includes parents getting high school diplomas and going on to higher education. I was told one by-product is that it causes them to give up the people and groups to whom they belong. It is state funded for 4 years. They also have two all day Kindergartens funded by Title I that include an emphasis on family literacy. They also have a half-time Vista position that is expiring, and the person will become a reading volunteer. She had worked pre-K-grade 6 in reading and math. She has recruited 40+ volunteers.

The Even Start grant helps provide the full day kindergarten. One half of the funding is from a three-year demonstration grant that loses 10% of the funds each year. There are 19 students in this Kindergarten class, with one third from Head Start. Two thirds of these students had no structured pre-school experience. They come to school not knowing their colors or shapes, and are unfamiliar with using crayons or scissors. They said the young children just watch TV. They would like to have a preschool to be able to have them benefit from ages 3-4. A speech therapist provides 30 minutes a week but they feel the whole class has speech difficulties due to the lack of correction and articulation.

Grade 1 has 6 ESL students (5 Spanish, 1 Russian). They receive 25 minutes pull-out from a reading teacher.

Grade 2 has a federal classroom reduction teacher.

I was told that the district funds one FTE reading specialist because it is a small school. She splits her time in half between grades 3 and 4.

Title I funds summer school and it has been offered for several years in grades K-6. It is no cost. It also provides parenting classes for working in Spalding.

The Board allocated funding of \$2000 for two years to update the library. They used to receive \$750 from the general funding but it was reduced to \$500.

Professional development:

Title I provided training by Ruby Payne who teachers said understands their population, their language, how to communicate in the language and values of generational poverty, how to reach the students to help them set goals and plan. This staff development was provided for all teachers, and the district is providing three follow-up trainings. Secondary principals were noticeably absent from the trainings, according to the teachers, even though it was thought that it would be important for everyone to hear the same message and brainstorm together. The district's Title I director is retiring and there was concern about who would provide the leadership in the future.

They have had additional staff development in Boys Town, Saxon, and Spalding. The district has provided staff development in alignment, curriculum, progression, assessments, and curriculum mapping. At every bi-weekly staff meeting, they said they 'do some staff development'.

Indicators of program quality:

Teachers feel that the school is moving more toward monitoring each individual's progress through the various assessments and making adjustments for the student.

Summary of school:

If there were additional funds, the social worker feels they could use an aide in every class full time. The principal said she would cite after school snacks as a need for the students, but she was conflicted because it would tend to have the school take even more responsibility away from the family for students' welfare and nourishment. She would also like a homework lab, dinner programs, and incentives for book reading. Others thought they need more counselors to deal with child abuse issues, and a physical therapist to relieve the classroom teacher who is trying to assist a special education child with a brain tumor.

**Teton County School District #1
Jackson Hole High School
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

Enrollment:	668
Ethnic makeup of student body:	642 Anglo, 25 Hispanic, 1 Asian-American
Students at-risk:	38
Title I eligible:	10
Special ed.:	71
ESL students:	25

How does this school define “at-risk students?”

A student “at-risk” is any student who is having a problem that interferes with his school performance to the point that he/she is not performing to level. In addition to academic issues, divorce, psychological and social problems, accidents, and medical reasons are frequently the basis for referral.

How does the school identify its “at-risk” students?

Building Intervention Teams (BIT) review student referrals from teachers, identify at-risk students, and track the results of planned interventions.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

The BIT process has identified 38 of this year’s students as at-risk students.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at-risk” students?

Jackson Hole High receives no district money to fund programs for at-risk students. One associate principal says that in dealing with at-risk students, the question is always “What can we do with our existing staff?” Teachers can accommodate students who qualify for assistance, such as releasing special education students to go to the resource room at any time, working with the tutor of an ESL student, and releasing an ESL student to go to the ESL room. For at-risk students, teachers make do with little assistance. Teachers “try to provide a lot of structure.” Students can come in at lunch to work with the teacher. Some are referred to the after school Focus on Success program.” The school is not totally without supplemental resources because it can call on several Jackson Hole community services and the generosity of some wealthy local residents.

ESL classes. The district does fund 1 ESL teacher whose pullout program concentrates on teaching English. The teacher uses Anglo peer tutors to form relationships and break down barriers. Of the 25 Hispanic students, 8 are very limited-English-speaking. Last year 6 new non-English-speaking students came to Jackson; next year, 6 more are expected. The teacher has a \$600 school supply fund and a \$1,000 book fund provided by the Rotary Club. She reports that

parent participation in parent/teacher conferences this year was good. She uses the district Title I Coordinator/Instruction Coordinator as a translator. She feels there is a need for faculty training on how to make classroom modifications for ESL students and to understand what they are experiencing in school.

District At-Risk Committee. A district wide committee made up of school counselors and nurses and representatives of the Community Counseling Center, Van Vleck House alternative youth home, county library, Latino Coalition, the Public Attorney's Office, Department of Family Services, community Health Committee, the Healthy Youth national program, and the Lutheran Brotherhood. The committee looks for services to help referred students and is collating district/community materials to make available to parents. Subcommittees are Early Intervention, Healthy Relationships, Abuse Reporting/Documentation, and Resource Manual, which is cataloging resources that schools can call on to help referred students. Each agency absorbs the costs of its own participating members.

Focus on Success program. An after-school, 4 days/week catch-up class for students with 2 or more F's and other academic problems, run jointly with the local Van Vleck alternative youth home. Students are referred by the BIT team, parents, or self. The school provides the room. Salaries and materials costs are paid by an extended learning opportunities grant that the Department of Family Services originated for pregnancy prevention and at-risk student programs. This year, the grant gave the district \$100,000 to divide between its elementary, middle, and high schools. Jackson Hole High did not use all of its \$25,000 share, so returned the unused portion to the program.

Boundless. A wealthy patron donated "unlimited funds" to the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole to establish this student scholarship program. One school counselor says the scholarships "allow at-risk students to participate in anything they want to," such as taking lessons in horseback riding, music, art, ice skating, kayaking, skiing, photography and swimming, or to participate in scouting and athletic league teams, or to attend summer science school. If a child is interested in an activity that is not on the list of participating organizations, parents are invited to request something else, for which, the school staff promises, "We will do everything we can to match your child with someone skilled in that area." School counselors hand out the scholarships.

Student interest clubs. Teachers serve as sponsors to student clubs such as Human Rights Club, Global Connections, and Partners in Art, a Hispanic dance class open to all students. Teachers receive no extra pay for these noontime and after-school activities.

