

Final Report to the Joint Education Interim Committee of the Wyoming Legislature

Laramie, Wyoming
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Pursuant to Section 14 of Enrolled Act No. 27,
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Participants' Observations

In June of this year, I opened the Data Facilitation Forum (DFF) report to the JEC with my observations after facilitating the two May sessions of the DFF. This report follows three additional sessions of the DFF encouraged by the JEC at its June 2002 meeting (**See Appendices E, F and G for summaries of the three DFF sessions since June**). For this report, rather than offer my observations, permit me to summarize the observations of the participants. At the conclusion of their fifth and last session, the DFF participants said:

- I appreciated the open dialogue. I believe the process lent understanding to all who participated.
- When reasonable people get together to discuss unreasonable problems, we can make great progress. We need to do this in the future instead of confronting one another. One possible example for additional work together may be the requirements of the “No Child Left Behind” federal legislation.
- Thank you to the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) for its good work and to the participants in this process. I echo the concerns about the “No Child Left Behind” requirements. Processes like this can help make sense out of nonsense.
- Expansion of the group to include other stakeholders pursuant to the request of the JEC was very helpful to the process.
- This has been very positive for everyone involved. A group of diverse people dealing with complicated, important issues can develop good solutions. The process works.
- This is just the beginning of what needs to be an ongoing process of discussion of education issues in Wyoming. I hope the legislature will lend its support to these recommendations in order to benefit the children and society of Wyoming.
- I've been impressed with the process. We have set a precedent. We, as a group, need to help ensure that there is future action and implementation of the DFF recommendations.
- I've always felt that data should be useful and helpful, not a burden. I've learned a great deal through this process. I will redouble my efforts to ensure that WDE gets useful information. I am comforted by others seeing the value in this data as well. I am more than willing to continue to communicate and cooperate. This has been a huge catapult for me.
- People make issues complex. We've built relationships among people to deal with the complexity of those issues. The process works. We needed a neutral person, with no vested interest, to help move us through this process. I would recommend this process whenever the level of the issue requires it.

- The process has been exemplary, has proven to us that it is possible to address tough issues without bringing a lot of emotional baggage and without attacking each other. A huge thank you to the legislature and legislators who helped make this happen. Providing for this process, with no preconceived notions as to its outcome was excellent. There is already a great deal of serious discussion about a similar process to resolve other education issues in WY. Allowing open meetings and observers has also been very helpful. After the first two meetings, we never managed to have all the same people together, but it still worked well.
- Thank you to specific legislators who made this happen. It was very useful. And it can be used in the future when the level of the problem justifies it. The initial insistence on people being there for all of the first two meetings drove some people off. We need to remember that data requirements are taking resources from the classrooms. Legislators need to be more aware of that when they ask for new data. We need to think very hard about data requests to ensure that the data is needed, will be useful and is used appropriately—especially student assessment data.
- It has been a very beneficial process. The use of these processes has great potential for the future. Having legislators here and participating has also been very useful. I appreciate their time and sacrifice in participating.
- Relationships have been built and those relationships have helped to open communications and bring solutions. The Ground Rules also helped us stay on task and focused.
- It has been very helpful. I am encouraged that this process could become a model. It is valuable to include the business sector on educational issues and discussions because that sector depends on the successful outcomes of the educational process. **(For a complete summary of the last meeting of the DFF, see Appendix G, pages 41-47.)**

The DFF participants came to agreements early in May on many diverse issues relative to education data in Wyoming. With minor modifications, those agreements prevailed throughout the remainder of the meetings. As I wrote in the June report to the JEC, the participants, as skeptical—even cynical—as they were when they began this process, came prepared to work hard and to do their best to understand other’s points of view. Throughout all the meetings, they were open and honest with each other and realistic and practical in their approach.

As a result of their persistence and good will, the DFF participants developed positive relationships that will be essential to implementing their agreements and to dealing with future issues that will arise.

A Review of the June 2002 Executive Summary

The previous report to the JEC summarized the two May 2002 meetings as follows:

On March 12, 2002, the Wyoming legislature passed and the Governor signed Enrolled Act No. 27 designed to address the Wyoming Supreme Court decision in State of Wyoming, et al, v. Campbell County School District, et al, 2001 WY 19, 19 P.3d 518 (Wyo. 2001). Section 14 of that Act provided:

The joint education interim committee shall provide a forum for facilitated discussion of data requirements, data composition, data quality and data quantity issues pertaining to the operation of the education resource block grant model, school prototypes contained within the model and adjustments to the model prototypes. The forum shall be facilitated by group facilitation professionals who shall assemble appropriate expertise in school finance data issues, including representatives of school districts, both large and small, urban and rural, and representatives of the division of economic analysis of the department of administration and information, state department of education, the department of audit, the department of employment and consultants to the legislature performing cost of education studies. The facilitator shall provide a report to the joint education interim committee on or before June 15, 2002.

Pursuant to that Section, in April, the Co-chairs of the Joint Education Committee (JEC) established the Data Forum and invited the participants. They also asked Dick Gross of the Consensus Council (CC) and Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI) to facilitate the Forum. The Data Forum participants met twice in May to engage in a facilitated process. After coming together for two one-and-a-half-day meetings, the participants developed a series of agreements on education data issues in Wyoming. Those agreements are presented as a vision, a goal, objectives and strategies noted in this report.

The **Vision Statement**—what Wyoming should strive to achieve—relative to education data that the participants agreed to is:

Wyoming has a nationally recognized education data system that is uniform, trusted, effective, efficient, and user-friendly; it reflects and advances Wyoming values, assists a wide variety of policy leaders to make fully informed decisions, and helps provide a remarkable, high quality and equitable education for all Wyoming students.

The **Overriding Goal** agreed to by the Data Forum participants is:

The JEC should empower this Data Forum or an analogous group to continue to assist it in addressing these and other education related issues and in making recommendations to the full legislature. This kind of a process should be established to follow up on and assist with progress in all of the areas of agreement. All or many of the current participants in the Data Forum would be appropriate for a longer-term effort. They could meet again within six months (e.g., October 10-11, 2002, in Casper, Wyoming). The Legislative Services Office (LSO) and the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) staff could provide ongoing assistance for such an effort. During subsequent meetings, the group could hear from representatives of all of the working/strategy groups that are recommended below to determine their progress and provide appropriate assistance.

In order to achieve that vision, and implement that goal and the other agreements developed by the participants in the Data Forum process, the participants request:

Requests

- That the JEC endorse the facilitated process of the Data Forum.
- That the JEC endorse the agreements—vision, goal, objectives and strategies—the Data Forum participants have developed.
- That the JEC authorize a continuation of the process initiated by the Data Forum.
- That the JEC encourage Data Forum participants to continue to work with the state agencies and other organizations needed to implement the agreements.
- That the JEC draft legislation required to implement the Data Forum agreements.
- That, if the JEC has concerns about any of the agreements developed by the Data Forum, the facilitator be authorized to work with the participants to address those concerns before any action is taken by the JEC.
- That the JEC encourage/authorize an analogous process(es) to address other education issues.

As the DFF participants understood from the outcome of the June 2002 JEC meeting that the JEC was very pleased with what had occurred during the two May DFF meetings and the JEC adopted the seven requests made by the DFF participants—including, and especially, that

- **the agreements the DFF participants had developed were endorsed,**
- **the DFF process was encouraged to continue and**
- **DFF participants were encouraged to work to begin implementation of their agreements.**

Executive Summary of This October 2002 Report

Based on the response of the JEC to its June report, the DFF assumed as its mandate the implementation of agreements that had been developed during its May meetings. Therefore, this report summarized progress that has been made in that direction. It is important to note that none of those who had initially agreed to participate in the DFF anticipated five rather than two meetings. Nevertheless, to the extent they were able, they attended, participated and helped to further the implementation of their agreements.

In particular, the DFF worked closely with WDE to develop a report that can be utilized to explain the MAP Model to many groups interested in how that Model functions as well as to the general public. It is the hope of the DFF participants that this report can also serve as a model for other reports that will be needed to explain the value and use of educational data in general and for student assessment data in particular.

Relative to student assessment, as indicated in the June report to the JEC and, again, in this report, it is not possible to overemphasize the need for a uniform student performance tracking system in Wyoming. Such a system will be invaluable to students, parents, educators, employers and others who have a stake in the outcomes of education in Wyoming. It is intended by the DFF that the system be fully compatible with the current Body of Evidence system, federal requirements and Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) standards.

The DFF strongly endorses the ongoing Standards and Body of Evidence Tracking (SBET) advisory group process to ensure continuous dialogue between all stakeholders in Wyoming education in the development of a uniform student performance tracking system. Such a system, “owned” by all the stakeholders in Wyoming education, has the potential to put Wyoming in a national leadership position in meeting the requirements of the federal “No Child Left Behind” legislation.

