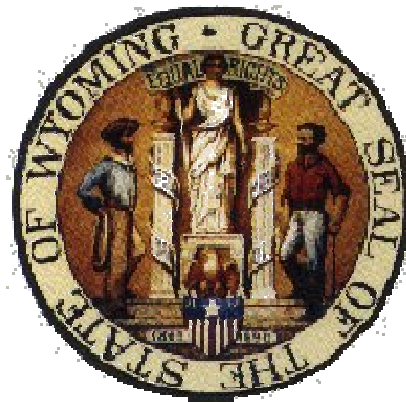


Report to the Joint Education Interim Committee of the Wyoming Legislature

Pursuant to Section 14 of Enrolled Act No. 27,
Passed by the Fifty-Sixth Legislature
of the State of Wyoming during the 2002 Special Session



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Participants

State Agency Representatives

Economic Analysis: Buck McVeigh

Employment: Beth Nelson

Education: Joe Simpson; Larry Biggio; Deb Holloway

Audit: Pam Robinson

MAP Representatives

Jim Smith

Michael Wolkoff

John Ehlers

District Representatives

Dwight Moose, Superintendent, Weston#7 (Upton)

Ed Wright, Business Manager, Campbell #1 (Gillette)

Jeff Carrier, Superintendent, Crook #1 (Sundance)

Dan Stephan, Superintendent, Laramie #1 (Cheyenne)

Lonny Hoffman, Superintendent, Fremont #14 (Ethete)

Craig Beck, Superintendent, Fremont #25 (Riverton)

Jim Rogers, Technology Director, Sweetwater #2 (Green River)

Mary Jo Lewis, Business Manager, Park #1 (Powell)

Jack Adams, Business Manager, Sweetwater #1 (Rock Springs)

Conilee Swantek, Business Manager, Platte #2 (Guernsey)

Jack Stott, Business Manager, Washakie #1 (Worland)

Marilyn Koester, Business Manager, Sheridan #2 (Sheridan) (unable to attend meeting 2)

District Board Representatives

Jeff Thompson, Albany #1 (Laramie) (unable to attend meeting 2)

Jeri Smith, Platte #1 (Wheatland)

Wyoming Education Association

Jean Hayek, Executive Director

Legislators

Senator Scott (Casper) (in meeting 2 Senator Sessions served as his alternate)

Representative Shivler (Jackson)

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Facilitator's Observations

At the conclusions of the Data Forum, the participants asked that, at the outset of this report, I present my impressions of the process.

Initial Perspectives

Prior to the first meeting, on May 2-3, I called all of the participants but one (who was vacationing at the time) to discuss their hopes and expectations for the meetings. A brief summary of those calls is contained in the body of this report. As a result of those calls, it was clear to me that many participants felt that, by this facilitated process, the Wyoming legislature only intended to give the participants an opportunity to air their views so that the legislators could say that they had done so. Some were very skeptical about what could be accomplished in such a short time, and some were very skeptical that, even if they were able to develop agreements, the legislature would do anything to implement them.

Land Mines

When I asked invitees about potential "land mines" I might encounter, I was warned by virtually every participant that there were long-simmering animosities among many of the participants that had been building for years and that, because of them, it would be difficult to make any progress.

Positive Intentions

Nevertheless, from the beginning, it was clear that all of the participants arrived at the meetings with positive intentions. The tone of their discussions throughout the three days of meetings was cordial and professional. They came to both meetings willing to hear other points of view, to discuss their concerns openly and honestly and to work toward agreements that would provide win-win solutions for all stakeholders involved.

Cohesiveness

Interestingly, at the end of the first meeting, when I asked whether any other participants needed to be added to the Data Forum for the second meeting, the participants responded in the negative. They felt it was essential to have been part of the first meeting because new relationships had been formed, honest views had been aired and open discussions had proceeded so positively they did not want to change those dynamics in the second meeting.

Determination

In spite of the history and contentious nature of the issues involved and their misgivings, the participants came to these two meetings determined to accomplish something. It was clear that all of the Data Forum participants desired to get past the litigation process and to resolve the education data issues for the good of all Wyoming's citizens, especially its children. In fact, work on many of the agreements is already underway with the assistance of state agencies and organizations whose involvement has been critical to the process.

Surprises

There are always surprises for a facilitator in processes like these. In this case, one of the significant surprises—not only to the facilitator but likely to the participants as well—was the discovery of the depth of concern about gathering student outcome-based data. During the first meeting, when the participants prioritized the issues, the concern about developing outcome-based data was sixteenth on the list. However, during the second meeting, it became clear that those concerns were almost universally shared, and all of the participants recognized the urgency about the issue. Because that issue is closely connected to the issue of expensive and complicated data collection in general, I listed it as issue 4 in the report. Some Data Forum participants might consider it an even higher priority—and more urgent—issue than that. Another surprise was that some of the participants who seemed most skeptical of the process during the interviews became some of the strongest advocates for the process by the end. That was both surprising and gratifying.

Future Perspective

While some participants would have chosen to go well beyond the legislative mandate, they were willing to abide by the constraints imposed by the legislative language. I believe they did so in the hope that the legislature would agree that this Data Forum process had arrived at such positive conclusions in such a short period of time that the legislature would determine that this kind of process would have great value for other educational issues they are concerned about.

Continuing Value

Because I have had the opportunity, through the Consensus Council (CC) and the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI), to facilitate an estimated 700 public policy consensus building/conflict resolution processes during the last 15 years, I have seen the incredible value and power of these processes. It was a pleasure for me to work with the participants in the Data Forum. I commend the legislature for authorizing such a process.

Executive Summary

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 at 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 provides 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 agreed to. All or many of 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:

1. That the JEC endorse the facilitated process of the Data Forum.
2. That the JEC endorse the agreements—vision, goal, objectives and strategies—the Data Forum participants have developed.
3. That the JEC authorize a continuation of the process initiated by the Data Forum.
4. That the JEC encourage Data Forum participants to continue to work with the state agencies and other organizations needed to implement the agreements.
5. That the JEC draft legislation required to implement the Data Forum agreements.
6. 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.
7. That the JEC encourage/authorize an analogous process(es) to address other education issues.

Report

In April, following the passage of Enrolled Act No. 27, the facilitator was selected. Discussions between the facilitator, the Legislative Service Office (LSO) staff and the Co-chairs led to a decision that two meetings would be held in the required time frame—on May 2-3 and May 29-30 in Casper, Wyoming. The legislative language prescribed the type of participants required for the process. After the appropriate participants were selected, a letter of invitation (Attachment A) was sent by the Co-chairs indicating initial ground rules and expectations. A few of the initial invitees, knowing they would be unable to attend all of the two meetings, declined the invitation. The final participants selected and the entities they represent were:

State Agency Representatives:

Economic Analysis: Buck McVeigh
Employment: Beth Nelson
Education: Joe Simpson; Larry Biggio; Deb Holloway
Audit: Pam Robinson

MAP Representatives:

Jim Smith
Michael Wolkoff
John Ehlers

District Representatives:

Dwight Moose, Superintendent, Weston #7 (Upton)
Ed Wright, Business Manager, Campbell #1 (Gillette)
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Assessment

Prior to the first meeting, the facilitator was able to call and discuss the upcoming meetings with all invitees but one, who was on vacation during the time before the first meeting.