Hispanic Coalition. A community group whose goal is to get parents involved in their children's education and to discourage students leaving school. The coalition is working to reverse the trend for Hispanic high school students to drop out to work in local food and hotel services to help support their families, and the failure of parents to register incoming school-age children. Two school counselors serve as school liaisons to the coalition, and the ESL teacher does much of the case management.

Parents Involved in Education (PIE). A series of meetings conducted by school staff for parents. During the first month, parents come to school to discuss issues. Parent/teacher conferences are held 4 times/year. At the end of each year, parents of 8th grade students are invited to an orientation meeting.

Lunch supplements. Approximately 1% of Jackson Hole High School students qualify for free/reduced price lunch. The school receives no Title I money and does not offer a free/reduced price lunch. The school nurse says, “If kids will come forward, there are sources to feed them.” The campus is open at noon, so it is difficult to track needy students. Often, the nurse says, she will give her lunch to a hungry student. A wealthy donor gives the school money to provide snacks for needy students. Counselors administer a small fund--\$100 contributed by the Department of Family Services—for students who need lunch money.

Athletic participation supplement. A private donor has established scholarships to pay for those who cannot afford it the \$50 pay-to-play fee the district charges students to participate on school athletic teams.

Medical supplements. The local Lions Club provides funds for needy students who need glasses. The Elks Club and “4 or 5 others” provide funds for children who need medical attention, and St. Johns Hospital “has been helpful with the Hispanic population.”

County library. The library “has lots of programs,” including ESL and others.

Overview:

The new Jackson Hole High School opened in January 2000, built with special use tax revenues and criticized by some citizens as being an “architectural extravagance.” It is situated across the street from the old high school and is a vastly improved facility. All windows on one side look out on a steeply rising mountain range; windows on the other side overlook a field of grazing dairy cows. All interior areas are spacious and well illuminated by natural lighting. A ballot measure to continue the tax, passed on the day of this MAP visit, will make possible the replacement of the old high school building with a new K-5 elementary school. Change is also coming to the school’s administration. The district superintendent, listed as one of the school’s three associate principals, has been replaced. Another of the associate principals has resigned, and the third had applied for the position of the school’s principal.

Program description:

The district’s scope and sequence drives the curriculum in all subject areas. Class instruction is aimed at grade-level skills requirements, as codified in a course syllabus for each subject. The school’s course offerings are geared to the 70%-80% of students who plan to attend college, with emphasis on courses that meet University of Wyoming admissions standards. For pre-vocational students, there is 1 vocational teacher. Special education students are integrated into regular classrooms as much as possible, with resource teachers conducting pullout sessions and working in regular classrooms with their students and others needing help. Ten of 32 units

required for graduation may be electives; for college bound students, the recommended number is 5.5.

Reading/writing (English):

English I, II, III, IV, and Honors English III are “standards-based course(s) designed around core literature from which these integrated language arts activities spring: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.” Texts are used In addition to prescribed literary works for each grade: English I and II classes use McDougel Littell’s *The Language of Literature*, English III uses Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich’s *Adventures in English Literature*, and English IV uses Houghton Mifflin’s *Themes in World Literature*. To prepare students for the WyCAS, teachers are teaching more sequential writing and doing more “on demand” writing. Six teachers in the English department also teach speech, drama, and news writing.

Math:

Math courses cover the required pre-college curriculum, with 6 math teachers offering the familiar college prep courses and 1 course each in math fundamentals 1 and 2, which enroll at-risk students. Additionally, one of the resources teachers conducts resource room math for special education students and works in math classrooms to help special ed and other at-risk students having difficulty with math.

Other:

Professional development. District professional development is tied in with personnel supervision and evaluation. Teachers and their supervisors look for courses and activities that will help clear the deficiencies noted on the backs of teachers’ certificates. Teachers are given 2 “floating” days each year to attend classes or workshops. An arrangement worked out with the state Department of Education allows the school administration to clear certification deficiencies. Teachers can take courses offered by Central Wyoming College in Casper or classes taught by district staff. The high cost of living in Jackson and the expense associated with traveling to distant workshops prompted the district to start offering professional development classes, taught by its own staff members who hold masters degrees.

Resources:

Few district resources flow into Jackson Hole High School, but the community resources described above contribute significantly to the services staff can apply to students in need.

<u>Staff:</u> 2.1 associate principals	1 computer technician
40 teachers	4 secretaries
1 ESL teacher	.5 nurse
3 counselors	<u>Special education funded</u>
1 librarian	6 teachers. .1 speech therapist, .1 psychologist
1 library assistant	

Indicators of program quality:

Standardized test results show Jackson Hole High students outperform their state and national counterparts in all areas tested. On the WyCAS, Jackson 11th grade scores exceed state averages in all three content areas tested. On the Terra Nova, they outscored a significant percentage of their counterparts nationwide in each of the three test areas. On the Iowa Test of Educational Development, they outscored three-quarters of their nationwide counterparts in all areas tested, outperforming at least 70% of their peers in all areas except language expression, where they scored at the 68th percentile.

Comments/summary:

Jackson's relatively high WyCAS and Terra Nova test results tend to hide the academic problems of the school's few at-risk students. Without community resources, the school would have little assistance to give them. Even with these resources, the school has limited academic help for its at-risk students. Of the at-risk students filtered through the BIT process, one teacher saw improvement in two students. Of another at-risk student who is failing she said, "It's heartbreaking; he isn't going to make it. He doesn't qualify for special ed. It would take one-on-one tutoring, reducing his class work, and modifying his classes. He can't read, which is a little late for high school." Concentrating professional development resources on clearing teachers' credential deficiencies consumes most available district staff development funds, leaving little for specific at-risk issues.

Interview: Dr. Peter Carparelli, District Superintendent
Teton County School District #

(On the day of this interview, Dr. Carparelli was in the process of boxing the contents of his office. The district board had already hired his replacement. He was cordial and responsive, but also seemed a little distracted and time-limited. He did not have data available to answer questions posed, and the secretary he relied on to find such items was absent. He loaned me his copy of the latest report on current year standardized test results, for year 2000, which he requested I return to him.)

The leadoff questions that follow were not the exact or only issues discussed during the interview, but they string together the comments recorded.

How does the district handle at-risk students?

Dr. Carparelli said, "We have an at-risk manual with district policies. Copies are at all schools." He added that the district uses the state accreditation definition of "at-risk" but could not recall how it was worded. The district is now doing a complete review of its curriculum through subject-area committees. The results, along with student test analysis, "will be fed into staff development." The district uses appropriate consolidated grant funds to pay for staff development activities. The implication of that and his following statement that "We do not have enough," seemed to be that since the district gets no EDY allocation, there are no appropriate

funds to focus on at-risk issues. For much of its staff development and curriculum development funds the district relies on a local public education foundation. The foundation has been operating for three years. Solicitations of individual donors create a \$75,000/year scholarship program, which funds teacher attendance at conferences and workshops. The program “is spending money where the need is.”