The DFF participants learned a great deal about the potential for a SIF system. They agreed that this system, in development among a group of innovative states including Wyoming, has the potential to be put in place in Wyoming in a relatively short time frame. SIF would allow for common language for data stored within districts and passed to the WDE, thereby reducing some of the confusion inherent in disparate systems. Together with the student performance tracking system, it has the potential to lift Wyoming to national prominence in meeting—and exceeding—federal and state education standards.

While the DFF process has taken a significant forward step in helping stakeholders in Wyoming education develop agreements on education data issues, it is a first step only. In order to continue the progress made by the DFF, the participants encourage ongoing and new advisory groups to WDE (and perhaps to the Wyoming legislature) that would operate on a consultative basis to develop continuing agreements on other aspects of education in Wyoming, including student demographics, educational technology, finances (already in place) and personnel.

REPORT

As a result of their three additional meetings and their work, in particular, with the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), the DFF participants have made significant strides in implementing their May agreements:

The MAP Model

While the Map Model itself was not the responsibility of the DFF pursuant to the legislation noted above, it became clear that there were abundant concerns shared by the DFF participants about that Model. Therefore, during their two May 2002 meetings, DFF participants agreed on and conveyed to the JEC five objectives relative to the MAP Model. They were:

Objective 1: To clarify definitions in the MAP Model.

Objective 2: To reduce the complexity of the Model.

Objective 3: To develop an action plan to address the negative consequences of the Model and its impact on the districts.

Objective 4: To develop a better explanation of how the MAP Model functions.

Objective 5: To examine alternatives to the MAP Model.

Most of the DFF agreements/objectives have been left to others to implement because the Wyoming legislature has not designated the DFF to do that work. However, the fourth objective—**To develop a better explanation of how the MAP Model functions**—appeared to fall within the scope of DFF's work. The DFF participants felt that a better explanation of how the MAP Model functions was critical to a good understanding of education data and data needs.

Therefore, working closely with WDE, the DFF participants first agreed on the kind of information that needed to be presented and to whom, then they analyzed and critiqued the presentation developed by WDE. **As a result, legislators, educators, parents, students and the public now have access to a succinct and informative explanation of the MAP Model, how it functions and the need for such extensive educational data to make it work.**

The DFF participants agreed that:

- Other potential topics for such educational/PR sessions include educational data and the DFF process and its agreements—in particular the need for a statewide student assessment data system. All presentations should be the same, with a possible difference in emphasis depending on the group.

- WDE, LSO, the school districts, WEA, the Heritage Society and other entities ought to be involved in using this presentation and others that may be developed for a statewide education/public relations effort.
- Presentations should be made to such groups as the Capitol Club, the Mining Association, and other industry groups. One of the participants agreed to help to arrange some of these educational sessions, possibly at the beginning of the next legislative session.
- The DFF participants and other presenters need to be certain that individuals and panelists that present this information are very knowledgeable about these issues.
- Another related issue that might arise during these presentations is capital construction. However, DFF participants agreed that these presentations should not explore that issue to any significant degree because of the difficulty of that issue and the many unresolved issues.

(See Appendix A, pages 13-23 for the text only—not the slides—of the presentation.)

Standards and Body of Evidence Tracking (SBET—formerly SBG/BOE)

As reported in June, the issue of student assessments in Wyoming quickly came to the fore during the discussions of the DFF. Initially, that issue was ranked only 16th on a scale of priority by the participants. However, after discussion during the first meeting in May and, upon returning for the second meeting that month, it became clear that the student assessment issue had become an overriding and compelling issue for the DFF to consider and to attempt the development of agreements.

As a result, DFF participants received information not only from WDE but also from national experts working in multiple states on student assessment issues. Because of that extensive input and their resulting discussions, **the DFF participants agreed that the JEC and the Wyoming legislature need to authorize and provide substantial resources for the development of a uniform, statewide student assessment system.**

Such a system, the DFF participants envision, must be fully compatible with the Body of Evidence (BOE) process well underway in Wyoming, with the requirements of the “No Child Left Behind” federal legislation and with the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF—See below for a discussion). The system must be uniform and available throughout Wyoming; and the costs for developing, placing and maintaining the system must be borne by the State of Wyoming. If districts choose not to participate in such a system, their systems need to be fully compatible with the statewide system, and those districts should bear the costs of needed upgrades and maintenance.

At their August 28, 2002, meeting, DFF participants agreed:

- The State of Wyoming needs a uniform student performance tracking data system to ensure accountability.
- The student performance tracking data system needs to be developed in such a way as to ensure interoperability within and between districts and with WDE.
- The participants are generally comfortable with the direction WDE proposes relative to SIF, but they believe that, initially, a stand-alone SIF-compliant system for Wyoming may be necessary rather than having Wyoming wait for development of a uniform multi-application SIF system.
- Wyoming needs to move ahead with a standards-based system with reasonable cost estimates. The WDE will complete and issue the Request for Information (RFI) on the stand-alone standards based grading system in conjunction with the SBG/BOE advisory group. With the information from the RFI, the SBG/BOE advisory group will develop a rough cost estimate for the JEC. Additionally, the WDE will develop a rough cost estimate for a study to identify what would be needed to implement SIF compliant systems statewide.

- Wyoming needs to be open to re-examining issues along the way—additional time may be necessary if costs are too large or if the system does not appear to work as Wyoming needs it to.
- Wyoming should not lose the BOE system already developed along the way.

As a result of these August agreements among the DFF participants, WDE, working with an advisory committee, developed a “Request for Information,” which has been sent to numerous vendors. Responses to the request are due at WDE by November 8, 2002. Information about the SBET project has also been disseminated to all superintendents in Wyoming. It is anticipated that a specific proposal based on the RFI will be submitted to the JEC at its November or December meeting. However, based on information the DFF and WDE have received, it appears that the cost of this new system for Wyoming will be in the range of \$5-7 million. **(See Appendix B, pages 24-25)**

Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF)

No less important is the SIF network. However, its development is likely to be farther down the road. The SIF network is basically a server system intended to be developed to nationwide standards and specifications (currently in process) that will permit districts to have interoperability within and between their educational data systems and will permit the state to have interoperability within and between state and district educational data systems. It needs emphasis that the SIF system is intended to be of substantial assistance to the districts in addressing their needs for interoperability of their own data systems.

On its website, SIF explains itself this way:

- Like any modern enterprise, K-12 districts and schools use complex software systems to manage information, to analyze and report on data, and to automate processes. Unfortunately, these systems are proprietary and often times unable to share information without costly and time-consuming customization work - if at all.
- Information entered into one system must be replicated to other systems by hand. And once the data is entered and entered again, retrieving it for analysis and reporting is usually more trouble than it's worth.
- One of the greatest administrative challenges facing K-12 educators is connecting disparate systems so they work together more efficiently. The Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) is an industry initiative focused on solving this problem through better standards and technologies. SIF is not a product, but rather an industry-supported technical blueprint for software developers to follow. It defines a common language for representing data and a reliable, secure, and consistent protocol for exchanging it automatically among software systems.

Specifically, SIF is intended to define standard formats for shared data—e.g., student demographics, information, assessment; to define standard names for the shared data, and to define the rules of interaction among software applications. It is intended to ensure that data is entered only once in one application and, automatically, moves onto other applications, to allow all applications to exchange data more effectively, and to allow educators to exchange data securely via the Internet.

During the next year, WDE and the advisory group intend to implement a planning process to develop standards, requirements, seek a vendor(s) and implement three pilot projects for a SIF network for Wyoming. They estimate the cost of this work at \$180,000. **(See Appendix C, pages 26-27)**

The potential for Wyoming becoming a model state for both SBET and SIF is real because of its relatively small population, court-mandated state involvement in primary and secondary education, and the need to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Wyoming education in the face of declining enrollments, budget pressures and the demand for uniform student assessment.

Advisory Groups/Process/Budget

Most of the agreements arrived at through the DFF process are based on the relationships and trust developed during the short—but intense—process between WDE and other DFF participants. And most of the agreements, in order to be implemented, will require a continuation and enhancement of those relationships and trust. DFF participants agree that a coordinated system of advisory groups to WDE will help to institutionalize a trust-building mechanism.

One advisory group which has been in effect for a number of years is the School Finance Data Advisory Group (SFDAG). It has provided valuable counsel to WDE relative to a wide variety of school finance data issues, and the DFF participants agreed that the makeup and operation of SFDAG provides a model for other advisory groups to WDE.