During those conversations, the facilitator asked the invitees how they interpreted the section of the legislation noted above and what they expected from the facilitated sessions. The variety and diversity of responses was remarkable. Some thought the legislation called for the participants to sit down and work on the “spreadsheets,” to ask questions of MAP and to assure the accuracy of the figures used in the MAP Model. Others felt that the legislation was simply a placebo to give the participants the illusion that their opinions mattered. Still others felt that this legislation required what could be the beginning of a longer process aimed at developing agreements on data and other education issues in Wyoming.

Invitees suggested a wide variety of potential “land mines” that the facilitator and participants might encounter in the process—ranging from tensions between large and small schools, to tensions between those who have been part of the litigation and those who have not, to tensions between school personnel and MAP, to tensions between legislators and the Wyoming Supreme Court, to tensions among the participants in the process simply because of the impression of some that this facilitated process was not intended to accomplish anything substantial.

Invitees were also asked about their prior involvement in the education data issues. Again, the range was broad—from those who had been intimately involved for decades to those who knew little about the issues and had become involved only within the last year or less.

Some conversations began with invitees testing the facilitator and his agenda to determine whether he was, indeed, neutral. Many invitees were hopeful because the facilitator was from a similarly rural state. The conversations that preceded the sessions were important to give the facilitator an historical perspective, to allow invitees to vent their frustrations and give their perspectives on the education data (and other education) issues, and to allow the facilitator to give invitees his impressions about what could be accomplished in such a short-term process.

The expectations of the invitees about what could be accomplished in two short meetings ranged across a broad spectrum. At the first meeting, the facilitator listed the range of expectations he had heard during his telephone conversations:

- Resolve nothing, make the situation worse; agree not to meet again.
- Resolve nothing but agree to meet again.
- Learn from each other.
- Help educate the public.
- Agree on an entity that can resolve the data issues.
- Agree on a process that can help resolve the data issues.
- Agree that this group plus or minus some participants is the group to do an ongoing process.
- Agree on resolving some of the data issues.
- Agree on resolving some data issues and propose an entity/process to resolve the others.
- Resolve virtually all education data issues.

With their range of hopes and expectations, the participants gathered for the first meeting in Casper on May 2. The meeting began at 1 p.m. on that day and continued until 8 p.m. that night. It began again at 8 a.m. on May 3 and continued until late afternoon on that day.

The complete summary of that meeting and the subsequent meeting on May 29-30 is contained in Appendix B.

Environmental Scan and Vision Statement

After self-introductions, a review of the proposed ground rules and agenda, the facilitator asked the participants to describe what they believed to be the current education, economic and political environment in Wyoming and to identify the stakeholders who had an interest in these education data issues. Those are contained in full in Appendix B. Relative to stakeholders, the participants ultimately agreed that all of Wyoming's citizens have a stake in education data issues—whether directly, as teachers, parents, children, administrators or more indirectly, as employers and potential employers, institutions of higher education and many others.

Relative to the Wyoming education environment, perhaps the most often repeated phrases were those that suggested lack of trust, tensions and conflicts, understandable after the years of litigation.

In an effort to begin to determine whether there might be general areas of agreement that the participants themselves might not recognize, the facilitator asked the participants what their values relative to education data in Wyoming were. They identified the following values:

- Quality education
- Consistency
- Independence
- Value—more bang for the buck
- Maintaining uniqueness of each community
- Trust and respect for Wyoming professionals
- Fairness and equity
- Honesty
- Small is good
- Efficient
- Effective
- Competent
- Confidence
- Integrity of data
- What's best for Wyoming kids
- Transparency
- Accurate reporting

Then, the facilitator asked, considering those values, what elements would the participants like to have in a Vision Statement that described what they wanted in the future relative to education data in Wyoming. They listed these elements:

- Help make informed decisions
- Producing a quality system
- Simple—does not take resources from the classroom—and able to be understood
- Quantifiable results/outcomes
- Undiluted/unpolluted source of information
- Lacks complexity
- Based on best practices/uniform language
- Relevant, not useless
- Equally beneficial to all students
- Congruent/best data sources
- Integration
- Useful for many purposes/by many different constituencies
- Meet formal legal requirements (or change the requirements)
- For state and federal purposes
- With uniform language/commonality
- Data tail should not wag the dog
- Representative of Wyoming
- Report once
- Complete for the purpose at hand
- Careful about invasion of privacy
- Timely

Based on those identified values and vision elements, the facilitator asked the participants to move into four breakout groups and develop draft vision statements. The four are contained in Appendix B. They are remarkably similar. The vision-development process suggested that the participants all wanted, basically, the same thing for Wyoming and Wyoming students. When compiled and summarized, the **Vision Statement** that the participants agreed to was:

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 provides a remarkable, high quality and equitable education for all Wyoming students.

Prioritized Issues Relative to Education Data in Wyoming

Having explored the environment in which this conversation was occurring and the vision the participants shared for Wyoming relative to education data issues, the facilitator asked the participants to identify, then group and prioritize the primary issues relative to education data in Wyoming. The participants identified the following 20 issues in order of priority:

1. The MAP Model is too complex and growing more complex; it is creating errors and confusion between costs and expenditures.
2. There is concern relative to the manipulation, interpretation and presentation of education data.
3. Education data in general is too complicated and expensive to collect and is taking resources from the classroom.
4. We suffer from a lack of common language and definitions.
5. There is a belief that data is to be collected and used for predetermined outcomes.
6. Data requirements continue to increase at both state and federal levels.
7. Data is being used for purposes never intended.
8. Data requirements are redundant, with many agencies basically asking for the same kinds of information multiple times.
9. There is often a poor match between the questions asked and the data needed.
10. There is non-uniform and/or failure to comply with current data requests and requirements.
11. There is no common technological basis/response—there are inconsistencies.
12. Data does not exist to address certain requests/needs.
13. There are unreasonable time demands for data—requests are not timely, and data is not relevant because of the length of time since it was gathered.
14. We need to be able to deal with/address a moving and changing target.
15. All districts are often painted with the same brush.
16. Outcome-based data is too difficult to develop.
17. Test scores are equated to success.

18. Old requirements for data never go away. New ones are just added.
19. There is a lack of community understanding of what education data says.
20. There are concerns about invasion of privacy.

Goal, Objectives and Strategies

During the first meeting, the participants developed initial agreements on the four primary issues prioritized (see above). During the second meeting, they reviewed and amended the initial agreements—the goal, objectives and strategies—they had developed during the first meeting. They also reprioritized the other issues and developed new objectives and strategies. This report focuses on the primary issues and the goal, objectives and strategies agreed to by the Data Forum participants.

As they developed agreements relative to the identified issues, the Data Forum participants came to a realization that, in order to implement these and develop potential new agreements, this kind of process would need to continue. Therefore, they agreed on one overriding goal:

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 agreed to. All or many of 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.

With that as an overriding goal, the participants addressed the primary issues they had identified by developing agreements on objectives and strategies.

ISSUE I. The MAP Model is too complex and growing more complex; it is creating errors and confusion between costs and expenditures.