Where is the need?

District curriculum is driven by state benchmarks and district standards. The district has a syllabus for each course. This year’s testing results will not be in until June. With those reports and the district review of its entire curriculum, the district will have a better idea of overall need. “I think we’re stuck,” the superintendent said; “A little static.”

How does the district use Title I funds?

Title I funds are allocated to grades 1-5. The majority of Title I students are at Rendezvous Campus. The district lost \$250,000 in 1997 when all Title I money was pulled. There was not enough money this year to do much with, so “we worked to get parents involved, and are spending the money for reading aides.”

College-bound students

One local newspaper reported, “About 45 community organizations donated more than \$300,000 toward college scholarships. Roughly 65 students received one or more scholarships of varying amounts...”

Comments:

The superintendent wasn’t able to put his hands on much data. I didn’t see the at-risk manual, and it wasn’t mentioned at either of the two schools I visited. He discussed the bond issue being voted on that day (another source of his distraction), its implications, and the position taken by the Jackson area House representative urging a “no” vote “as our schools can be funded by other means.” Voters did, in fact, reject the bond issue, but approved continuation of the special use tax that funded construction of the new high school and past district building projects. The bond measure would have allowed the district to improve the Rendezvous Campus site. Neither school there meets earthquake standards. Coulter Elementary would have been razed and Jackson Elementary brought up to standard. Funds from the special use tax will go to fund the removal of the old high school building and construction of a new K-5 school on the site. Coulter Elementary will be vacated in favor of the new school. Jackson Elementary will continue in operation. It will be several years before the special use tax can fund essential improvements at what is now Rendezvous Campus.

**Teton County School District #1
Rendezvous Campus
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

Enrollment:	609
Ethnic makeup of student body:	540 Anglo, 67 Hispanic, 2 African-American
Students at-risk:	167
Title I eligible:	102
Special ed.:	100
ESL students:	75

How does this school define “at-risk” students?

The definition of “at-risk” at Rendezvous Campus is fairly broad. Performance in the lowest quartile on a standardized test, failure to meet standards, low socio-economic status, disruptive behavior, and being an ESL student can all lead to identification.

How does the school identify its “at-risk” students?

Rendezvous Campus uses a variety of sources to identify at-risk students. A BIT (Building Intervention Team) referral, which can be initiated by the teacher and other staff members, is frequently the lead factor. The free and reduced lunch application process, standardized tests results, home visits, and referral by the school counselor or nurse may trigger identification. ESL students are automatically “lumped into” this category.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

The school has identified 167 students as “at-risk” on the basis of low academic performance, behavioral problems, language deficiency, or other factors.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at-risk” students?

Rendezvous Campus is a Title I school, and it relies on Title I funds to support basic components of its instructional program for all students, including those at-risk. While there is school wide effort to accommodate the needs of at-risk students within the regular program, teachers have limited resources to call on for additional help. The only one identified is an Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) class, established through a TANF grant that originated in the Welfare Department. Teachers recommend students who are not meeting standards or not completing homework assignments for after school help. Rendezvous Campus receives \$43,125 of the district’s \$114,000 grant.

Overview:

Rendezvous Campus has been on a Title I roller coaster. Two years ago, it had to adjust to a \$245,000 loss in program funds; last year, it had only \$62,000. The administration felt this

year's \$105,000 allocation was too little to do much with, so decided to pour most of the money into reading. Being a Title I school, they applied funded services across-the-board and in a manner so that benefits to Title I-eligible and other at-risk students also accrue to their non-at-risk peers. Services funded by special education and ESL also reach other students, but to a lesser degree.

Program description:

Rendezvous Campus is comprised of two adjacent elementary schools—Jackson (grades 1-3) and Coulter (grades 4-5). Kindergartners attend the Kinder Center in downtown Jackson. For administrative purposes, Rendezvous Campus is designated a single administrative unit and operates on a single budget. The co-principals work as a team, but for day-to-day operations have divided administrative responsibilities, with each taking one of the schools. Neither building meets earthquake standards, a matter that would have been corrected by a recently failed bond issue. However, a successful special tax continuation measure will replace the old high school with a new K-5 elementary. Coulter will be emptied; Jackson Elementary will continue in operation.

Class size is capped at 18 but is climbing to 20-22. Next year, the school is bracing for a loss of 1 teacher at each grade level and 4 aides, which will increase class size and dictate programmatic changes.

Reading/writing:

Reading “Power Hour.” The objective of this organizational plan is to give every pupil small group reading instruction for one hour every day. To achieve groups of 4-5 pupils to 1 adult, all available staff teaches reading during “power hour”—mornings for grades 1-3, afternoons for grades 4-5. ESL pupils go to the ESL room, where the 3 teachers and 1 aide conduct 4 leveled reading groups. Title I pupils go to the Title I room. Some special education students go to the resource room to work with one of the special education teachers, others remain in the classroom to work in a small group with a resource teacher. Classroom teachers, the reading teacher, reading paraprofessionals, classroom aides, and resource teachers convene 2 to 3 small groups in each classroom. Instruction is guided by district standards and benchmarks, using a combination of a reading text series, leveled books, Guided Reading, and Accelerated Reader in the upper grades. The principal says “...kids learn to read,” and district test results appear to support her claim. In 2nd grade, some ESL pupils are reading at or near grade level and remain in the regular class for reading. Due to the projected loss of teachers and aides, the principal says, the school will not be able to continue power hour next year.

Math:

Math has been a school improvement goal for three years. The school aligned the math program with district and state standards, selected the Math Lands text series, and sent “a lot of people to conferences and workshops,” to improve their math teaching skills. Test scores show Rendezvous students achieve at or above district and state averages.

Resources:

Staff. The district receives no EDY allocation, so the school gets none either. The district does, however, fund Rendezvous Campus' 3 ESL (2.5 FTE) teachers and several other instructional staff members.