Therefore, WDE has proposed—and DFF supports—the continuation or establishment of the following advisory groups:

- Student demographic data (to include Vocational Education and Special Education district representation)
- Certified and classified personnel data
- Technology data
- Financial data (the “School Finance Data Advisory Group—SFDAG”—exists, as noted above, but costs are not covered by the state)

DFF also believes that legislative appropriations for these groups will be essential, both to indicate legislative support for the groups and to provide adequate resources to WDE and the participants. **WDE estimates cost of developing and continuing these advisory groups at approximately \$23,000 annually. (See Appendix D, pages 28-29)**

Summary

There is much left to be done in the area of educational data and, for that matter, relative to all education-related issues and litigation in Wyoming. However, it is clear to those who have been DFF participants that tremendous strides have been made in addressing the education data issues; that relationships have been built which will assist in overcoming barriers as these agreements are implemented, and that the potential for developing further agreements on other education issues in Wyoming is significant.

It seems equally clear that the Vision developed by the DFF participants at the outset is one which is attainable:

Wyoming has a nationally recognized education data system that is uniform, trusted, effective, efficient, and user-friendly; it reflects and advances Wyoming values, assists a wide variety of policy leaders to make fully informed decisions, and helps provide a remarkable, high quality and equitable education for all Wyoming students.

The DFF participants, as noted in their initial observations, thanked the legislature for the opportunity to have been involved in what many noted has been a useful, beneficial, exemplary process that could be a model process for Wyoming as well as for other states involved in education and other public policy issues. Perhaps the most compelling of all was a participant's observation at one of the sessions that it is conceivable that the long-term impact of the DFF process on education (and other public policy issues) in Wyoming will be equivalent to bringing the railroad through Wyoming.

APPENDIX A

School Finance Narrative - MAP Model Revised for 2002 Changes

In November of 1995, the Wyoming Supreme Court declared the Wyoming school finance system unconstitutional. This decision required the Wyoming Legislature to redesign the existing system of school finance. The legislature hired Management Analysis and Planning, Inc. to assist with the process.

In December 1999, a trial before the First Wyoming Judicial District Court regarding the school finance system was completed. That decision was appealed to the Wyoming Supreme Court. In February 2001, the Wyoming Supreme Court issued its decision in the appeal. The Supreme Court found the cost based funding model approach adopted by the legislature was capable of supporting a constitutional school finance system, but also required a number of changes.

The legislature responded to the Court's decision in its 2002 session with changes to the model and supporting legislation, as well as a number of special studies to address additional areas.

Slide 2

Wyoming school districts are funded through a Cost Based Block Grant. Cost Based means that the amount a particular district receives depends on the specific characteristics of that district that raise or lower the actual costs that that district faces. Block Grant means that most of the funding for operating local schools is received by school districts in the form of a lump sum of money that school districts can spend for virtually any legal purpose. The Cost Based Block Grant was conceived to serve two important purposes. First, it was to respond to the Supreme Court's 1995 ruling that the funding for every student in Wyoming be identical except where there was a cost-based rationale for providing more or less funding. The second purpose was to preserve as much local control as possible by providing local decision-makers the maximum flexibility to allocate resources to meet local needs and priorities.

Slide 3

MAP developed the block grant in 1997 using what is generally known as the *professional judgment* method. The first step in the professional judgment process was to define that which is to be produced, i.e., the basket of education goods and services, for whom, i.e., the student population, and in what context, i.e., school levels and sizes.

Slide 4

The legislature defined the required basket of goods and services in statute, consisting of three major areas:

- The common core of knowledge
- The common core of skills, and
- Services to special needs students – the disabled and the gifted and talented.

Slides 5 & 6

The common core of knowledge includes the areas of

- Reading and language arts
- Social studies
- Mathematics
- Science
- Fine and performing arts
- Physical education
- Health and safety
- Humanities
- Career/vocational education
- Foreign cultures and language
- Applied technology
- Government and civics

Slide 7

The common core of skills addresses

- Problem solving
- Interpersonal communications
- Keyboarding and computer applications
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Life skills

Slide 8

MAP then developed three school prototypes—a kindergarten through grade 5 elementary school of 288 students, a grades 6-8 middle school of 300 students, and a 9-12 high school of 600 students. The student population in these prototypes reflected the statewide average characteristics of Wyoming students including poverty, minority status, and English proficiency.

Slide 9

Next, consulting educators, research, and professional organizations, MAP compiled the nature and quantity of resources necessary to deliver the basket to the prototypical student population. These resources included

- Personnel
- Supplies/instructional materials
- Equipment
- Aid for disabled students and gifted students
- Student activities
- Professional development for staff

- Student assessment
- District operations, to include maintenance and operations of facilities, district administration, and transportation

Slide 10

Once the nature of the resources was identified and the quantity of each was determined, market prices for each of the resources were sought. Where market prices were not available, as in the case of educator salaries, MAP sought surrogate prices that could be justified by economic theory. Once prices were determined, they were multiplied by the quantity of each resource and summed to derive an overall cost for each of the prototypes.

This process provided a total annual cost of operation for each of the prototype schools. Since each prototype was based on a specified number of students, dividing the total cost by the number of students gives a prototypical-funding amount for each student by grade span.

Slide 11

Districts would then receive funding according to the number of students in the various grade spans. Students are counted using a concept called Average Daily Membership or ADM for short. An ADM count is taken every day, and consists of all the students who are present and all the students who are on an excused absence. These daily counts are accumulated during the year, and then divided by the number of school days at the end of the year.

Slide 12

To help compensate for the effects of student enrollment fluctuations, ADM is averaged over a three-year period. This is sometimes referred to as the “three year rolling average”. Since kindergarten students are only required to attend a half-day, the count of kindergarten students is divided by two to generate a full-time equivalent ADM.

Slide 13

The funding per student in each prototype, with its assumptions of class sizes, is as follows:

<u>Grade-Level Grouping</u>	<u>Class-Size</u>	<u>Full K ADM</u>	<u>½ K ADM</u>	<u>Funding per ADM</u>
Elementary (Grades K-5)	16	288	264	\$6,238
Middle (Grades 6-8)	21	300		\$6,223
High School (Grades 9-12)	21	600		\$6,454

Slide 14

For example, a district with 415 elementary students, 250 middle school students, and 335 high school students would receive prototypical funding as follows:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>ADM Count</u>	X	<u>Prototype Amount per ADM</u>	=	<u>Prototype Total</u>
K – 5	415		\$6,238		\$2,588,770
6 – 8	250		\$6,223		\$1,555,750
9 – 12	335		\$6,454		<u>\$2,162,090</u>
					\$6,306,610

Slide 15

It was never intended that Wyoming school districts mimic the resource allocation pattern implied in the prototypes. The prototypes serve as an example of one way that resources could be combined to deliver the basket. Other ways may be more expensive or less expensive, depending on the preferences, the skills, and abilities of the educators employed by the school districts. The prototypes produced a total amount adequate to deliver the basket.

If each school in Wyoming were identical to the prototypes, every school district would receive the prototypical amount of funding. But, schools vary from the prototypes in terms of student and teacher characteristics. Some students require additional resources to achieve up to their academic potential. Some teachers are paid more because they have taught longer or acquired additional educational credits. The cost of living in some school districts is greater than average and some small schools and small districts face diseconomies of scale that increase cost per student. Thus, the model includes a series of adjustments that compensates for the unique cost characteristics of each district and school.

Slide 16

Adjustments include:

- Small schools
- Students at risk of academic failure
- Experience, responsibility, education of administrators
- Teacher seniority
- Experience of other staff
- Small districts
- An inflation adjustment, and
- Regional cost of living differences

While most adjustments are additions to the basic funding amounts, some can be negative. For example, the regional cost of living adjustment can reduce funding for districts with relatively lower costs of living.

Slide 17

The model also provides for 100% reimbursements of some costs. These would include:

- Student transportation expenditures
- Expenditures for disabled students, and
- Other reimbursements

We'll talk more about the adjustments and reimbursements later.

Slide 18

The model developed by MAP is a giant Excel workbook that combines all these various pieces together. It considers requirements in the law, assumptions and costs developed by MAP, and data from the districts to calculate the total operations funding available to each district for the year. Final amounts for each district aren't available until all districts submit their data and the data is checked for accuracy.

Slide 19

The preliminary estimate for total operations funding for the 2002-2003 school year is \$724.3 million. This doesn't include any federal funds, funds for capital construction, funds for major maintenance to district buildings, and other special purpose grants.

As mentioned earlier, Average Daily Membership for funding purposes is calculated using a three-year rolling average. For the school year ended in June 2002, the statewide preliminary three-year rolling average ADM is estimated at 85,710.

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Note: the calculation below supports the ADM numbers above.

<u>School Year (SY)</u>	<u>1/2 K ADM</u>
1999-2000	87,962
2000-2001	85,353
2001-2002	83,813
Three-year Average	85,710

Dividing the estimated total operations funding of \$724.3 by the three year average ADM of 85,710 gives an estimated total funding per student in SY 2002-2003 of \$8,451. However, the amount per district will vary considerably from the average.