While attention to the MAP Model itself may seem beyond the purview of the Data Forum, participants agreed that there are significant issues relative to the MAP Model that are intimately related to data issues and that the time is right for a facilitated process similar to the one these participants have engaged in to work on issues relative to the MAP Model (see overall goal above). They believe that the JEC should understand the costs and potential benefits of such a process. However, regardless of such an independent process relative to the MAP Model, the participants agreed:

Objective 1: To clarify definitions in the MAP Model

Strategies

1. The LSO and the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) need to identify the meaning of definitions of components and adjustments (areas that affect funding) in the Model.
2. The WDE, school districts and the JEC need to identify the unintended consequences, inconsistencies and assumptions of the definitions in the Model.
3. The State Board of Education, WDE, school districts, LSO and the JEC should identify policy questions that have to be addressed in implementing the MAP model.

Objective 2: To reduce the complexity of the model.

Strategies

1. An unidentified entity/agency should study the MAP Model and determine whether it is possible to reduce the complexity of the Model.
2. The WDE, statisticians, school districts and the JEC need to conduct a review of formula functions to combine those with minor impact—e.g., into a miscellaneous category.
3. All stakeholders need to work at trying to change the philosophy relative to block grants versus itemization. [*The participants wonder whether and how the Model is trying to accomplish either one.*]

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

Strategy

1. All stakeholders and the legislature need to come together to build consensus among a diverse group of stakeholders to develop such a plan.

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

Strategies

1. The LSO and the WDE need to do formal documentation for the operation of the spreadsheet.
2. The LSO and the WDE need to develop multiple users' manuals for all stakeholders.
3. The LSO and the WDE need to develop a manageable way to work with and use spread sheets.

4. The WDE needs to provide continuous training in this area.

Objective 5: To examine alternatives to the MAP Model.

Strategy

1. The legislature and all stakeholders (and all of Wyoming) need to explore this possibility.

Again, while the MAP Model may appear to be separate from the educational data issues, because the data issues are so integral to the Model, it seemed appropriate for the Data Forum participants to express their concerns about that Model and the need to define and explain it much better as well as to reduce its complexity.

ISSUE II. There is significant concern relative to the manipulation, interpretation and presentation of education data.

Objective 1: To build stakeholder trust in educational data—including financial, staff, facility and student data—and how it is used.

Strategies

1. The WDE, school districts, and legislators should establish a working group by July of 2002 to develop a common template to collect and report data. A supplementary budget may be necessary to fund changes proposed by the working group.
2. That working group should establish a process to validate data, and the Department of Audit (DOA) can feed their results to the working group beginning in July of 2002.
3. The WDE should continue the School Foundation Data Advisory Group (SFDAG) to update the accounting manual on a regular basis and to provide associated training to school districts.
4. The WDE and MAP should provide details of the MAP Model to school districts and legislators by September 2002.
5. The LSO, school districts, and the WDE should educate, through the media, stakeholders, including all education groups, about the use of data (recognizing that explaining outcome-based data will be more difficult).

ISSUE III. Education data in general is too complicated and expensive to collect and doing so is taking resources from the classroom.

Objective 1: To develop a high quality, flexible database that will be able to respond to most data questions quickly and accurately while respecting confidentiality.

Strategies

1. This Data Forum and/or an analogous, diverse group of stakeholders should review other states that are leaders in the database development area—e.g., Florida, Texas, Oregon—by December 31, 2002 (earlier if possible to meet legislative requirements) and help determine in advance the kinds of data that is currently needed and will be needed in the future and coordinate between state agencies and local school districts.
2. This report to the JEC should note the need for champions in this area.
3. The WDE and the Human Resources Subcabinet should conduct a comprehensive review/inventory of all data requested of school districts and identify sources to check for relevance and redundancy. [See also Subcabinet under “Other Issues” below] The legislature may need to authorize such action during the 2003 session and provide funding to WDE, especially for MAP data elements. The WDE will then need to prepare a coordinated report recommending changes for the 2004 legislative session.
4. The WDE and school districts should adopt common terms and definitions by the 2003-04 school year (See also Issue V below). The WDE and school districts should standardize collection of data applications and implement the use of bridge software universally by the 2004-05 school year.
5. The WDE, working with districts (perhaps in a working group under the auspices of the Data Forum) should engage a consultant to develop complimentary data architecture between districts and WDE within 18 months. An inventory and a bridge might be part of that, helping districts with their own use of architecture and data. (Some of this may not be necessary depending upon the speed at which an entirely new student data system can be developed and implemented—see Issue IV below.)
6. The WDE and the LSO will coordinate their calendars for the 2002-03 school year so as to schedule and stagger required data submissions by school districts to smooth their workload.
7. The legislature should develop an appropriate process for the legislature and state and local entities to seek and develop needed data. The legislature should require that state agencies and the legislature identify/determine the “impact” on districts of required data collection—e.g. “data impact statements.” The legislature should authorize such action during the 2003 session and provide funding to districts for such data collection.

8. The WDE should “pre-populate” all forms with data that are already known so that districts do not need to fill in information the WDE and other state agencies already have by the 2002-03 school year.
9. This Data Forum or an analogous group needs to develop standards and ethics relative to the use of this data.
10. The new software developed to meet data needs must be flexible and expandable to address new issues.
11. All those requesting new education data must be aware of the need for a longer lead-time to gather the appropriate information in a consistent manner (or be prepared to have data that is of inferior quality).

(In all of this the JEC needs to be aware of the likely additional data requirements for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ((ESEA)), redefined by the “No Child Left Behind” legislation recently enacted, and for data on school capital construction ((CAPCON)).)

ISSUE IV (As reprioritized in the second meeting and placed here because it is closely related to Issue III, above). Outcome-based data is too difficult to develop and compile.

Objective 1: To develop a standards-based tracking system.

Strategies

- The JEC needs to develop legislation to support a new standards-based tracking system.
- A committee led by the WDE and school superintendents, including legislators, technology experts and other relevant state agency people, should research and recommend a uniform, model system by the end of September or early October of this year, and the WDE should then prepare a supplemental budget request to pay for such a system. (There was discussion suggesting that each of the 48 districts did not necessarily need its own tracking system and that a centralized or regional tracking system could be established.)
- The State Board of Education and the WDE must modify the “accreditation rubric” in the area of measures from the present time until the tracking system is in place.

ISSUE V. We suffer from a lack of common language and definitions.

Objective 1: To create and/or update resource manuals for the Wyoming Accountability System (fiscal, assessment, accreditation, and report card). Manuals will include: Glossary of terms, clear directions for completing forms and surveys and descriptions of processes and products.

Strategies

1. The LSO, the WDE, the SFDAG and school districts will work together to construct draft resource manuals by the spring of 2003.
2. They will send manuals to readers for feedback.
3. They will use feedback to improve manuals.
4. They will distribute resource manuals to appropriate personnel with feedback cards and place them on the web site.
5. They will work together to conduct regional training.
6. They will update resource manuals on a regular basis.

ISSUE VI. There is a lack of full compliance with requests for education data

Objective 1: 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.

Strategies

1. The WDE needs to provide uniform and ongoing training and pay special attention to districts when there is turnover.
2. Each district needs to assume appropriate responsibility for training, responding to requests for, and ensuring accurate data.
3. All districts should explore the feasibility and cost-benefit of data cooperative service agreements with other districts.

ISSUE VII. It is often difficult to match appropriate questions with the responses needed.

Objective 1: To ensure that the questions that need to be answered are appropriately matched with the data being sought.