2 co principals	5 classroom aides
2 secretaries	1 librarian
35 teachers	1 library paraprofessional
1 reading teacher	1 library aide
3 reading paraprofessionals	1.6 music teachers
1 nurse	2 physical education teachers
2 computer instructors	1.5 counselors
2.5 ESL teachers	1 ESL paraprofessional

Title I funded: 2 reading paraprofessionals, .66 family liaison, 1 hourly translator

Special education: 4.66 teachers, 4 paraprofessionals, 1 speech therapist, .5 psychologist

Staff development. In addition to the school funds applied to send teachers to workshops and conferences, teachers also have access to staff development grants provided by the Public Education Coalition, a non-profit organization of local community members, businesspeople and parents, and PARTners, a non-profit group under the Cultural Council of Jackson Hole, which gives \$16,000 for 30 staff development grants each year to Jackson teachers.

Title I family liaison. Title I funds the family liaison to spend 2/3 of her time at Rendezvous Campus, buys materials for her program, and pays for an hourly translator. Working to bring Hispanic and migrant parents into the school involves her in suicide prevention, securing health services, finding food for needy families, dealing with family abuse, obtaining reading materials for parents, working with teens to help them resist dropping out of school, and doing crisis counseling with pregnant teens and abusive parents. She spends about 50% of her time with Hispanic families and 50% with families of at-risk Anglo students. She is also the school contact for community based and state supported programs such as the Parent Education Network, Parent Information Center, and UPLIFT workshops for parents. The family liaison will be dropped as of September 30.

Computers. The school has 2 computers in every classroom, 40 in two computer labs, 7 in the library, and 20 older models in a small third lab, for a total of approximately 137.

Indicators of program quality:

Terra Nova test results for 2000 show Rendezvous Campus students performing at or above district and state levels in nearly all subject areas. It has not always been so, the principal reports. Concentrating on reading and math in professional development programs, and aligning school curriculum with state standards and benchmarks have paid off. No numbers were offered, but the rate of return of ESL students to the regular reading program indicates the school's

intensive ESL instruction is succeeding. The school is working on corrective action in response to its last accreditation visit regarding how the school tracks services to at-risk students. The school is in the process of building a database. Testing with and tracking results of the Terra Nova test for the past three years has been part of that process.

Comments/Summary:

The distinction the school makes between “paraprofessional” and “aide” is that the former is certificated or has a teaching degree. Rendezvous Campus doesn’t have much discretionary money, but its success in getting paraprofessionals and aides who are well trained gives the school a strong program. The age of the buildings shows, and interior space is overloaded. The staff was upbeat and positive. The co-principals were cautious in anticipation of the bond and tax measures being voted on the day of this visit. The subsequent failure of the bond issue, which would have rebuilt Rendezvous Campus, pending budget cuts, and major changes in the central administration will affect the school’s program.

**Uinta County School District #1
Evanston Middle School
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define “at risk” students?

Evanston Middle School currently operates a Title I program with 30% of their students being served by this funding source. These are students who are scoring in the bottom 25% on the Terra Nova, the standardized achievement test given last year. While all of these students are considered “at risk”, the school has adopted a much broader definition by indicating, in writing that it applies to “any student whom, because of one or more of a variety of factors may be at risk of lowered or decreased academic success and achievement”. The factors they list are, poverty, race, Limited English Proficiency, and a disadvantaged family situation, identified learning or behavioral problems, a past history of educational failure, identified psychological or medical problems, or significant social maladjustment. They use these areas to refer students to a five-person committee that then determines the exact programs for each student’s additional program inclusion.

How do they identify their “at risk” students?

Students are referred to the committee on the basis of a variety of indicators offered by teachers, parents, support personnel, or other agency referrals. Even self-referral by a student is considered appropriate. Test data regarding student achievement is considered, as is financial data regarding the economic status of the family, disciplinary or behavioral data, and grades or academic achievement in the classroom. Student eligibility for free and reduced lunch programs is considered basic economic information that would be used to include a student in these programs. This committee makes a determination of which “at risk” programs are appropriate for the particular case. There is major reliance on Title I funds in dealing with students that have academic problems at Evanston Middle School. The school includes LEP students within the “at risk” population. Special Education students are also included, but they are then referred to specific Special Education services based of their Special Education IEP.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

There were 365 total students enrolled in Evanston Middle School. Over 2/3rds of the students qualify for some sort of “at risk” program under the broad identification standards used – 53% because of the free and reduced lunch program, 30% in the Title I program, 10% in LEP, and 11 % in the Special Education programs. There was also an undetermined, but relatively small number of students served under the inclusive set of factors mentioned above.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at risk” students?

Teacher to student ratios run between 17 to 21 students per classroom. In addition there are a variety of intervention programs that target specific student situations and lower this ratio

to around 6 to 1 for identified “at risk” individuals. There is a basic 8 period 40 minute day for all students but a significant variety of programs are provided to “at risk” students depending on the decisions of the committee. Such programs include homework help a program open daily to students after school, ICU Intensive Care, which is a placement during school for students at risk of failing because they are not completing their work, before school tutoring programs, ZAP (Zeros Aren’t Permitted), a school work make-up program, a call in home work assistance phone program, “At-risk” aides working with students identified by the committee, and a school Resource Officer that is funded from the Drug Free Schools Grant that may be asked to assist in certain cases.

The Title I funds are specifically focused to help in the math area where a teacher and aides meet with regular education teachers to promote academic growth. This program includes the services of one teacher and one aide, with a second “at risk” aide provided by district funding. The school counselor is also Title I grant funded.

The SAP teams, which are what they call the 5-person committee that meets to make recommendations for at risk students, has the option to organize groups of students around student needs or themes to address any issue affecting them. These may include handling anger, divorce, grief, adapting to a new school, and general support groups. The school dedicates any funds and resources available including Welfare programs and DARE to augment this coordinated program.

Overview:

At 365 students, Evanston Middle School is considered a large school in a district with no EDY funding under the current MAP formula. There are 24 FTE regular teaching positions, and 3 special education teachers. Also on staff is a district-funded nurse, a grant funded social worker and a YAHA (Youth Alliance) funded aide.

Student ethnicity consists of a majority of white Anglo-American students, however there is a 9% Hispanic and 2% Native American population. There is also what the staff considered to be an increasingly higher migrant population with what the school administration estimates as a 15% per year turnover of the student body.

The school facility itself is actually the old high school site and the middle school program was moved here when their new high school facility opened. The result is a lot of space for outside facilities including a football field and track. In fact, the high school continues to use it as a practice facility. Evanston Middle School also has a gymnasium, and a very large theater, that easily seats the whole school population. However, there are some major facilities utilization issues because they are actually short of permanent classroom facilities. About half of the classes are housed in a portable facility across a closed street where there are some major facilities needs. The biggest problems coming from weather related issues, which makes it difficult to move back and forth between this temporary facility and the regular building. The school also has a number of computers, a computer lab and was getting a “power school” lab installed during this visit.