Slide 20

Using statewide ADM counts, the estimated total guarantee for the 2002-2003 year, and the prototypical funding amounts by grade span, we estimate the amount of total funding attributable to the prototypical funding and to the adjustments and reimbursements as follows:

<u>Total</u>	<u>Prototypical</u>	<u>Adjustments/ Reimbursements</u>
\$724.3 MM	\$540.4 MM	\$183.9 MM
100%	74.6%	25.4%

Note: the following supports the above chart

<u>Grade Level</u>	Statewide ADM <u>Count</u>	X	Prototype Amount <u>per ADM</u>	=	<u>Prototype Total</u>	Estimated Total <u>Funding</u>	<u>Difference</u>
K – 5	35,662.6		\$6,238		\$222,391,974		
6 – 8	21,449.7		\$6,223		\$133,481,483		
9 – 12	28,597.4		\$6,454		<u>\$184,567,620</u>		
					\$540,441,620	\$724,300,000	\$183,900,000
Percentage					74.6%	100%	25.4%

Slide 21

The combination of all these various funding items is called the foundation “guarantee”. Then, the guarantee amount for each district is compared to other revenues available to that district. If the guaranteed amount exceeds local resources, the district is entitled to a payment from the school foundation account equal to the difference. If local resources exceed the guarantee, the district is a recapture district and pays the school foundation account the excess amount, subject to state constitutional limitations. This excess amount is then distributed to other districts as part of the entitlement payment.

Slide 22

Funding Guarantee

The funding model and supporting legislation determine the funding guarantee. Local wealth, and therefore local revenues, does not affect the guarantee amount, but only the entitlement or recapture amounts. The major components of the guarantee are the prototypical funding based on ADM by grade span, the funding adjustments, and the reimbursements.

Slide 23

Impact of Local Revenues

As mentioned earlier the local revenues collected by a district affect only the amount of the entitlement or the recapture. Local revenues do not impact the guarantee amount. This slide recaps the calculation showing the components of the guarantee and how local revenues affect the entitlement or recapture after the guarantee is determined.

Slide 24

Funding Example

Drawing from our previous example of prototypical funding for a district, let's continue by adding the remaining pieces. Assume the adjustments total \$1,050,000 and the reimbursements total \$1,060,000. The combination of the prototypical funding, adjustments, and reimbursements yield a total guarantee of \$8,416,610. Further, assume local revenues of \$5,300,000. Subtracting the local revenues from the guarantee gives a shortfall of \$3,116,610. In this case, the district would receive entitlement payments from the school foundation account of \$3,116,610.

Slide 25

Adjustments to Prototypical Funding

This slide to ease transition to new area.

Slide 26

Small School Adjustment

The Legislature recognizes that the operation of small schools generally costs more due to significant diseconomies of scale as fixed costs are spread over relatively few students. To ensure delivery of the basket to students attending small schools, the model provides adjustments to compensate for these additional operating costs.

This small school adjustment provides additional staff, and allowances for utilities and activities for those schools that meet the small school criteria. To be eligible for the small school adjustment, the school must have an ADM for the prior year that is less than or equal to the amounts as shown below.

<u>Grade Band</u>	<u>ADM</u>
Elementary	263
Middle	299
High	599

Slide 27

At-Risk Students

Additional resources are available under the model to address the special needs of districts in providing programs and services to large concentrations of students who are at risk of failing to make adequate academic progress. There is no count of at-risk students. Also, there is a significant difference between districts in how they classify and count students as at risk. The model needs some way to fund this component. Since there is no way of counting the at-risk students, the model uses the unduplicated count of students who are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program or who are limited English proficient as a substitute for the count of at risk students. The adjustment is based on the assumption of average student characteristics statewide. As the percentage of at-risk students increase above the statewide average, the district becomes eligible for an increased at-risk adjustment.

Slide 28

District and School Administrators

Effective with the 2002-2003 school year, the legislature added an adjustment for the experience, education, and responsibility (based on enrollments) levels of school and district administrators. The adjustment compares each administrator's experience, education, and responsibility to statewide averages, and provides either a positive or negative adjustment.

Slide 29

Teacher Seniority

Teacher salary cost in the model is based on entry-level average salary. An adjustment for experience levels of all non-Special Education teachers is included, and commonly referred to as the teacher seniority adjustment. An adjustment amount is established for each year of seniority, with certain restrictions. The entry-level average salary amount is then adjusted upward based upon the actual seniority level of district personnel. A three-year rolling average calculation is also applied to the seniority adjustment.

Slide 30

Small Districts

An adjustment for small districts is also included, based on a series of prototypes that provide a minimum level of central office staffing at varying ADM levels. Each district receives the higher of this minimum configuration or the amount in the prototypical model for district office operations. The ADM cut-off level for the small district adjustment is about 1,000 ADM.

Slide 31

Inflation Adjustment

The model provides an adjustment, commonly referred to as the External Cost Adjustment, to help compensate for inflation increases. This adjustment must be statutorily specified by the legislature each year.

Although not in statute, it is generally understood that the costs in the model must be reviewed and updated/recalibrated every five years.

Slide 32

Regional Cost of Living Adjustment

To compensate for differences in the salary costs in different regions of the state, the model provides an adjustment based upon a regional cost of living index. The model uses a rolling average of the Wyoming Cost of Living Index (WCLI) for the last six semi-annual periods to calculate the adjustment.

Slide 33

Expenditure Reimbursements

This slide to ease transition to new area.

Slide 34

Transportation Reimbursement

The model reimburses 100% of transporting students to/from school and to/from activities.

The transportation adjustment also includes reimbursement for bus purchases and leases. Lease costs for the prior year are reimbursed at 100% and bus purchases are reimbursed over a five-year period.

Slide 35

Students with Disabilities

The model reimburses 100% of the actual allowable district education expenditures for students with disabilities. Allowable special education expenditures include district programs and services for students with disabilities as identified under federal law.

Slide 36

Other Reimbursements

State law provides for additional 100% reimbursements for support of geographically isolated students, additional compensation for geographically isolated teachers, and special tuition for students.

Slide 37

Computation - Review

When all the pieces are combined in the model, the process looks something like this:

ADJUSTED PROTOTYPICAL FUNDING
+/- ADJUSTMENTS
+ 100% REIMBURSEMENTS
GUARANTEE
- LOCAL REVENUES
PAYMENTS TO OR FROM DISTRICTS

Constitutional provisions limit the amount of the maximum recapture.

Slide 38

Hold Harmless

The legislature adopted a funding provision to help offset some of the funding losses from implementation of the new funding model and associated legislation. This provision provides districts will receive the same amount of funding as in the 2001-2002 school year, except for any decreases associated with a loss of ADM. The hold harmless provision is effective for both school years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. This provision acts only to mitigate losses and does not limit a district's funding guarantee.

Slide 39

Hold Harmless – (cont'd)

Hold harmless provides additional funding to those districts whose SY 02-03 and SY 03-04 guarantee amounts are below the ADM-adjusted SY 01-02 guarantee. The estimated statewide cost of the Hold Harmless provision for this year, SY 02-03 is \$9.5 million

Additionally, the legislature authorized special studies dealing with both the Small Schools Adjustment and the Regional Cost of Living Adjustment. Changes in these two adjustments accounted for the bulk of the funding reduction experienced by the districts.

Slide 40

Local Revenues

Local revenues are all general fund revenues of the district except those excluded by law. The two largest revenue sources for the districts are the 25-mill district property tax and the 6-mill county property tax. Other revenues include items such as auto taxes, fines and forfeitures, interest earnings. If a district holds cash greater than 15% of its guarantee, the excess could also be considered a local revenue, and reduce the payment to or increase the payment from the district.

Revenues excluded are generally small in total amount, and would include, among others, interest earnings, rental fees, and admissions to events.

Slide 41

Foundation Payment Timing

Payments due to districts are made on August 15, October 15, and February 15 of each year. Payments from districts are due June 15.

Slide 42

Future Actions

As mentioned earlier, the legislature authorized a number of special studies in areas of specific concern. These included

- Vocational Education
- Special Education for disabled students
- Regional Cost of Living
- The Reading Assessment and Intervention grant
- Small schools

Slide 43

Future Actions – Cont'd

- At-risk students, and
- Certified staff compensation

Results of these studies will come before the legislature over the next two years. Depending upon legislative action, these studies have the potential to modify the funding model.

APPENDIX B

Standards and Body of Evidence Tracking (SBET) Software

October 10, 2002 – Data Facilitation Forum (DFF) Meeting

NOTE:

Underlined text comes from Dick's report for the August 28, 2002 DFF meeting.