Strategies

1. The WDE will assess the areas in which data is or is likely to be needed and develop a “data advisory group for student information” by the spring of 2003 to assist on the development of appropriate questions. Representatives of both those who seek data and those who respond to requests for data need to be involved in such an advisory group.
2. Pretesting instruments/pilots research questions should be used to ensure that the questions are appropriate for the information needed.

Other Issues

Human Resources Subcabinet

Discussion relative to the Subcabinet kept recurring, and the Subcabinet members who are participants agreed to meet and develop a full list of data requests that all of the Wyoming state agencies that are part of the Subcabinet make of educators and bring that back to the next meeting of the Data Forum. The WDE will also continue to emphasize that all requests for education related data should be “vetted” by the WDE before they are sent because the WDE may already have the kind of information being sought. Those educators who know will also send WDE a list of the kinds of information being requested from federal agencies. The Subcabinet participants will come to the next meeting to report on what they can do to help reduce data requests from state and federal agencies.

Questions to MAP

Between the first and second meetings, participants who had questions about aspects of the MAP model, sent them to Mary Byrnes at LSO, who relayed them to MAP. The WDE and LSO worked together to put all questions and responses on a site accessible by the participants. During the second meeting, participants suggested that this question/answer process could be improved by opening the question/answers to others who might want to ask questions, by making the WDE the initial source of information, that there might need to be a transition time during which MAP might respond and that, later, WDE would respond unless it needs to refer questions to MAP.

Other Facilitated Processes

The Data Forum participants agreed that the time is ripe for a process similar to the one they have been involved in to attempt a settlement of all of the legal issues related to education in Wyoming; that the JEC needs to understand the costs and potential benefits of such processes. However, if legislative funding is not now available for such an effort, to demonstrate a good faith commitment to the process, those involved or potentially involved in the litigation should share the costs of a facilitated process. All of the critical stakeholders need to be involved in order for this kind of process to succeed.

Concluding Comments of Participants

At the end of the second meeting, the facilitator asked for comments from the participants about how the process had gone and for any recommendations they might have. The participants said:

1. This is a good finished product. We need to continue to educate ourselves, legislators, our colleagues and the public about these issues.
2. I've learned a lot. The information and communication have been very useful. Agencies are taking on a lot of responsibilities.
3. This has been a very good start, the interchange has been good, and we need to continue communications.
4. There is a lot of energy here toward common goals.
5. I'm pleased and optimistic, especially about the potential for other facilitated processes.
6. I've appreciated this process. I believe in it and in being proactive instead of reactive.
7. I've really enjoyed this. These are nice people. This is a great start.
8. I appreciate the process but am concerned that the JEC members may not be the same as the legislators who will have to consider our recommendations.
9. I'm impressed with the process, but we have a big job ahead.
10. I believe we've met with the intent of the legislation. We've looked at the big picture.
11. It's been informative and interesting. We need the JEC commitment and support.
12. I believe we can resolve all of the issues in litigation in this way.
13. These are great people. And this is exactly the pattern we need to resolve other issues.
14. We're building good relationships. I'm pleasantly surprised. We will see a good change.
15. I've truly enjoyed being part of this. This will help resolve other issues. We can't let this effort die.
16. The toughest job is yet to come. The burden is on each of us, not just on the legislature. I have a greater appreciation of our common problems. I believe I've grown through this process.
17. We are players in a political process. We can't get bitter if the JEC doesn't adopt our recommendations. We need to work it through each of the groups we belong to.

18. We've identified and quantified many of the problems and the possible avenues for solutions. We've done good work.
19. The education budget is a huge expenditure. I appreciate the work the agencies are doing to help implement these recommendations. I will help sell this to the JEC.
20. Today has been particularly productive. We will get better data and make better decisions as a result.
21. I've appreciated being part of this. It's been informative. We can come together to find solutions. This should continue.
22. I have a renewed hope. It's been very constructive. We've begun to develop good relationships.
23. I especially appreciated that we added the whole student data piece. It is a necessary area to address.

Summary

The participants have thoughtfully and enthusiastically engaged in the process mandated by the Wyoming legislature. They have come to broad agreements on significant education data issues. Therefore, the participants in the Data Forum request:

1. That the JEC endorse the facilitated process of the Data Forum.
2. That the JEC endorse the agreements—vision, goal, objectives and strategies—the Data Forum participants have developed.
3. That the JEC authorize a continuation of the process initiated by the Data Forum.
4. That the JEC encourage Data Forum participants to continue to work with the state agencies and other organizations needed to implement the agreements.
5. That the JEC draft legislation required to implement the Data Forum agreements.
6. 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.
7. That the JEC encourage/authorize an analogous process(es) to address other education issues.

Appendix A

April 8, 2002

Dear-----,

As you know, the Wyoming Legislature passed school finance legislation this past session, which was signed into law by the Governor on March 12, 2002. The enacted legislation, 2002 Wyoming Session Laws, Chapter 76, Section 14, being original Senate File 0051, required the Joint Education Interim Committee to provide for a facilitated process and report on educational data needs and concerns. As Committee Co-Chairs and following adjournment of the 2002 special/budget session, we immediately began to work with staff to implement this requirement. As you recall, the law requires the facilitated discussion and report to be completed by June 15 of this year. Accordingly, we have set dates and a location for two facilitated sessions which must occur well before June 15 in order to enable preparation of a report on this date.

We are inviting you to be one of a small group of participants at these sessions. Two meetings have been scheduled in **Casper at the University of Wyoming Outreach Center on May 2-3 and May 29-30**. Both of these meetings will begin at noon and may continue well into the evening of the first day, will begin early the next morning and will end by 5:00 p.m. of the second day.

Based on the recommendations of many people with whom we have conferred, on a bipartisan basis, in and outside of Wyoming, we have contracted with Dick Gross of the Consensus Council and Policy Consensus Initiative in North Dakota to facilitate this two-meeting process. We are hopeful the discussion will begin to identify and address a wide variety of data concerns relative to school finance. Mr. Gross indicated that having less than 30 participants in such meetings is optimal. Therefore, we obviously are not able to invite all or even a substantial percentage of those who have a significant interest in these issues. Further, great efforts were made to include broad representation of different areas of expertise, district characteristics and geographic regions, as required by law.

Given these constraints and the requirements of law, working with Mr. Gross and staff, we have developed what we believe is as broad a based list of invitees as possible. A copy of this list is attached.

We hope you understand that this is a significant opportunity for you to have an impact on these educational data issues and that this invitation is exclusive to you. Mr. Gross indicates it is essential that all participants be able to attend both meetings in their entirety. Therefore, if you are unable to do that, we ask that you decline this invitation. In other words, by accepting this invitation, you are agreeing to attend all portions of these two meetings. Alternates will NOT be workable. We need your response to this invitation by Friday, April 19, 2002.

Please refer any questions or comments, and indicate if you are or are not able to accept this invitation, to **Dave Nelson, Legislative Service Office, at (307) 777-7881.**

Mr. Gross has worked in public policy and facilitated over 700 consensus building/conflict resolution processes on a wide variety of issues in Russia, eastern and western Europe, South America, Canada and all of the US states. He has recently facilitated meetings of the Wyoming Energy Commission, the Wyoming Landowners/Sportsmen Rendezvous and a diverse group working on the Forest Service plan for management of the national grasslands in Wyoming. He has cautioned that those who accept this invitation not come to these sessions with unrealistic expectations. It will only be possible to begin to address these data issues in this short time frame.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this invitation.