Program Descriptions:

Reading/Writing:

The district prides itself in providing a strong district standards-based academic program. In reading this translates into the classroom teacher utilizing a variety of materials, that they consider to be highly focused to each student's individual requirements. According to Wayne Dennis, Director of Instruction, the district specifically does not want teachers to focus upon any single text and has been providing professional development to teachers in order to implement the district program.

Writing Standards have been a special district focus that the whole district has worked on. Teachers and District staff together were planning a special summer field trip through Wyoming for Evanston Middle School students, observing Wyoming history firsthand, and then making written journal entries about the experience.

Finally, there were concerns expressed by staff members about the lack of a spelling program for their students.

Math:

The school utilizes the Addison Wesley and Prentice-Hall Basal texts but augments with additional supplementary materials that are at their disposal. The Title I program focuses on math assistance for identified underachieving students. This is a pull out program that utilizes an aide to work directly with groups of about 6-8 students.

Professional development:

There has been major district level work on the development of standards based programs. There are a variety of district-funded activities that drive this process. Evanston Middle School has a mentor teacher program and an Ed Gate program that includes a model school conference and a supporting web site. This appears to be a State of Wyoming professional development support program. The teachers also have their 40-minute prep time built into the regular teacher workday.

Indicator of program quality:

There is a major focus upon the district standards that have been developed to provide a unified district direction, however assessment of these standards is in a preliminary stage of implementation. The school is involved with teacher teams that are a common trait of a true middle school program. However, the student schedules seemed to be organized more like a junior high school program. One important positive quality indicator was the number of before and after school programs available to assist students with their schoolwork. With 125 students testing in the bottom 25% on the Terra Nova, the last standardized test given, this school staff is specifically focusing on these students.

Summary of School:

Evanston Middle School uses a variety of funding sources to meet “at risk” issues for many of their students. The school is using Title I, ESL; DARE funding, along with a significant reliance of Wyoming State Welfare programs to make up for the lack funds they are not receiving under the small school formula. I was informed by the school counselor that a student can obtain welfare status in Wyoming in 24 hours, and this is an important funding source for the school.

There are some construction remodeling issues at this school that need to be resolved, but it did not appear to be clear that there were any major construction plans underway.

There was a strong focus on getting identified students into the appropriate “at risk” program and the school has a 4 page “At Risk” identification process that was provided to me by the school principal. The principal, and district administrator, Wayne Dennis, Director of Instruction, both indicated that the Big School/Little School formula has not worked for them and that the thresholds need to be adjusted.

**Uinta County School District #1
North Evanston Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define “at risk” students?

North Evanston currently operates as a school-wide Title I school with 53% of the students qualifying for the Free/Reduced Price Lunch program. They feel that all of their student are at risk not only because of this level of students meeting the classic at risk definition but also because of a 27% mobility factor with about 30% of the students operating below grade level. There were specific concerns raised regarding increased levels of family instability, i.e. single parent and foster children situations, and it was remarked that a number of these students do not currently qualify for special services, but they feel fortunate that they can serve them under Title I school-wide funding, although that designation has slipped below the 50% level in the past. This has created instability in the school’s ability to serve these students. There is an increasing number of Hispanic students so that the 35 LEP students are serviced out of Title I funds, which the staff felt fragmented their ability to focus on these students. It was suggested that the Welfare program that operates in Wyoming provides an easy threshold for qualification and that many of their students are recipients of these programs.

How do they identify their “at risk” students?

As suggested above all students were considered to be more or less at risk and the northern part of town is seen as containing the higher poverty levels. Generally, the WyCAS scores augmented by the district own assessments determine which students are to be served by their “at risk” programs. There were Behavior Intervention Teams that operated at the school out of general fund monies, and “Skill building programs”, with “at risk aides” were assigned to help specifically identified students. There were also before school programs and a school breakfast program operating at the school, however, they have not been consistent parts of the program and it was the feeling of staff that they are not reliable on a long-term basis.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

There were 320 total students enrolled in North Evanston, but it is in a declining growth mode, because there were over 400 students enrolled last year. They really see all their students as potentially “at risk”. However, they specifically identified 11% as special education students that were served within that program, and an additional 30% not on grade level, not including the LEP students mentioned above. In combining these numbers it appears that better than 50% of the students in this school participate in some form of “at risk” program.

What programs do they provide specifically for “at risk” students?

This school is a beneficiary of a 17/1 teacher to student ratio. In addition there are a variety of intervention programs that target specific student situations. Beyond regular funding

the school provides two title I teachers and four aides that are utilized as additional help to specifically identified students. It was usual to see three or four adults assisting in the regular classroom environment, with actual adult/student ratios of close to 4:1. In addition to the Title I staffing there is a district aide which was identified as an “at risk” tutor that operates an after school program. Students not meeting grade level expectations are routinely required to access this program. There was also a computer program called “success maker” provided out of a grant with U.S. West, so that students were funneled into the lab for additional assistance, beyond the regular computer lab time allotted to each classroom. Additional computers have been provided in the library and individual classrooms through a \$50,000 AMOCO settlement that was provide to each school. There are 3 computer labs in the school. Before school assistance programs and breakfast programs were also in operation at the time of this visitation. Because these programs have often been started and stopped the concern was often expressed about the continuity of these programs. Because of the school-wide designation, “at risk” populations seemed to merge with the overall school population. There was a district-wide focus on writing standards and WyCAS results as staff was concerned that about 10 out of every 25 students would not be able to pass this assessment program.

Overview:

There are 35 regular classroom teachers, and 3 special education teachers in North Evanston Elementary. There is also a district-funded nurse, an LEP teacher and a Special Education funded counselor. It is located in the less economically blessed section of town. It is the only school in the district that qualified for a “school-wide” Title I program, and it often flirts with the 50% requirement for school-wide program designation. It has often been lower than the current 53% Free/Reduced Lunch level. The feeling was that while the school has declined in enrollment, the level of students qualifying under that designation has actually increased.

The school building is a very attractive facility. It has a very nice library and a school gymnasium, staffed by a 3/5 P.E. teacher. There are modern computer labs, which seemed to enjoy a high level of usage among all students. The staff was very excited about the “power school” computer program that was being prepared for installation that provides individual student data to parents via the Internet. They were getting ready to implement a variety of on-line tools, to be incorporated into their programs for next year.