Again agreeing that the DFF supports and understands that the JEC supports additional funding to districts to assist in a more sophisticated student assessment data system, DFF participants also feel:

- Wyoming needs a uniform student assessment data system to ensure accountability.
From your perspective and that of the legislature (as best as can be predicted on the latter), does uniform mean that using the software is mandatory? Craig heard comments at the last JEC meeting that he thought would be pertinent for this group to consider.
- The student assessment data system needs to be set up in such a way as to ensure interoperability within districts and with WDE.
Our request for information (RFI) has specified SIF as a requirement for the system.
- The participants are generally comfortable with the direction proposed in Steve's presentation but believe, at least initially, a stand-alone system may need to be developed that will be compliant with SIF.
The RFI is intended to cover the SBET module of the SIF system. More discussion when the SIF update is provided.
- Wyoming needs to move ahead with a standards-based system with reasonable cost estimates. The WDE will complete and issue the Request for Information (RFI) on the stand-alone standards based grading system in conjunction with the SBG/BOE advisory group. With the information from the RFI, the SBG/BOE advisory group will develop a rough cost estimate for the JEC. Additionally, the WDE will develop a rough cost estimate for a study to identify what would be needed to implement SIF compliant systems statewide.
- *RFI released on October 2, 2002. Responses due to the WDE on November 8, 2002.*
- Wyoming needs to be open to re-examining issues along the way—additional time may be necessary if costs are too large or the system may not work.
Defer to Larry's comments in the last agenda topic for Thursday.
- Wyoming should not lose the BOE system already developed along the way.

September 17, 2002 SBET Meeting Summary

The advisory group reviewed and finalized the RFI. A subgroup of advisory members volunteered to review vendor responses to RFIs – Kim McKinnon (Asst. Supt. of Curriculum, Fremont #25), Bill Gatley (Director of Technology, Sheridan #2), Mark Mathern (Executive Director of Curriculum, Natrona #1), Lyla Downey (Asst. Supt. of Technology, Campbell #1), Teresa Staab (Director of Curriculum, Big Horn #1), Steve King (Data & Technology Supervisor, WDE), Larry Biggio (Director of Finance & Personnel, WDE)

See <http://www.k12.wy.us/DATAandTECH.HTM>, first link for copy of RFI.

Information to Superintendents

Per suggestion of DFF, the SBET group arranged for information about the SBET project to be disseminated to all Superintendents in the state. Craig Beck took the lead on this, indicating that there were meetings that would allow him to present on SBET.

Timelines

11/8/02	Responses to RFI are due.
12/18/02	Feasibility and estimated costs submitted to JEC
01/15/03	JEC proposes to state legislature
04/15/03	RFP released
07/01/03 – 3/01/04	Software implemented, training provided
04'-05' School year	Software in place and in use

Preliminary Cost Estimates for SBET Software

- One application was reviewed and initially appears to be a viable option. It would cost the state \$5 million, possibly less given the economy of scale for a state purchase.
- Training will be critical for effective implementation. Costs for working with key staff in every district is estimated to be \$100,000. Training would be provided onsite and throughout the 2003-04 school year.
- Hardware costs for implementing this system should be minimal given many districts already run their own student management systems. This cost accounts for 10 districts to upgrade or purchase new servers at an average price of \$7,500 per server (total \$75,000).
- Existing software may require modifications to meet the requirements of the SBET advisory group. \$1 million is estimated to be the high-end expense for this work.

Total estimated cost - \$6,175,000 (I believe it could be as low as \$4 million)

Annual maintenance, upgrades and user support fees – \$750,000 (15% of software costs)

APPENDIX C

SIF Study and Expected Costs

October 10, 2002 – Data Facilitation Forum (DFF) Meeting

DFF requests/comments from last meeting

- The WDE will develop a rough cost estimate for a study to identify what would be needed to implement SIF compliant systems statewide.
- Crude budget and options relative to a student assessment system and interoperability.

WDE proposed study and estimated costs

Outcome:

- District supported business case and implementation plan for a statewide system built on the SIF model that shares education data between the WDE and the districts, and allows districts to share within district, with appropriate security and access control.
- A list of custom data objects that do not currently exist in SIF specifications.

Plan to include:

- Requirements and functional specifications
- Initial draft of operational policy and procedures
- Cost-Benefit analysis
- Implementation schedule and priorities

Activities (March 2003 to December 2003)

- Review existing district systems and compatibility with SIF
- Draft specifications and get consensus from districts
- Form/utilize a steering/advisory group of district and WDE representatives
- Perform a cost analysis of the options
- Conduct three pilot/demonstration projects showing:
 - data exchange within school/district
 - data reporting to WDE
 - student data exchange
 - fiscal data exchange

- set-up of zone integration servers (ZIS) for integration within a district
- set-up of ZIS at WDE for communication to/from district
- Work with key Wyoming vendors on integration issues (for example, Software Unlimited and the finance extract)
- Present and promote at various meetings/conferences (two NCA conference, others?)
- Attend all six SIF meetings (contractor and WDE Representatives)

Costs

- Contracted project lead \$65K (Mar 03' – Mar 04') – keep them on contract through March to help respond to questions from Legislature
- Software/hardware for pilots \$30K
- Integration subcontract for pilots \$45K
- Meetings of advisory group \$5K
- Travel for SIF meetings and local promotional meetings \$35K
- **TOTAL COST - \$180K**

APPENDIX D

Advisory Group

October 10, 2002 – Data Facilitation Forum Meeting

DFE requests/comments from last meeting

- An update on the composition, process and budget of the advisory committee.
- Mike's note: I also recollect that many of the DFE felt like the new group or groups needed to be small and representative.

Plan for continuing communication from where DFE leaves off

Rather than this group or the WDE selecting an advisory group, we would like to ask districts for volunteers in the following categories:

- Student demographic data (to include Vocational Education and Special Education district representation)
- Certified and classified personnel data
- Technology data
- Financial data (the "Data Advisory" group) ALREADY EXISTS but costs are not covered by the state

We would convene one large group with complete representation in the spring. The smaller groups (above) would be comprised of at least six and no more than 12 representatives. These groups would also meet in the fall and spring and would informally communicate on an as needed basis.

Purpose of the large convening:

- Opportunity for the WDE to receive input from district staff
- Updates on data issues related to funding model.
- Updates related to general data issues (e.g., SIF steps, student level data).
- Review of WDE website reporting tools
- Review on new technologies (e.g., staffing application)

Purpose of the smaller groups:

- Communication can be more informal, conducted by e-mail and done on an as needed basis (groups will be smaller, allowing for quicker response time to issues that require a short turn-around)
- Provide feedback on issues, tools, and collection processes for each data area.
- Will allow the WDE staff to let districts know when data is being provided to requestors and will allow districts to help us explain the legitimate uses of the data.
- Provide the WDE with a pilot group to help improve data collection surveys and the documentation that must accompany them.
- Allows for primary contacts for product development
- Provides trainers in a train the trainer model

Estimated Annual Expense for Advisory Groups

Food and space for large convening	\$3,000
Food, space, and travel for small group meetings	\$6,000 = \$75 (travel for one) x 2 ¹ x 10 ² x 4 ³ \$3,600 = \$45 (meals for one) x 2 x 10 x 4 \$2,400 = \$300 (space for one meeting) x 2 x 4 \$4,800 = \$60 (hotel room for one) x 2 x 10 x 4
Materials/Copying	\$2,000 (for large convening) \$500 (for four small group meetings)
TOTAL ESTIMATED <u>ANNUAL</u> COST	\$22,300 (\$13,900 for remaining part of year)
TOTAL ESIMATED <u>TWO-YEAR</u> COST	\$44,600

¹ Two meetings, fall and spring.

² Ten members per group.

³ Five groups, including finance Data Advisory group.

APPENDIX E

Meeting Three Data Facilitation Forum Casper, Wyoming July 25-26, 2002

Dick Gross began the Data Facilitation Forum (DFF) with the following proposed agenda for the first day:

- Ground Rules
- Introductions
- Dick's Update
- Update of JEC Meeting of June 18—Dave, Bubba, Kathy and others
- Update on Objectives and Strategies of DFF—Larry and Mike
- Update on Body of Evidence (BOE) group—Mark Mathern
- Discussion of Presentations
- Input relative to student assessments from Glynn Ligon and Barbara Clements

DFF participants agreed with the proposed agenda.

Dick again suggested the following ground rules:

- It's your show
- Everyone is equal
- No relevant topic is sacred
- No discussion is ended
- Respect each other's opinions and the time
- Silence on decisions is agreement
- Make sure I write what you meant
- Have fun

Participants agreed to the ground rules.