Sincerely,

Senator Irene Devin

Representative Bill Stafford

Attachment (1)

Appendix B

DATA FACILITATION FORUM

The participants invited by the Education Interim Committee Co-Chairs for the Data Facilitation Forum gathered for their first meeting at the University of Wyoming Outreach Center in Casper, Wyoming on May 2-3 and, again, on May 29-30.

The participants were:

State Agency Representatives:

Economic Analysis: Buck McVeigh

Employment: Beth Nelson

Education: Joe Simpson; Larry Biggio; Deb Holloway

Audit: Pam Robinson

MAP Representatives:

Jim Smith

Michael Wolkoff

John Ehlers

District Representatives:

Dwight Moose, Superintendent, Weston #7 (Upton)

Ed Wright, Business Manager, Campbell #1 (Gillette)

Jeff Carrier, Superintendent, Crook #1 (Sundance)

Dan Stephan, Superintendent, Laramie #1 (Cheyenne)

Lonny Hoffman, Superintendent, Fremont #14 (Ethete)

Craig Beck, Superintendent, Fremont #25 (Riverton)

Jim Rogers, Technology Director, Sweetwater #2 (Green River)

Mary Jo Lewis, Business Manager, Park #1 (Powell)

Jack Adams, Business Manager, Sweetwater #1 (Rock Springs)

Conilee Swantek, Business Manager, Platte #2 (Guernsey)

Jack Stott, Business Manager, Washakie #1 (Worland)

Marilyn Koester, Business Manager, Sheridan #2 (Sheridan) (unable to attend meeting 2)

District Board Representative:

Jeff Thompson, Albany #1 (Laramie) (unable to attend meeting 2)

Geri Smith, Platte #1 (Wheatland)

Wyoming Education Association:

Jean Hayek, Executive Director

Legislators:

Senator Scott (Casper) (substituted in meeting 2 by Senator Sessions)

Representative Shivler (Jackson)

They were facilitated by Dick Gross of the Consensus Council and Policy Consensus Initiative in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Dick began both of the meetings by suggesting the following **Ground Rules**:

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

Although he didn't suggest the following as Ground Rules, he said he would request

- No cell phones (or that they be turned to silent ring)
- Non-attribution when participants are discussing outside this room what others have said in this room. . .and he would ask the same of the media.
- No observer participation
- As close as possible to 100% consensus/full agreement

Everyone agreed to the Ground Rules at both meetings.

Dick, then, suggested the following **Agenda** for the first day of the first meeting.

- Welcome, Agenda, Ground Rules
- Introductions
- Discussion of potential outcomes of this process
- Environmental Scan—stakeholders/constituents and current education, economic and political environment in Wyoming
- Values—What Wyoming values should education data try to advance/enhance?
- Vision for use of education data in Wyoming
- Components/elements in Wyoming education necessary to achieve that vision
- What kinds of data are needed to measure/indicate if and the extent to which those components are there?
- What are the current gaps, problems, and issues with education data in Wyoming?

Dick said that, from the many discussions he had preceding this facilitation, it appeared that there were a wide range of **expectations** about what, if anything this process could accomplish:

1. Resolve nothing, make the situation worse; agree not to meet again.
2. Resolve nothing but agree to meet again.
3. Learn from each other.
4. Help educate the public.
5. Agree on an entity that can resolve the data issues.
6. Agree on a process that can help resolve the data issues.
7. Agree that this group plus or minus some participants is the group to do such a process.
8. Agree on resolving some of the data issues.
9. Agree on resolving some data issues and propose a method/entity/process to resolve the others.
10. Resolve virtually all education data issues.

In preparation for discussion of education data issues in Wyoming, Dick asked the participants to discuss who the **stakeholders, customers and constituencies** were:

- Parents and children
- Outside of state employers and institutions of higher education
- The business/industry community
- Supreme Court and legal community
- Teachers
- Taxpayers
- Local government
- People in poverty
- Military
- Native Americans
- Juvenile Justice/Legal System
- Retirees
- Developmentally disabled
- Higher education/graduate students
- Pre-school social services
- Religious organizations
- Economic developers
- Agriculture
- Federal agencies
- Everyone in Wyoming
- Other schools—private, home, religious
- Labor

Dick asked the participants to describe the **current education, economic and political environment in Wyoming:**

- Legislators and others are distrustful of educators
- Better economy but not booming
- Boom and bust cycles
- Mineral dependent
- Lot of support for and recognition of education and its importance
- Local dissatisfaction with the results of education
- High cost of education
- Low cost of education
- Suffering with aging population
- Losing young and students
- Low birth rate—potential long term, radical impact
- Complex
- Seeking increased accountability
- Increased institutional stress
- Win-lose mentality
- Waste of dollars for data, litigation, etc.
- Hurt feelings
- Highly rural
- At risk students on the increase
- Lack of connectedness between education and economic development
- Local control—wanting independence but very dependent
- Impact of federal directives only beginning to be felt and will be increasing
- Politics shift from locals to state legislature and Supreme Court
- Interinstitutional and branch tensions
- How much to spend is the question
- It is difficult to raise sufficient dollars in the current economy (and may be in any economy), especially with the current narrow tax base (see mineral dependence)
- Significant difference in political power between Democrats and Republicans in Wyoming
- What results do we want?
- Highly urban as well as highly rural
- Isolated
- Frontier
- Attitude problems among Wyoming people
- Limited access to 4 year graduate education
- Strong 2-year system
- Wide differential between districts—e.g., Jackson
- High federal government land ownership and employment
- Lot of conflict with all levels of government, but especially federal—all other levels are painted with the same brush as the federal government
- Data-driven society and will continue to increase
- Behind in some new management techniques in Wyoming

- May not have the economies of scale
- State of small employers—no major corporations or top business leaders
- Collisions between different levels of government
- Although Wyoming hasn't yet felt the impact, it is located in a high growth region of the country
- Absentee landowners

Dick asked what **Wyoming values** education data should help advance:

- Identify successes and shortcomings in education
- Quality education
- Consistency
- Independence
- Value—more bang for the buck
- Maintaining uniqueness of each community
- Trust and respect for Wyoming professionals
- Fairness and equity
- Honesty
- Small is good
- Efficient
- Effective
- Competent
- Confidence
- Integrity of data
- What's best for Wyoming kids?
- Transparency
- Accurate reporting

Given those Wyoming values, Dick asked what **elements** would the participants like to see in a vision statement for Wyoming's use of education data.

1. Help make informed decisions
2. Producing a quality system
3. Simple—does not take resources from the classroom—and able to be understood
4. Quantifiable results/outcomes
5. Undiluted/unpolluted source of information
6. Lacks complexity
7. Based on best practices/uniform language
8. Relevant, not useless
9. Equally beneficial to all students
10. Congruent/best data sources
11. Integration
12. Useful for many purposes/by many different constituencies
13. Meet formal legal requirements (or change the requirements)
14. For state and federal purposes

15. With uniform language/commonality
16. Data tail should not wag the dog
17. Representative of Wyoming
18. Report once
19. Complete for the purpose at hand
20. Careful about invasion of privacy
21. Timely

Participants then broke into four groups to develop draft vision statements:

Group 1

The Wyoming education data system will support high-quality and equitable education for all students. It will be systematic, timely, economical and accurate. Qualities of the system will include: efficient, purposeful (with clear expectations for collection), coordinated, credible, reliable, accurate, systematic, uniform with clear reporting requirements, timely.