The special education classrooms, bilingual programs, and the after school programs were housed in a portable classroom wing that was not under the roof of the main school facility. Kindergarten classrooms seemed to be regular sized facilities, and did not have in-classrooms bathroom facilities. The Kindergartens are currently operated under extended day schedules. However, because of the special education definition requiring students to test two years below grade level, special education students were not identified at this level. There was staff concern expressed regarding this situation, as they felt that it would be in their students’ best interest to receive this additional help early, before slipping that far behind.

The school is using their Innovative Grant funding, i.e. Eisenhower monies to augment their focus on writing standards. There is a strong “standards” push now occurring in the school district, prompting some staff to feeling that there is less emphasis on the individual student’s

welfare. The school also makes an effort to promote Parent Education activities at the school and they utilize Title VI funds for the foster Grandparent program.

Program Descriptions:

Reading/Writing:

The district prides itself in providing a strong district standards-based program. In reading this translates into classroom teacher utilizing the Houghton/Mifflin basal reading text but supplementing with a variety of materials. The district specifically does not want teacher to focus upon a single text and has been providing professional development to teachers in order to implement the district program. This is seen most vividly in the writing programs, where the whole district has focused upon Writing standards. Again, teachers are utilizing a variety of instructional programs, but seem to particularly focus on computer-assisted programs to provide augmentation.

Math:

The school utilizes the Saxon math program, but relies upon major computer augmentation for reasoning and word problems. There was general satisfaction among teachers that math was “under control”.

Indicator of program quality:

There is some difficulty in obtaining longitudinal data on these students. The Terra Nova, which was previously utilized, has been discontinued, and there still is no data on the WyCAS that can be used to make grade level comparisons, although it is expected that after this years testing process that will no longer be the case. There is a major focus upon the district standards that have been developed to provide a unified district focus, however assessment of these standards is in a preliminary stage of implementation. The real indicator that remains as a concern for this school is the 30% of the population not achieving at grade level in reading and writing.

Summary of School:

This school has strong resources and the teacher/student ratio seems relatively low. A significant portion of the funds that support intervention programs comes from federal program dollars. Most of the intervention programs depend on these resources, although the district does provide one “skill builder” aide. There is concern over the fragmentation of funding that occurs as these funding sources are continually adjusted and changed as student population shifts. The strongest concerns voiced by the staff involved behavioral cases that seem to be increasing in the overall student population. These students are not special education children, but were described by staff as “emotionally disturbed” or “socially maladjusted”. There is also an increase in the Hispanic bilingual population that needs greater attention as the numbers grow. School and district administration feel that the Big School/Little School formula has not worked for them and that the thresholds need adjusting. They indicated that the “MAP 3” formula seemed like it

could have worked for them. There was special concern over a growing population of “disconnected” students. These are students that do not have the parental and family support that is needed to provide the basic behavior and social expectations needed for academic success.

**Weston County School District #1
Kitty Moats Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at risk" students?

Students are at risk of not meeting grade level standards and are also at risk by what was described as the social and emotional circumstances related to their low levels of poverty and the lack of an enriched environment.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They use free and reduced lunch, district assessments, teacher referrals, grade 3 Terra Nova, and WyCAS. They also conduct a case by case analysis of each student.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

Sixty-three percent (63%) are identified as free and reduced lunch and "at risk". Twenty-five percent (25%) are identified as academically at risk, and they feel 25% of the grade 6-8 students need more 1:1 assistance.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

This school is able to provide an individualized approach for its 33 students, and this characteristic attracts parents and students from Newcastle, as well. In addition to small class sizes, there are many extra services available. Title I services, however, are only provided to one student for 30 minutes in reading before she rides the morning bus to Kitty Moats from Newcastle.

Overview:

Kitty Moats generates EDY funds. It has 33 students with 3.5 classroom teachers. They indicated that attrition of staff is non-existent. Twenty of the students are from Osage and 13 choose to attend from Newcastle and are transported by bus approximately 15 miles each way.

Kitty Moats is seen as an 'alternative program' for students in Newcastle who need a smaller environment. It is a 'small and necessary school' and receives the 'small school adjustment'. There is a declining enrollment problem. The school had 50-60 students two years ago, 46 last year and 33 this year. Thirty students is their "cut-off", and they are applying for a variance; otherwise, the school will have to be closed because student enrollment has dropped too low in the past two years. I was told more than once that there would be no effect on the other schools in the district if this school were to close and the students were to move to Newcastle; however, there would be political issues with the Osage community, and the special very small school environment alternative would be lost.

The principal is only part-time here; she is shared with the other elementary school in the district, which is in Newcastle. I was told that Kitty Moats has 'never had a full-time principal', but has had a part-time teacher/principal in the past. The district is building a new high school, and a new elementary school (this principal's other school). They do not remember having any dropouts.

In the Weston district, grades K-2 have 160 students, grades 3-5 have 180 students, grades 6-8 have 200+, and high school grades have 300+ students.

Osage is about 80 miles from Mt. Rushmore. It is in Weston County, which is Wyoming's poorest, I was told. There is ranching, coal, logging, and a refinery in this region for employment; they 'lost the saw mill', and this area was part of the 'oil boom'. There is also an 'honor farm' nearby.

Osage consists of 200-300 people living in a pine forest. Osage is not visible from the highway. The principal met me at my motel in Newcastle at 6:40am to caravan with me because she did not think I would be able to find the school. The 'streets' are unpaved and are basically just ruts. Osage has only this school, a post office and a bar, besides the homes. There is nothing else there, so the school is considered the 'community center', and the families are very supportive and participate in everything going on at the school. For any services, they must go 15 miles in either direction to Upton that has 1000 people or Newcastle that has 3000 people. Most people in Osage have lived here for several generations, and have rarely ventured even as far as Mt. Rushmore, Yellowstone or Devil's Towers. Most students come without having had any preschool experience. Some are from what was called 'dysfunctional' families that have located here to avoid authority and scrutiny, and all that may imply. Sometimes counseling services are declined because parents do not want anyone knowing about their family details. There is virtually no law enforcement in Osage. 'Meth', 'pot', 'E', and alcohol are the drugs of choice with drinking still being legal in cars. I was told the most 'advantaged' students are children of ranchers.