Dick asked each of the participants to introduce themselves, indicating where they are from, what they do and, if they had participated previously, their thoughts since the last DFF meeting or, if they were new, thoughts since being invited to join the DFF. It was pointed out that group membership was modified by the Joint Education Interim Committee (JEC) and also, modified by circumstances. Membership modifications include the replacement of Joe Simpson by Annette Bohling (Deputy State Superintendent), the reduction of MAP representation to one (John Ehlers), the addition of Steve Butler (Community Colleges), Sue Koller (UW), Bonnie Foster (Natrona #1 Board members and replacement for Jeff Thompson), Michael Fliccek (NCSD

#1 WyCAS Coordinator), Mike Hamilton (replacement for Deb Holloway, SDE), Deb Hinckley (Qwest), and Wendy Lowe (Wyoming Taxpayers Association).

Dick, then, reviewed the DFF report to the JEC. He asked Dave, the legislators and others who were present at that meeting to discuss what had happened at the JEC meeting. In summary, they reported that the JEC had been positive about the DFF report and had adopted its agreements, with a directive that the group present recommendations to the JEC on a statewide database.

Dick asked Larry and Mike to give an update of what progress has been made to implement the agreements of the DFF. That report is attached. During their report, Dick noted those areas that they indicated still need work. They are:

- WDE needs information from districts about duplication of data requests, especially because the “October blitz” time will be coming up soon.
- Districts need to refer others who request information from them to WDE to determine whether WDE already has collected that information.
- A committee/working group needs to be established to assist WDE on how to best collect data.
- No entity has been identified to study the MAP Model and determine whether it is possible to reduce the complexity of the Model.
- The block grant paradox (see attached report from WDE).
- No entity has been established to determine and deal with the negative consequences of the MAP Model.
- How to give other stakeholders a better understanding of how the MAP Model operates and how to interpret educational data—how to offer training more broadly, possibly train the trainers, including school boards and teachers.
- Who should assist WDE on developing a common template?
- Who should assist WDE in reviewing the data collected?
- How can WDE and other agencies appropriately stagger requests for information when the data requires similar time frames?
- Who should assist WDE and others in developing ethics and guidelines to help address the trust issue about how data is interpreted and presented? Would it be helpful if narratives that explain data were sent to the districts for input before being finalized? Would it be helpful if explanations of how the data was aggregated were sent to the districts for their comments before being finalized?

- Should there be legislation prohibiting the collection of historic educational data or at least requiring sufficient time to gather the information?
- How can we better define such terms as “at-risk”?

Larry and Mike also reported that there are several special studies currently being conducted that may impact the DFF agreements:

- At-risk students
- Small school definition/adjustment
- Regional cost of living
- Vocational education
- Special education
- Compensation levels

Following their report, Mark Mathern reported on behalf of the Standards Based Grading-Body of Evidence Advisory Group. The report provided DFF participants with a briefing on software necessary to support standards based grading and body of evidence data. A copy of that report is attached.

After Mark’s presentation, DFF participants asked several questions and discussed the issued in preparation for a presentation by speakerphone by Glynn Ligon and Barbara Clements.

- Among other aspects of their presentation, Glynn and Barbara suggested:
- Problems with multiple vendors:
- Some won’t play the game.
- There may be other standards developed in the future and upgrades may be required.
- What they have available may not include all Wyoming needs.
- Some vendors may fail to deliver.

Potential problems with a single vendor/developer:

- Placing a lot of faith in a single vendor/developer.

- The standards could change.
- The vendor may not deliver.
- Unanticipated costs along the way.

[Dick's comment: It seems as if all of these elements apply to both single and multiple vendor situations.]

They also said that what would be needed in a system include:

- Good, clear standards.
- Automated electronic exchange capability.
- Coordination across the collection—information collected once and shared.

They suggested the following steps that would be required to make a decision about how to proceed with a data system:

- Determination of the scope.
- Development of the standards.
- Related technological principles and standards for the infrastructure.
- Include all of the stakeholders in decision making.
- Determine a timeline, phase in and funding.

At the end of the first day, participants suggested that the Standards Based Grading-Body of Evidence advisory group might want to meet in conjunction with the statewide school improvement conference to be held September 16-17 and be prepared to give the JEC an update at its September 23-24 meeting. The hope of the DFF is that the SGB-BOE advisory group will develop functional specifications and a preliminary cost estimate for the development of a statewide student assessment (and other educational) data system. Participants also discussed whether other DFF participants might want to work with the Body of Evidence group and decided to wait until the second day to further discuss.

The DFF participants also agreed on the following agenda for the second day:

- Discussion of the education of all stakeholders relative to the MAP Model and educational data.
- The block grant paradox.

- Potential legislation to address an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) solution to the litigation and limiting collection of data.
- The potential for the DFF, a working group, a committee or other group(s) assisting with:
 - Developing a common template to collect and report data.
 - How to best collect data.
 - How to best validate data.
 - Guidelines/ethics for interpreting and reporting data.
 - Other possibilities.
- Whether/when to meet again before October.

At the beginning of the second day, Dick again asked whether others from the DFF cared to volunteer to join the discussion of the BOE group. Larry and Jeff volunteered to join Craig and Mike who are already participants in that group.

1. Also, during day two, DFF participants first discussed the need to educate all stakeholders about the MAP Model and the use and interpretation of educational data.

They agreed that:

- WDE, LSO, the districts, WEA, the Heritage Society and other entities ought to be involved in this kind of education/PR effort.
- Presentations should be made to such groups as the Capitol Club, the Mining Association, and other industry groups. Wendy will help to arrange some of these educational sessions, possibly at the beginning of the next legislative session.
- The DFF and other presenters need to be certain that individuals and panelists that present are very knowledgeable about these issues.
- Other related issues that might arise during these presentations include capital construction. However, DFF participants agreed that these presentations should not get into that to any significant extent because of the difficulty of that issue. The best topics for such educational/PR sessions are: the MAP Model, Educational data and the Data Forum Facilitation process and its agreements, in particular the need for a statewide educational data system. All presentations should be the same, with a possible difference in emphasis depending on the group.

- WDE should work with MAP, LSO and other volunteers on a PowerPoint presentation and present it at the next DFF meeting, which participants agreed should next be in Casper on **August 28 from 9 a.m. to approximately 5:30 p.m.**

2. Relative to a committee to address the issues noted above (common collection/reporting template, best means to collect data, best means to validate data, data interpretation/reporting guidelines, etc.) DFF participants agreed that such a committee should include (but not necessarily be limited to) the following kinds of participants:

- Steve, Larry and Mike from WDE.
- Superintendents.
- Curriculum Directors.
- Business Managers.
- Special Education personnel.
- Student assessment personnel.

This committee/group might do much of its work by a combination of emails and conference calls. DFF participants agreed that such a committee could deal with all of the educational data issues noted above and, possibly, others as well. They also agreed that there should be a period for public comment on proposed decisions of this committee.

3. DFF participants also discussed the block grant paradox but, basically, agreed that this paradox may have to continue for now.

4. DFF participants agreed that no legislation about collection of educational data was necessary. However, they also agreed that:

WDE and others should work together to develop a memorandum/handbook/brochure (one or more than one) to explain educational data collection concerns and limitations as well as what kinds of educational data WDE and other agencies already have. Such information should be targeted to legislators, associations and other stakeholders who would have an interest in the information. **DFF participants agreed that the draft of these publications should be presented at the August 28 meeting.** WDE may also want to get input from the committee/group described previously to help make decisions on data and surveys.

In another matter, **not to be considered part of its report to the JEC**, DFF participants suggested that, if legislation is developed to attempt to resolve litigation through ADR processes, such legislation/thinking should include:

- Identify participants/decision-makers in prior and potential future litigation.

- Do an assessment to determine interest, development of potential ground rules, MOU and timelines for resolving the issues.
- Somehow, have representatives of all 48 districts involved.
- Seek court approval of some kind—e.g., relative to any court-imposed deadlines that might be a problem, a potential moratorium on enforcement of court orders (a time out).
- Include legislators in the assessment/facilitation.
- Involve the Attorney General's office.

Potential topics for the August 28 meeting:

- If possible, further update on implementation of the DFF agreements.
- If possible, a presentation by the BOE group of potential next steps toward a statewide student assessment and other educational data issues.
- Drafts of a presentation to stakeholders about the MAP Model, educational data and the DFF process.
- Drafts of potential memo/handbook/brochure on educational data issues.
- Discussion of composition/process of new committee to assist WDE in resolving educational data issues.

If DFF participants have modifications to this report or to the agenda for the next DFF meeting, they may contact Dave Nelson, LSO.