Group 2

All Wyoming stakeholders understand and trust that the educational data has all the necessary qualities to assist in making informed decisions concerning specific identified issues.

Group 3

Wyoming aspires to have an efficient data collection system that reflects Wyoming values and supports informed decision making those benefits all students equally.

Group 4

The Wyoming Accountability System will provide timely, accurate and consistent data to meet reporting requirements and to assist all stakeholders in making quality decision about public schools. The system will be: user friendly, well defined, integrated, efficient, effective, uniform and relevant.

Dick combined those vision statements into one:

Wyoming will develop a model education data system that is systematic, uniform, integrated, timely, economical, efficient, accurate, credible, reliable, trusted, purposeful, well-defined, relevant, user-friendly in order to reflect/advance Wyoming educational values; to assist all stakeholders in making informed decisions; to achieve high quality, equitable education for all of Wyoming students.

[The above was not intended to be a draft vision statement, only one which pulls the other four together. A more refined draft vision statement that Dick suggested at the second meeting might read:

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 provides a remarkable, high quality and equitable education for all Wyoming students.]

The participants, then, identified **20 issues** they see with education data in Wyoming. Based, in part, on such criteria as: Urgency, Feasibility, Cost-benefit ratio, Number of people impacted and the Right Thing To Do, participants prioritized the 20 issues as follows:

1. The MAP model is too complex and growing more complex; it is creating errors and confusion between costs and expenditures.
2. There is concern relative to the manipulation, interpretation and presentation of education data.
3. Education data in general is too complicated and expensive to collect and is taking resources from the classroom.
4. We suffer from a lack of common language and definitions.
5. There is a belief that data is to be collected and used for predetermined outcomes.
6. Data requirements continue to increase at both state and federal levels.
7. Data is being used for purposes never intended.
8. Data requirements are redundant, with many agencies basically asking for the same kinds of information multiple times.
9. There is often a poor match between the questions asked and the data needed.
10. There is non-uniform and/or failure to comply with current data requests and requirements.
11. There is no common technological basis/response—there are inconsistencies.
12. Data does not exist to address certain requests/needs.
13. There are unreasonable time demands for data—requests are not timely, and data is not relevant because of the length of time since it was gathered.
14. We need to be able to deal with/address a moving and changing target.
15. All districts are often painted with the same brush.
16. Outcome based data is too difficult to develop (and so is the reality).
17. Test scores are equated to success.

18. Old requirements for data never go away. New ones are just added.
19. There is a lack of community understanding of what education data says.
20. There are concerns about invasion of privacy.

The same four groups then met again to develop Goals/Objectives/Strategies. Group 1 addressed the number 1 issue, group 2, the number 2 issue, etc.

Overriding Goal: The legislature should empower this data forum group or an analogous group to assist it in addressing these and other issues and making recommendations to the legislature. Relative to this goal, participants agreed that this kind of a group should be established to follow up on and assist with progress in all of the areas noted below. Current participants in the data forum group would be appropriate for a longer-term effort. They could meet within six months (e.g., October 10-11, 2002 in Casper). LSO and WDE could provide ongoing staffing assistance. During their meetings, the group could hear from representatives of all of the working/strategy groups that are recommended below to determine progress and provide appropriate assistance.

Group 1

(See issue number 1 above.)

Preliminary observations of Group 1: The current MAP model's complexity breeds error and confusion. It does not reflect legislative intent. It has definitions that do not reflect Wyoming values and are not mutually agreed upon (e.g., "central administrator years of experience); and cost-based id driven by expenditures, causing further complexity and the need for more audits.

Objective 1: Clarify definitions in the model (See Group 4)

Strategies

1. LSO and WDE need to identify the meaning of definitions of components and adjustments (areas that affect funding) in the model.
2. WDE, school districts and the Joint Education Committee need to identify the unintended
3. consequences, inconsistencies and assumptions of the definitions.
4. The State Board, WDE, school districts, LSO and the Joint Education Committee need to
5. identify policy questions that need to be addressed.

Objective: Reduce the complexity of the model.

Strategies

1. Someone needs to determine whether it is possible to do so.

2. WDE, statistician, school districts and the Joint Education Committee need to conduct a review of formula functions to combine those with minor impact—e.g., miscellaneous category.
3. All stakeholders need to work at trying to change the philosophy relative to block grants versus itemization. [*The participants seem to wonder whether and how the model is trying to accomplish either one.*]

Objective: Develop action plan for negative consequences of model and its impact on the districts.

Strategies

1. All stakeholders and the legislature need to come to build consensus among a diverse group of stakeholders to develop such a plan.

Objective: Develop a better explanation of how the model functions.

Strategies

1. LSO and WDE need to do formal documentation for the operation of the spreadsheet.
2. LSO and WDE need to develop multiple users manuals for all stakeholders.
3. LSO and WDE need to develop a manageable way to work with and use spread sheets.
4. WDE needs to provide continuous training in this area.

Objective: To examine alternatives to the Model.

Strategy

1. The legislature and stakeholders (and all of Wyoming) need to explore this possibility.

During meeting 2, participants suggested the following additions to these goals and strategies:

While attention to the MAP model itself may have been beyond the purview of this Data Forum, participants agreed that there are significant issues relative to the MAP model and that the time is right for a facilitated process similar to the one these participants have been through to work on issues relative to the MAP model. The Interim Committee should understand the costs and potential benefits of such a process. (This is repeated in a similar form relative to other education issues that have been part of the litigation at the end of this summary.)

Group 2

Issue Number 2 (see above).

Goal: To build stakeholder trust in educational data—including financial, staff, facility and student data—and how it is used.

Strategies

1. Utilize a common template to collect and report data. Establish a working group of WDE, school districts, and legislators by July of 2003. A supplementary budget may be necessary to fund changes. (See, also, Group 3, strategy number 2)
2. Establish a process to validate data. DOA can feed the results to a working group (See number 1 and/or ongoing group such as this) beginning July 2002.
3. Continue the SFDAG to update the accounting manual on a regular basis and provide associated training to school districts.
4. WDE and MAP should provide details of MAP to school districts and legislators by September 2002.
5. LSO, school districts, WDE should educate stakeholders, including all education groups, in the use of data through the media, recognizing that explaining outcome based data will be more difficult.

Group 3

Issue Number 3, as substantially amended during the second meeting, relates to student, staffing, and fiscal data.

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

Strategies

1. This group and/or an analogous diverse group of stakeholders needs to review other states that are leaders in the database development area—e.g., Florida, Texas, Oregon—by December 31, 2002 (earlier if possible to meet legislative requirements) and help determine in advance the kinds of data that is needed and will be needed in the future and coordinate between state agencies and local school districts.