Program description:

There is a grade K-2 classroom, a grade 3-4 classroom, and a grade 5-8 classroom. Because their program is standards-based and their implementation of standards is more advanced than most other Wyoming schools I visited, teachers felt that one of the difficulties in having multi-age groups was that they had so many standards for which to plan lessons. They have one planning period every other day, during music or swimming. (Students are bused to Newcastle for swimming at least weekly during spring.) It seemed that students really are able to have individualized programs. In other ways, however, teachers find these multi-grade classrooms with incredibly small numbers of students to have great advantages. The delivery of the lessons is easier than the planning it takes for each one of them. There are lots of opportunities for reinforcement of lessons because older and younger students hear the other students' lessons, and rarely tune out. I was told they 'didn't have trouble meeting standards, and that funding was not a problem', except some students in grade 3-4 could not pay for their required recorder. The principal found a way to pay the \$3 for any student having that problem. There are no after school programs. There is a breakfast program in which all students

participate. There are weekly discussions with parents. There is no attendance policy. The graduation rate was described as 'fairly high'. Until a few weeks ago, the kitchen staff who are integral to this little school, made homemade meals. Everyone eats at the same time in the gym; I did, too. The counselor has 'lunch duty' at the principal's request.

The NCA goal is creative writing and written communication, with DEAR (drop everything and read) occurring from 12:30-1pm each day. They have 'buddy' reading. They gave a survey about how students felt about reading, and matched readers with non-readers. The other NCA goal is caring for themselves and others. They are in NCA Phase 7.

The computers are old, and apparently passed down to Kitty Moats from other schools in the district. Three of the ten families of Kitty Moats have computers.

Summer school is four weeks long, and funded through 'ELO' which is a TANF program. Summer school includes enrichment and correction, and is based on teacher recommendations. It is conducted in two week blocks of English language arts and math, and then, science and social science. All students are invited, but selected parents are notified with a letter, specifying benchmarks for their student. The principal said, "there has to be a 'body of evidence', not just a problem with one or two benchmarks." This is the first year, and I think it is free. She said there has 'always' been summer school for special education students.

Reading/writing:

They were very proud and pleased to have adopted the McGraw/Hill 2000 reading series that is 'filled with literature, is not a basal, and has strategies for different learning styles'. In grades 7-8, they have bought a companion series, Glencoe, that is integrated, culturally diverse, and has 'little books to go with the series', as well as a practice book. They were very excited about how this would allow them to keep track of benchmarks. Students come to school with limited language skills, and a very limited exposure to much beyond television and Osage. Accelerated reading is used K-6, although it was not prominent.

Math:

They use Saxon math, and would like to provide more hands-on opportunities. Lessons in the grade K-2 classroom are together, across grades.

Resources:

Despite the Title I designations of these students and \$181,000, only one student receives services. A district decision sends Title I funds elsewhere. No Title I funds or services are provided beyond K-5 in Weston. There is a federal DARE program. There is a counselor provided .5 day per week to provide "on demand" assistance and "bullyproofing" services. There is also an aide funded by special ed. There is a district funded nurse for .5 day per week. There is an occupational therapist funded by a special education contract shared 50% with Upton School District for 500 hours per year. She makes suggestions to teachers about sensory processing, developing motor skills with fine motor and hand development for holding a pencil. She was

concerned about the number of children here born with neurological problems, born who would not have survived several years ago, born to mothers involved in substance abuse, born of parents who were both special education themselves, or who are born into a family with all special education students. She had seen more variety of '94-142 syndromes' than anywhere else she had worked in Wyoming or in several other states. There was a medical fragility that she had noticed and could not explain. Here, too, the issue of special education services was raised in terms of the lack of availability in the early primary years. Some thought the problem related to district philosophy about emotional versus mental problems. There is also a speech therapist who spends .5 day every other week and is assisted with by an aide who spends 2 hours per day. They consult 30 minutes per week to plan.

District funds provide one FTE for remedial reading for the high school and for a school within a school at the high school. The middle school also has one FTE for remedial 'at risk' reading.

Professional development:

They indicated there is a plan for professional development, including 12-14 full days of work on all standards, creating assessments, and the NCA process. 'Bullyproofing' has been provided in each building. Once a month there is a presentation, and there had been one presented on the IRA conference that was attended by a staff member.

Parent education:

They have a parent meeting once a month with ten people attending, which represents all families in the school (two families have four children each). The principal calls each family personally and sends letters. The counselor provided a discussion of bullyproofing (Project Achieve).

Indicators of program quality:

Grades 4 and 8 use WyCAS, grades 3 and 7 use Terra Nova. They use district assessments in grade 1 for math, in grade 2 for English language arts and in grade 5 for social science. They have aligned content standards in the four core areas and 'back-mapped' them. They have curriculum teams, participate in accreditation visits, and are working on standards for PE and foreign language. They try to establish a 'body of evidence' about each student's progress.

Summary of school:

This school seemed to provide a very individualized, caring environment with a knowledgeable staff, many services, and a standards based program. The services for at risk students seemed to be provided and funded by the small school funds.

No one, at any school I visited, was aware of the extra \$500 being generated by schools highly impacted with EDY students. While this would not necessarily be expected at schools that were not impacted, it did surprise me at Title I schools.

District Interview:

The interview was with the superintendent and the business manager. There are 900 students in the district and I think there is \$470,000 of EDY funds. There is also the small school differential. The class size in Newcastle is around 15. The superintendent prides himself in focusing on curriculum and instruction, not on politics, rules and regulations, budgets and paperwork. He wants there to be a program for each student. He sends the Title I funds to 'wherever the Title I services will meet the needs of the most students'. I was very surprised that Kitty Moats had no Title I funds other than the 30 minutes for the one student before she commuted to Osage from Newcastle.

He feels that the MAP model has to be funded, and that there must be COLAs. He would prefer total local control where he could just send an invoice to Cheyenne and it would be paid, and have 100% reimbursement with a degree of reasonableness. This current approach is too centralized for his preferences. He said he has told his board that he spends 70% of his time working for the state and 30% working for them. I think he said he had been there 23 years and that he never wanted to take the offers he had had to go to bigger districts because he liked being able to do whatever he wanted to do to respond to his students' needs, sometimes ignoring specific requirements, etc. In a bigger district, he felt he would not have that freedom.

He was very hostile to me, and indicated that this was the first time he had been interviewed by MAP. The principal had told me that the superintendent's wife is the grade 4 teacher at Kitty Moats; she was very cooperative but he could have had advance information from her, and decided to play a little game with me. It was not good humored, but not totally mean-spirited, just totally uncooperative. He basically refused to provide any information beyond what I have in the above paragraph, and I gathered that the business manager was slightly embarrassed at his antics. The business manager was basically not permitted to respond to me either.

At the end, the business manager did try to clarify what it was I wanted in terms of follow up information. As in all cases with the district meetings, I asked them to fax or e-mail any follow up information to MAP, and I said that I would call if I had questions.

As to the small school increment for Kitty Moats, if the school is under 200 and falls below 75% in two years then they are in jeopardy of losing the extra funding. The student population has dropped from 49 to 44 to 31 in the past two years.