APPENDIX F

Meeting Four Data Facilitation Forum Casper, Wyoming August 28, 2002

Dick Gross began the fourth meeting of the Data Facilitation Forum (DFF) by again proposing the Ground Rules previously adopted:

- It's your show
- Everyone is equal
- No relevant topic is sacred
- No discussion is ended
- Respect each other's opinions and the time
- Silence on decisions is agreement
- Make sure I write what you meant
- Have fun

He, then suggested the following Proposed Agenda:

- Introductions
- Update
- Presentations/Discussion
- Larry—MAP Model presentation
- Mike—Use/Interpretation of Data
- Mike/Steve—Education data/handbook/memo/brochure
- Steve—Education data collection—concerns, limitations and inventory
- Mike—Education Data Advisory Committee proposal—to address common collection, reporting issues, mechanisms and validation
- Mark, Steve, Mike—Student data assessment issues—Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF), Standards Based Grading/Body of Evidence (SBG/BOE)
- Preparing for the October meeting

Participants agreed with the agenda. Dick asked the participants to introduce themselves, and they did.

During Larry's presentation relative to the MAP Model, participants generally agreed that the presentation, especially for a general audience, should be made more general and simplified and that examples might be helpful. Specific suggestions included:

- Language relative to the "Prototypical Model" needed explanation. In general, participants thought it would be helpful to explain the general context—e.g., how did the prototypical model come about, possibly change the order of the slides so that the more general explanations come first.
- Discuss the difference between Average Daily Membership (ADM) and Average Daily Attendance (ADA) so that listeners understand that ADM is not just a one-shot attendance number.
- Other questions included: Who are "classified staff," what are "external cost adjustments," and what is "special education"?
- It would be valuable, participants thought, to explain better where most of the funding came from and what it was for. The exceptions might be treated more generally. General percentages might be more helpful, and adjustments might be explained in terms of how they affect districts.
- It would be better if adjustments were explained as increases and decreases rather than positive and negative.
- It might be helpful, at least for people in the districts, to explain links to local and state resources, that local resources are less meaningful in WY than other states, that local enhancements are, however, possible.
- It might also be useful to explain issues that are not yet resolved because of ongoing court jurisdiction or for other reasons.

Relative to Mike's presentation on interpretation of data, participants suggested:

- Districts should also be regarded as consumers of information both between themselves and relative to the WDE.
- There is a snowball effect relative to variations in data—variations are compounded as different people use and confuse the data.
- Again, the need to distinguish between enrollment and ADM.
- Drop out rates seem to be very problematic.
- It would be very helpful if people were told what the data is to be used for, how it will be used and how it will not be used (but that it always needs to be accurate).

- Special attention may need to be paid to media requests, and media may be a subset of the public or its own consumer of educational data.
- It is important to bear in mind that local folks and legislators will probably always go to their local school districts for information. However, if the data requested is multi-district or statewide, districts should be strongly encouraged to refer consumers to WDE rather than providing information themselves.
- An index of frequently asked questions might be useful (Mike said some of that is being done).
- Describing why the information is being requested—e.g., state law, federal law, etc.—would be very useful.
- Listing of the 37 mandatory reports in some way would be helpful.
- Wyoming Public Television/Radio might be a method to help inform the public about a variety of education data issues.

Mike also noted that all requests for new education data, particularly from WDE staff, should have to be defended, perhaps before an advisory committee. He, then, discussed a potential liaison person in each district, which the participants discussed later in the day.

Steve and Mike presented at length about education data issues, and questions and about the SIF and other student assessment data systems. **Their presentations are attached.**

Following presentations and lengthy discussions, the participants came to “initial” preferences so that WDE personnel could indicate these leanings at meetings scheduled between this meeting and the October meeting of the DFF:

Again agreeing that the DFF supports and understands that the JEC supports additional funding to districts to assist in a more sophisticated student assessment data system, DFF participants also feel:

- Wyoming needs a uniform student assessment data system to ensure accountability.
- The student assessment data system needs to be set up in such a way as to ensure interoperability within districts and with WDE.
- The participants are generally comfortable with the direction proposed in Steve’s presentation but believe, at least initially, a stand-alone system may need to be developed that will be compliant with SIF.
- Wyoming needs to move ahead with a standards-based system with reasonable cost estimates. The WDE will complete and issue the Request for Information (RFI) on the stand-

alone standards based grading system in conjunction with the SBG/BOE advisory group. With the information from the RFI, the SBG/BOE advisory group will develop a rough cost estimate for the JEC. Additionally, the WDE will develop a rough cost estimate for a study to identify what would be needed to implement SIF compliant systems statewide.

- Wyoming needs to be open to re-examining issues along the way—additional time may be necessary if costs are too large or the system may not work.
- Wyoming should not lose the BOE system already developed along the way.

Relative to an advisory committee on student assessment data, participants agreed that more than liaisons with the 48 districts will be required. Superintendents should be asked for their input and for potential advisory committee members and kept informed of recommendations. Duties of advisory committee members and time commitments should be explained. Diversity among advisory committee members—e.g., large and small districts—should be maintained.

A new Superintendent may be interested in developing a more global liaison function involving all districts, but that would be up to the new Superintendent.

For the October meeting, participants agreed:

- It will be held on October 10-11 at the same location in Casper, beginning approximately noon on October 10 and continuing until approximately 4 p.m. on October 11.
- More refinements of the work WDE has begun would be appreciated.
- An update from the September 17 meeting, including input and other suggestions relative to the student assessment data discussions.
- An update on the composition, process and budget of the advisory committee.
- Crude budget and options relative to a student assessment system and interoperability.
- Recommendations on whether to postpone some BOE requirements.
- Input to the JEC relative to the usefulness of this process.

Other suggestions from the DFF:

Mike and Larry should meet with the two candidates for Superintendent as soon as possible to give them an update on the DFF process and get their input.

Whatever system is considered for student assessment should be very flexible to accommodate the needs of the districts.

The BOE group's input needs to be included in all considerations of student assessment data.

While SIF sounds excellent for WY, we need to be aware of potential shortcomings.

APPENDIX G

Meeting Five Data Facilitation Forum October 10-11 Casper, Wyoming

Dick Gross began the last meeting of the Data Facilitation Forum (DFF) by reminding the participants of the prior Ground Rules that had been adopted:

- It's your show
- Everyone is equal
- No relevant topic is sacred
- No discussion is ended
- Respect each other's opinions and the time
- Silence on decisions is agreement
- Make sure I write what you mean
- Have fun

He, then, suggested the following general agenda:

Thursday, October 10

12-5 p.m. WDE updates/responses

Friday, October 11

8-8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

8:30 a.m.-Noon Review progress/lack of progress since August meeting and on June report to JEC

Noon-12:30 p.m. Lunch

12:30-3 p.m. What's left to do, what recommendations to the JEC

3 p.m. Last words

The Participants agreed.

Dick, then, asked the participants to introduce themselves and indicate how they hoped to leave the session tomorrow. The participants said that, as they end this process, they hope:

- That SIF/BOE are on their way to integration and interoperability in the districts and the state and that the resources necessary to make that happen are made available by the legislature.
- That the structure is in place for ongoing dialogue about education issues in Wyoming, that this kind of discussion should continue and that we have a core of people to help make that happen.
- That the issue of Wyoming-wide, consistent student identification numbers has at least been addressed.
- That contacts between the people involved in this process will continue as positive as they have been during this process.
- That a mechanism/process has been developed to help JEC to solve other education problems in Wyoming and let the members of the JEC know that there are people who can help them solve these problems.
- That these processes/committees continue to operate, to develop consistent data, to help determine outcomes, to develop useful information and that Wyoming, as a result, develops the nation's best education data system.
- That we and the JEC convince the legislature to support the new systems that will be needed.
- That the formal and informal discussions that have begun here will continue.
- That we develop all systems for education that Wyoming needs in an optimum way.
- That we continue the dialogue that has begun here, that we know where we can all go for help, that we see all of the recommendations of the DFF implemented.
- That we all have a better understanding of the Body of Evidence process and reporting and documenting necessary for it.
- That the recommendations of the DFF are implemented, particularly the new systems that will be needed.
- That a framework will be in place that the new Superintendent and legislators can use to bridge the communications gaps.
- That I am up to speed on all the issues, can add value and be of help as we move ahead.

Dick, then, suggested the following specific agenda for Thursday afternoon:

Presentations of/discussion with WDE relative to:

- Standards and Body of Evidence Tracking (**SBET**—formerly SBG/BOE)
- Update on the September 17 meeting

- Update on Schools Interoperability Framework (**SIF**)
- Potential Advisory Groups/Process/Budget
 - Student Data/demographics
 - Certified and classified personnel
 - Building data
 - Financial data
 - Technology
- MAP Model Overview
- Discussion of Body of Evidence (**BOE**)

Participants agreed, and Mike Hamilton of WDE reported on the first four items. What follows are some of the comments/recommendations made by DFF participants. **Copies of Mike’s reports, with recommended changes from the DFF participants are attached.**

Re SBET

- In terms of funding, an additional 15-18% may need to be added for fees, maintenance and support.
- That the guess is that there will be a system available “out there” that has close to everything WY needs.
- That there should be a close tie-in to federal requirements and the standards developed through the BOE process (grades are not the issue here—they are not standards).
- That WY needs a statewide, uniform, student identification system for statewide aggregation of data relative to BOE, outcomes, jobs, etc.
- That the system needs to be a non-Social Security number identification system, but it may be used in connection with a voluntary SS number identification system.
- There needs to be an education process for parents relative to the need for SS numbers to track students longer term to determine outcomes, to determine “success” out of school.
- WY should pursue the potential for developing its system as part of a consortium of states, although the likelihood may be minimal because of BOE in WY.