2. The report to the Joint Education Committee of the Wyoming legislature should note the need for champions in this area.
3. Conduct comprehensive review/inventory of all data requested and identify sources to check for the relevance and redundancy. [*See Subcabinet activities below*] The legislature may need to authorize this during the 2003 session and provide funding to WDE, especially for MAP data elements. And WDE will need to prepare a coordinated report recommending changes for the 2004 legislative session.
4. Standardize collection of data applications. Implement the use of bridge software universally—WDE and districts by 2004-05 school year. Adopt common terms and definitions—WDE and districts by 2003-04 school year. [*See Group 4*]
5. WDE, working with districts (maybe in a working group under the auspices of this group?) should engage a consultant to develop complimentary data architecture between districts and WDE within 18 months. A bridge might be part of that; helping districts with their own use of architecture and data, and an inventory may also be part of it. (Some of this may not be necessary depending upon the speed at which an entirely new student data system can be developed and implemented.)
6. Schedule required data submissions to smooth the workload. WDE and LSO will coordinate their calendar for the 2002-03 school year.
7. Require that state agencies and the legislature identify/determine the impact of and provide funding to the districts for required data collection. The legislature should authorize during the 2003 session.
8. Pre-populate all forms with all data that are known so districts do not need to fill in information WDE [*and other agencies?*] already have. WDE needs to do by the 2002-03 school year.
9. This group or an analogous group needs to develop standards and ethics relative to the use of this data.

(In all of this we need to be aware of the additional data requirements for ESEA and CAPCON.)

Group 4

Objective: To create and/or update resource manuals for the Wyoming Accountability System (fiscal, assessment, accreditation, and report card). Manuals will include: Glossary of terms, processes and products.

Strategies

1. Construct draft resource manuals.

2. Send manuals to readers for feedback.
3. Use feedback to improve manuals.
4. Distribute resource manuals to appropriate personnel with feedback cards and place on the web site.
5. Conduct regional training.
6. Update resource manuals.

Note: Forms and Survey Reporting

All collections should include:

1. Glossary of terms
2. Clear directions for completing forms and surveys

Responsible Parties: LSO, WDE, Data Group and Districts

Timeline: One year

Additional Comments

1. Bringing these participants together has been a good start. It should continue and be only a starting point.
2. Add “work together” at the beginning of some of the above phrases—e.g. Work together to construct draft resource manuals, etc.
3. We should support the continuation and enhancement of the Human Resources Subcabinet.

[Note from Dick: Discussion relative to the Subcabinet kept recurring, and the Subcabinet members who are participants agreed to meet and try to develop a full list of data requests that all of the agencies that are part of the Subcabinet make of educators and try to bring that back to the next meeting. They will also continue to emphasize that all requests for education related data should be “vetted” by WDE before they are sent. WDE may already have the kind of information being sought. Those educators who know will also send Joe a list of the kinds of information being requested from federal agencies. The Subcabinet participants will come to the May 29 meeting to report on what they can do to help reduce data requests from state and federal agencies.]

Common Themes that emerged during the first day and a half meeting:

1. Need for common definitions.
2. The burdens of data and questions of whether the burdens outweigh the benefits and are having a negative impact on the classrooms. The notion that data gathering also impacts curriculum and staff development.
3. The potential of technology to assist in resolving data issues.
4. The need to inventory to learn what is out there.
5. Participants want meaningful participation in the process of data gathering, interpreting, and presenting data.
6. The need to get everyone on the same page relative to data collection, reporting, etc.—systematic, uniform consistent, accurate, standardized.
7. Need for ongoing training in many areas.
8. Need to do trust enhancing.
9. We need to have conversations with and help educate other stakeholders.
10. Concerns about the complexity of the system.
11. The need for user friendly manuals to address multiple audiences.

Thoughts for consideration for the second meeting (as amended during the second meeting, see number 5 below)

1. Should non-fiscal issues be removed from the discussion or treated separately given the short time frame? There was discussion that seemed to suggest that most participants feel that all of the data issues need to be discussed together.
2. We need to be able to identify what can be done without legislative help.
3. We need to determine what will require legislative help.
4. Reporting requirements that are unnecessary should be abolished.

5. **Between now and the next meeting, participants who have questions about aspects of the MAP model, should send them to Mary at: mbyrne@state.wv.us; fax her at 307-777-5466 and or call her at 307-777-7881. WDE and LSO will work together to put all questions and responses on a site accessible by the participants. (During the second meeting, participants suggested that this question/answer process could be improved by opening the question/answers to others who might want to ask questions, by making WDE the initial source of information, that there might need to be a transition time during which MAP might respond and that, later, WDE would respond unless it needed to refer questions to MAP.)**

[See above discussion about work of the Subcabinet. WDE also requested that, if participants know of current data that should no longer be requested, they review the web site list and bring highlighted lists to the next meeting. Note—none were brought to the second meeting.]

During the second meeting, Dick asked participants to talk about **input they had received, thoughts they had and/or what, in particular, they had learned** between the first two meetings.

They responded:

1. Too broad a task in too short a time frame.
2. There is no silver bullet, but we can accomplish some of the things.
3. We are moving in common directions with our proposed goals, objectives, definitions, etc. There is hope.
4. The process is working. We should have begun much earlier. This is a diverse group, and we are funneling information and focusing.
5. We need better process for the future—this was an amazing process and hugely valuable.
6. We need to continue this into the future, be proactive, not reactive.
7. This kind of effort is important to figure the data issues out.
8. The issues exceed the time we were given. It is critical to come to agreement on terms and definitions in particular.
9. The enormity of the task is daunting. There may need to be an ongoing process. We can come to agreement, but leaders also need to commit.
10. Getting everyone's point of view has been valuable. We did move ahead and developed some agreements.
11. The MAP model is still the most contentious issue. This process needs "teeth" in it and the commitment of leaders.

12. There has been so much distrust and political games. We need long-term planning and funding for it. Districts need to demonstrate their needs and make their case. How can a faculty match the “basket of goods” and the student-teacher ratios? What has happened with interviews this spring—where are we on hiring new teachers?
13. We have a very complicated set of issues. We made good progress, building friendships and trust, but much is still on the surface. It will take a lot of working together to get over the history.
14. We need common definitions and terms. There is a great variance in peoples’ understanding, and it relates to credibility and trust and the validity of the data. We may need the legislature to define the terms. There is a huge knowledge gap about the MAP formula.
15. It is tough to make progress when there is ongoing litigation. We need a different level of thinking to get out of the litigation box.
16. We may need to focus more on education data issues and we still need to bridge the trust issue.
17. There is a lot of impatience. We want solutions. Wyoming has tremendous resources, and we have many common beliefs. We can solve our own problems.
18. Legislators need credible data—what is the data and what does it mean? The “basket of goods” is still an issue. I appreciate the frankness and honesty of all the participants.
19. We need to recognize the realities. We are in a litigious environment, have time constraints, declining enrollments. We need common definitions and consistent reporting of data. It requires real effort.
20. I have come to realize how important “conversations” are, to be able to understand others’ points of view. I’m learning more and know I need to get over preconceived notions. We all need to listen to different views.
21. The real complexity is in the social issues, such as others’ skepticism about what we are doing. We need to have something productive and continue this process to address data and other issues as well. We need to adjust timelines to do this right. It was and is all right to be different here in this context.
22. I have a sense of hope. Consensus is not easy. We really need to listen to others. I am also cynical about the short time frame for this effort. There are so many issues about data. We need this process for other issues as well.
23. We need to attack the process, to segregate and focus on what we can get done in a very short time frame.

24. I have been concerned that there have not been many times that we've talked about kids. Maybe if we lock people away for a week and take them through this process, we can resolve all the issues.