**Weston County School District #7
Upton Elementary
SITE VISIT SUMMARY**

How does this school define "at-risk" students?

They use a broader definition to include students at risk due to academically not meeting standards and ESL issues.

How do they identify their "at risk" students?

They use the Title I BIT team at two hour monthly meetings. It is an all elementary team that focuses on where students are, test scores, plans, and referrals.

How many students do they identify by their definition?

They identify 30-33% of the students as at risk; they have 12 Title I students.

What programs do they provide specifically for "at risk" students?

They have .5 FTE as a certificated tutor for at risk students to work on 'appropriate behavior'. The focus academically is on classroom inclusion; it is prescriptive and includes reading, math, and language arts mainly. There is another .5 FTE funded by Title I focusing on math and English language arts, and especially on daily oral skills due to what they consider to be their students' narrow language experiences.

There are two Spanish-speaking ESL students in grades 2 and 3 whose father is employed by a ranch, who hires regularly from the same area in Texas. They are provided with two hours assistance in reading per day and are considered to be doing well.

Overview:

Upton Elementary is in a district with no EDY funds. It has 88 students, but the facility also houses the district's middle school students. There are problems regarding declining enrollment. Grade K-1 has 14 students, grade 4 has 24. There has been a class size reduction teacher in grade 4.

The area's employment is primarily agriculture and coal, with coal creating a transient population of about 25%. Most people, however, hardly ever leave Weston County, and do not travel. Alcohol and drugs are issues. About half of the students have computers in their homes.

I arrived on time at 7:30 but the principal, with the superintendent, did not arrive until 8:15. No one seemed to be concerned, and they did not even seem to realize how long I had been waiting. They met with me briefly and I never encountered them again. It is the principal's first

year and she was also the principal at the high school; the superintendent's fourth year. The principal deferred to the superintendent, and the superintendent seemed to prefer it that way, so the principal did not respond to my questions very much.

Teachers said they have been together at this school many years, with virtually no turnover, other than an infrequent retirement. I was told that they all have family ties to the community and have total confidence in each other.

Parents here are said to be open to services with an 'anything for my child' perspective. This community has special education families in which all the children and the parents have received special education services.

This was another great facility and it had an incredible auditorium/theater.

Program description:

The program is standards based and is said to be aligned with Wyoming's standards. School improvement focuses on reading and pre-reading strategies, and on critical thinking skills; writing and the six traits are embedded in subjects.

There are two older computers in every room, and they looked abandoned in most rooms; I only saw one IMAC. The resource room has four computers and they were all in use. Title I has two. I was told they are used for drill and practice, writing components, research, "correctives and enrichment", and math and science work.

The lab has 24 computers, and is shared with the middle school. I only observed several middle school students in there during one period when I was sent there for a grade 2 class that was not there. This visit was like that. I was to meet someone or go to a classroom and no one would be there, or ever arrive, and no one could assist me. There was a substitute secretary in the office who tried to be helpful but did not have a clue about what I was to be doing or really how to help. It was frustrating, but also revealing and puzzling at the same time.

There is a breakfast program and snack time at 10 am. There is an after school study table with aides. Fifteen percent of the students ride the bus; most other students are latchkey.

There is a six weeks summer school that is remedial and by referral, based on Title I, IEPs, CRTs, needs, and parents' requests. It is funded by TANF/ELO. Twenty to thirty students are participating in the five hour per day program. The district provides transportation and summer school is free.

I was told the dropout rate is "very low"; 50% go on to higher education with half completing their programs.

There is a preschool in the building funded by a child development grant.

Reading/writing:

Reading is Houghton Mifflin. Grades 2-3 use guided reading. They focus on whole language balanced with phonics, attack skills, and STAR reading on Fridays for 15 minutes. A volunteer reads to students, they have a 'word of the week' and an all elementary 'wall of words'. They work on the six traits, conventions, and creative writing.

Math:

This is the fourth year for Saxon math. They feel the repetition is helpful for the students and they are pleased with it. I think I was told they use it two times a week for 15 minutes. One teacher expressed concern about her students being unable to do well on tests of math problem solving, so they are doing it every day, trying to bring up the test scores, but to little effect.

Resources:

They have a federal consolidated grant which includes Perkins, Eisenhower, drug free, special education, and Title I. They supplement each program with state funds.

There is .5 FTE for special education pull-out, and two teaching assistants who are classified and also funded by special education. There is another FTE at the district funded by special education. Grade 2 has eight students with ESL, Title I, and special education. Grade 3 has twelve students with ESL, Title I and four homebound students.

There are three counselors who use pull-out for 1:1 with what they consider to be very effective results. They respond to both parents and teachers' referrals. There is a .5 day per week counselor funded by special education and IEPs have priority. The counselor deals with abuse and transiency issues. There is a diagnostician for special education testing. There is a tutor available on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 30+ minutes for Title I language and math pull-out. The students miss recess to attend one day per week.

There is a social worker who deals with child abuse and referrals to CPS. They would like more funds available for counseling days, more Title I tutoring and teaching assistants.

There is also speech assistance provided by a special education resource specialist. The special education teacher will only be .5 next year. There was some concern about district support for special education, a question of credentials, and no services available for special education at the high school.

Parent education:

There is a parent advisory group that meets three times per year for all parents of at risk students; about 12 people attend. Parents requested assistance in helping with students' lessons, and in response they had an open house that provided lessons modeled for parents to use at home. They have 100% attendance at parent conferences. Parents want to help but teachers feel they do not have the time or enough skills.

Professional development:

They are connected with MCREL and they are a 'field service site' for Wyoming. They have assistance 12 times per year, four related to reading in the content areas and four related to the six traits of writing. They have also had training on inclusion from Gillette, provided by district funds. There have also been trainings on bully proofing and Boys Town to deal with aggressive behavior.

Indicators of program quality:

There is the WyCAS at grades 4, 8, and 11, and Terra Nova at grades 3, 7, and 10. There are district assessments at grades 2, 6, and 9. They said they have benchmarks in the four core subjects. MCREL has assisted them in developing criterion referenced tests at the district level for classroom use. They are also part of the Northeast Wyoming Math Alliance. In the fall, they review all data, parents are involved, and they especially review writing and math for diagnostic purposes.

Summary of school:

They seem to be in the process of implementing standards based programs; some classrooms more than others. With the small school environment and the facility and resources available, I was surprised they were not further along. It appeared that leadership was somewhat lacking. Their commitment to the BIT team approach and their use of it to take real control of the monitoring process of students' progress was impressive.