We realize that Wyoming needs to have a new system to assess students and that there is no current system in place in districts in WY that will do so adequately. The State should cover the cost of a new system. The State “will provide for a new, uniform system,” and each district will be required to supply the necessary information. And, if districts are

unwilling to adopt a new system, they need to meet the requirements and will need to pay for upgrades in current systems on their own.

Relative to **SIF**, the DFF participants recommended only that, in assessing the current environment in WY, the state aspects of the system—e.g., the state library system—need to be assessed as well.

Relative to the presentation on **Advisory groups**, the DFF participants recommended that the “building” advisory group be dropped because of the Commission currently operating. If it is necessary to have any kind of oversight on the Advisory groups, the JEC and State Board of Education may provide assistance/oversight of some kind.

Relative to appropriations for the SBET and SIF systems, in particular, DFF suggests the possibility of legislation that could be passed with **an immediate effective date**.

One of the candidates for Superintendent, **Kathy Emmons**, was attending the DFF meeting as an observer and, since the DFF had asked for the reactions of the Superintendent candidates to the DFF process and recommendations, she was asked her opinions about the DFF and its recommendations. Her responses were uniformly positive, and she thanked the DFF participants for committing their time to this process. She indicated she would favor such processes on other difficult and contentious issues in education in Wyoming.

The DFF participants adjourned for the evening.

On Friday, following a continental breakfast, Dick reviewed Thursday’s work and asked Larry Biggio to present an updated version of the **MAP Model** materials.

Relative to that presentation, DFF participants suggested that:

- It should be noted that the MAP Model determines what is available for education funding in the districts and that an example or examples might be helpful to illustrate how that happens.
- There needs to be careful use of the term, “economies of scale,” because it may mean different things to different people.
- The term “external cost adjustment” should be used and explained because of its significance.
- The word “isolation” relative to students should be explained differently.
- There should, perhaps, be an explanation of what could happen if the legislatures’ “hold harmless” policy is not continued.
- There should be something added about the fact that all of this education policy is evolving in Wyoming and that there are studies being done that may have controversial recommendations for other changes.

Following the discussion of the MAP Model presentation, DFF participants complimented Larry and the WDE for the updated version and indicated it had already proved useful in several different circumstances.

The DFF participants then spent a significant amount of time and discussion on the **Body of Evidence** standards and the concerns that surround them.

Participants agreed that federal legislation, state legislation, the State Board of Education and WDE have all proposed standards to “push the envelope,” to help move schools, students, teachers, parents, all involved in education in Wyoming to higher levels. The primary issue, participants agreed, is that **there is currently no adequate, uniform way for the schools to demonstrate compliance, to allow for remediation if needed or to allow students to graduate for having met the standards.** The standards themselves are problematic because, although descriptions have been provided, different districts can adopt different “cut points,” thereby applying standards in a non-uniform way throughout the State.

DFF participants agreed that, as they discussed recommendations relative to SBET/SIF (see attachments), they heard issues raised about accreditation and graduation that, although not within the purview of the DFF, are significant. The DFF recommends that a facilitated process analogous to the DFF process and/or administrative action may be necessary to address those concerns very soon. Kathy Sessions agreed to contact the State Board of Education about passing on these concerns to the Board at its next meeting.

Following this discussion, the DFF participants reviewed the June report to the JEC to determine whether other actions were necessary at this time and whether additional points need to be made to the JEC. They determined (Please refer to the full June report to JEC for the full text of the following issues and objectives.):

Issue II (Objective: To build stakeholder trust in educational data—including financial, staff, facility and student data—and how it is used.)

- A presentation similar to the one Larry Biggio has developed relative to the MAP Model will be needed in the future to explain the student assessment and interoperability process/system—SBET/SIF.

Issue III (Objective: To develop a high quality, flexible database that will be able to respond to most data questions quickly and accurately while respecting confidentiality.)

- A uniform student identification number/system is essential to help reduce the burden on school districts and add to the flexibility and usefulness of the database.
- Legislator sensitivity to the costs/burden/legitimacy of providing education data is essential.
- Giving examples has been very helpful.

- The Advisory Groups will be helpful in this process and may also help to develop ethical standards in the use of education data. However, all of this relates to a great extent on trust and relationships that have been strengthened through this process. There is no intent on the part of the DFF participants to suggest that data be suppressed, simply that it be accurate and used appropriately.

Issue VI (Objective: To address the concern that some districts may not comply with requests for educational data or do so inappropriately on a regular basis, instead of painting all districts with the same brush.)

- Districts need to take the initiative when they have turnover to inform WDE of their needs and to seek out other resources for training as well.

Following the updated discussion of the June report to the JEC, Dick asked the participants whether there were new issues the DFF participants needed to consider. DFF participants discussed the necessity of **thinking strategically and helping one another to ensure that the DFF recommendations are adopted by the WY legislature and, once adopted, are implemented.**

Conclusion

Dick, then, asked the participants their last thoughts about the process—how they felt it had worked, what may not have worked as well, what could be improved, and what thoughts they felt needed to be conveyed to the JEC. They said:

- I appreciated the open dialogue. I believe the process lent understanding to all who participated.
- When reasonable people get together to discuss unreasonable problems, they can make great progress. We need to do this in the future instead of confronting one another. One possible example may be the requirements of the No Child Left Behind federal legislation.
- Thank you to the WDE for its good work and to the participants in this process. I echo the concerns about the No Child Left Behind requirements. Processes like this can help make sense out of nonsense.
- Expansion of the group to include other stakeholders pursuant to the request of the JEC was very helpful to the process.
- This has been very positive for everyone involved. A group of diverse people dealing with complicated, important issues can develop good solutions. The process works.
- This is just the beginning of an ongoing process of discussion of education issues in Wyoming. I hope the legislature will lend its support to these recommendations in order to benefit the children and society of Wyoming.

- I've been impressed with the process. We have set a precedent. We, as a group, need to help ensure that there is future action, implementation of the DFF recommendations.
- I've always felt that data should be useful and helpful, not a burden. I've learned a great deal through this process. I will redouble my efforts to ensure that WDE gets useful information. I am comforted by others seeing the value in this data as well. I am more than willing to continue to communicate and cooperate. This has been a huge catapult for me.
- People make issues complex. We've built relationships among people to deal with those issues. The process works. We needed a neutral person, with no vested interest, to help move us through this process. I would recommend this process whenever the level of the issue requires it. We need neutral facilitation.
- The process has been exemplary, has proven to us that it is possible to address tough issues without bringing a lot of emotional baggage, without attacking each other. A huge thank you to the legislature and legislators who helped make this happen. Providing for this process, with no preconceived notions as to its outcome was excellent. There is already a great deal of serious discussion about a similar process to resolve other education issues in WY. Allowing open meetings and observers has also been very helpful. After the first two meetings, we never managed to have all the same people together, but it still worked well.
- Thank you to specific legislators who made this happen. It was very useful. And it can be in the future when the level of the problem justifies it. The initial insistence on people being there for all of the first two meetings drove some people off. We need to remember that data requirements are taking resources from the classrooms. Legislators need to be more aware of that when they ask for new data. We need to think very hard about data requests to ensure that the data is needed, will be useful and is used appropriately—especially student assessment data.
- It has been a very beneficial process. The use of these processes has great potential for the future. Having legislators here and participating has also been very useful. I appreciate their time and sacrifice in participating.
- Relationships have been built and those relationships have helped to open communications and bring solutions. The Ground Rules also helped us stay on task and focused.
- It has been very helpful. I am encouraged that this process could become a model. It is valuable to include the business sector on educational issues and discussions because that sector depends on the successful outcomes of the educational process.

Dick, then, told participants he would have the draft summary of this last meeting to them by **Monday or Tuesday of next week (October 14-15)**. He asked for their immediate responses if they felt changes need to be made. He will have a draft of the last report of the DFF to the JEC to DFF participants by as early as possible on **Friday, October 18**. **He asks that any comments on the report get to him by early Monday morning, October 21** because he needs

to finalize the report and get it printed that day for presentation to **the JEC on Thursday afternoon, October 24 at the U of Wyoming, Student Union Family Room. Any DFF participants who wish to attend are welcome.**