During the second meeting, participants **regrouped and reprioritized the issues** identified but not addressed at the first meeting as follows:

1. Unreasonable time constraints/non-timely requests for data.
2. Dealing with constantly changing targets.
3. Data is non-existent to be able to respond to data requests.
4. There is non-uniform compliance with data requests (also related to all districts being painted with the same brush).
5. There is sometimes a poor match between the data desired and the questions asked.
6. The concerns with outcome-based data—how to do it well.
7. Data being used for purposes never intended.
8. There is no common technological base—i.e., software.
9. The concern that test scores are equated with success.
10. Concerns about invasion of privacy.
11. Data is sometimes no longer relevant because it is outdated.

After discussion, the participants agreed that changes made to the third group's set of objectives and strategies from the first meeting addressed newly prioritized issues 1 and 2. Relative to issue number 3 on data not being available, in addition to the objectives and strategies of group 3, the participants noted:

1. The new software developed must be expandable to address new issues.
2. All those requesting new data must be aware of the need for a longer lead-time to gather the appropriate information in a consistent manner (or prepared to have data that is of inferior quality).
3. The legislature should develop an appropriate process for the legislature and state and local entities to seek and develop needed data.

Relative to issue number 4, compliance, participants agreed as follows:

Objective: To address those districts that do not comply or do so inappropriately on a regular basis (instead of painting all districts with the same brush).

Strategies

1. WDE needs to provide uniform and ongoing training and pay special attention to districts when there is turnover in the districts.
2. Each district needs to assume appropriate responsibility for training, responding, etc.
3. All districts should explore the feasibility and cost-benefit for cooperative service provisions relative to data, as is done in the area of group purchasing, for example.

(See, also, the strategy from Group 3 relative to impact statements and funding for providing data.)

Relative to issue 5, that of the poor match between the questions asked and the data desired, participants agreed:

Objective: To ensure that the questions that need to be answered are appropriately matched with the data being sought.

Strategies

1. WDE will assess the areas in which data is or is likely to be needed and develop a data advisory group for student information by the spring of 2003. (Representatives of both those seeking the data and those responding to requests for the data need to be involved.)
2. Pretesting instruments/pilots research questions should be used.

Relative to issue 6, related to outcome based data, participants agreed:

Objective: To develop a standards-based tracking system.

Strategies

1. The Joint Education Committee needs to develop legislation to support a new standards based tracking system.
2. A committee led by WDE and the Superintendents, including legislators, tech people and other state agency people, needs to research and recommend a uniform, model system by the end of September or early October of this year, and WDE needs to prepare a supplemental budget request to pay for such a system.
3. The State Board and WDE must modify the accreditation rubric in the area of measures from the present time until the tracking system is in place.

Relative to the issue 7, use of data for purposes never intended, participants agreed that this was a trust issue addressed by the objectives and strategies of Group 2 during the first meeting.

Relative to issue 8, the common tech base/software, participants agreed that the objectives and strategies of Group 3 should address that. Joe and Lonny agreed to meet and discuss and refer to the State Board further discussion the concern that test scores are equated with success, issue 9. Participants also agreed that the issue should also be addressed by the new emphasis on standards and standards tracking.

Relative to issue 10, concerns about invasion of privacy, for the most part participants were comfortable with current efforts underway. However, they identified the following objective and strategies:

Objective: To safeguard sensitive information.

Strategies

1. As the new student information data system is developed, WDE, the attorney for the School Boards Association and the Attorney General's office need to ensure that legal review is done to provide for necessary safeguards in the system.
2. State agencies and school districts must ensure that appropriate firewalls are in place and appropriately maintained.

Relative to the final issue, concerning data being outdated, participants agreed that a new, uniform and advanced data system and the advisory committee proposed should ensure that information gathered is relevant, timely and up to date.

Next Steps

Dick provided the following time line for this report and the report to the Joint Interim Committee:

1. By June 3—Dick will provide a summary of the two meetings to all participants
2. By June 5—Dick is asking for any comments from the participants on the summary (see email address below)
3. By June 7—Dick will have a draft of his report to the Joint Education Committee to all participants
4. By June 12—Dick is asking for the response of the participants to the draft report—to be sent to him by email at dgross@agree.org
5. By June 18—Dick will report to the Joint Education Committee and a final copy of his report will be emailed to all participants

There was a short discussion about what the group should do if, for example, the Joint Education Committee did not endorse a continuation of this process. Participants suggested that they could work in their own groups, that WDE might seek funding on its own for an ongoing process, that each participant could influence his/her own legislators.

There was another short discussion about ensuring that the recommendations of this group proceed, regardless of the action of the Joint Education Committee. Participants indicated that several of the recommendations were in the process of being implemented and that they could, on an individual basis, encourage the processes to continue and participate actively in them. Again, organizations and agencies to which participants belong should also help to implement the recommendations.

Participants were asked **what, in particular, they wished included in the report**. They responded, overwhelmingly, that Dick should report that the time is ripe for a process similar to the one they have been through to attempt a settlement of all of the legal issues; that the JEC needs to understand the costs and potential benefits of such processes; that, If Legislative funding is not now available for such an effort and to demonstrate a good faith commitment to the process, those involved or potentially involved in the litigation should share the costs of a facilitated process. All of the critical stakeholders need to be involved in order for this process to succeed.

Participants also agreed that Dick should observe how positive the participants were in and about this process.

Dick should also refer to the Common Vision for the future of Wyoming relative to the use of educational data.

And emphasis needs to be placed on the need for a new, flexible student data base system and the need to support districts in making this happen.

Concluding Comments

Participants were asked for any concluding comments/observations they had relative to the process. They said:

1. This is a good finished product. We need to continue to educate ourselves, legislators, our colleagues and the public about these issues.
2. I've learned a lot. The information and communication have been very useful. Agencies are taking on a lot of responsibilities.
3. This has been a very good start, the interchange has been good, and we need to continue communications.
4. There is a lot of energy here toward common goals.
5. I'm pleased and optimistic, especially about the potential for other facilitated processes.
6. I've appreciated this process. I believe in it and in being proactive instead of reactive.
7. I've really enjoyed this. These are nice people. This is a great start.
8. I appreciate the process but am concerned that the JEC members may not be the same as the legislators who will have to consider our recommendations.
9. I'm impressed with the process, but we have a big job ahead.
10. I believe we've met the intent of the legislation. We've looked at the big picture.
11. It's been informative and interesting. We need the JEC commitment and support.
12. I believe we can resolve all of the issues in litigation in this way.
13. These are great people. And this is exactly the pattern we need to resolve other issues.
14. We're building good relationships. I'm pleasantly surprised. We will see a good change.

15. I've truly enjoyed being part of this. This will help resolve other issues. We can't let this effort die.
16. The toughest job is yet to come. The burden is on each of us, not just on the legislature. I have a greater appreciation of our common problems. I believe I've grown through this process.
17. We are players in a political process. We can't get bitter if the JEC doesn't adopt our recommendations. We need to work it through each of the groups we belong to.
18. We've identified and quantified many of the problems and the possible avenues for solutions. We've done good work.
19. The education budget is a huge expenditure. I appreciate the work the agencies are doing to help implement these recommendations. I will help sell this to the JEC.
20. Today has been particularly productive. We will get better data and make better decisions as a result.
21. I've appreciated being part of this. It's been informative. We can come together to find solutions. This should continue.
22. I have a renewed hope. It's been very constructive. We've begun to develop good relationships.
23. I especially appreciated that we added the whole student data piece. It is a necessary area to address.