

Thoughts for Outcome-Based Accountability in Wyoming

Report to the Select School Finance
Recalibration Committee

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Background for Accountability

- **Wyoming has a generously supported school funding model**
- **The Wyoming funding model reflects a “theory of action” about how to improve student achievement**
- **The funding model includes all the resources to support every element of that theory of action**

Background

- **The Theory of Action embedded in the funding model was reinforced by the Wyoming Improving School model identified as part of the recent School Use of Resources study**
- **The Wyoming Improving School model is the view of Wyoming's leading educators on how to boost student achievement**

Dilemma

- **Funding for Wyoming's schools**
 - Has increased substantially over the past 13 years
 - Today is more than adequate to provide the Basket of Educational Goods and Services
- **Student achievement in Wyoming has not improved much**
 - Reading achievement has been relatively flat
 - Math achievement has risen slightly

Dilemma, continued

- **Districts do not spend their education resources in ways aligned with the Funding Model or the Wyoming Improving School**
- **Suggesting that too many dollars are spent in ways not clearly linked to student achievement**

Challenge:

- **How to get schools and districts to produce more dramatic improvements in student achievement**
- **With the assumption that if they did, resource use would reflect the strategies embedded in the Wyoming funding model**
 - **Would be open to different resource use patterns if they were associated with improvements in achievement, but so far that is not the case**

Response to This Challenge

- **Create an outcome-based accountability system for Wyoming**
 - **This will complement:**
 - **Generous resources in the funding model**
AND
 - **Multiple developmental activities sponsored by WDE**
 - **Design and implement the outcomes-based accountability system in multiple phases**

What is Outcomes-Based Accountability?

- **A system in which you identify the key outcomes desired**
 - Those outcomes are measured, including changes over time
 - People are held accountable – given rewards and sanctions – for impacting outcomes and changes in outcomes over time
- **Somewhat controversial in education**

What is Outcomes-Based Accountability?

- **Identify key outcomes sought:**
 - **Student academic achievement?**
 - **High school graduation rate?**
 - **Hathaway scholarship eligible?**
 - **Student behaviors?**
 - **Teaching/principal effectiveness?**
 - **Instructional practice/performance?**

What is Outcomes-Based Accountability?

- **Measure each outcome:**
 - **If the outcome cannot be measured, it can't be used in outcome accountability**
 - e.g., Student citizenship
 - **PAWS for student achievement**
 - **Common method for 4 year high school graduation rate**
 - **A system to measure teaching practice**
 - **A method to measure teaching effectiveness**
 - Value-added?

What is Outcomes-Based Accountability?

- **Measure change in outcomes over time**
 - Value-added, balanced scorecard, change to a standard, many approaches
- **Set targets for improved outcomes**
 - Increase by so many percentile points, by a specified percentage, by so many points
 - Concept: there is a base measure and then a target for improvement – improvement target should be a “stretch” but attainable

What is Outcomes-Based Accountability?

- **Provide consequences for results**
- **Rewards and sanctions for meeting or not meeting the targeted improvements**
- **Rewards :**
 - **No state intervention, monetary bonus, pay hike, tenure, promotion, etc. Give something valued**
- **Sanctions:**
 - **State intervention, no bonus—pay freeze, no tenure, dismissal. Take away something valued**

Outcomes-Based Accountability for Wyoming

- **Would help channel concern over the rise in funding not producing the student achievement results desired**
- **Would send a signal about the results the legislature expects and wants**
- **Can start for 2010-2011 academic year and can be made more complex and sophisticated over time**

Accountability System

- **Phase 1 Accountability**
 - Implemented next year
- **Phase 2 Accountability**
 - implemented over next 2-4 years

Phase One Accountability

- **Focus on District and Schools**
- **Set numerical student performance goals for PAWS tests**
 - **First at state level**
 - **Then at district level – derived from state goals**
 - **Cascade down to each school in district**
 - **Set 5 year targets with intermittent annual targets for reading, math, science, writing and all tested subjects**

Phase One Accountability

- **Examples of student outcome goal areas:**
 - % proficient or advanced, overall and by key subgroup (to close achievement gaps)
 - % advanced, overall and by subgroup
 - For high schools in addition:
 - 4 year graduation rate
 - % taking AP courses and getting a 3 or better score
 - % qualifying for Hathaway scholarships

Phase One Accountability

- **Be super rigorous in some areas:**
 - **Given the resources available and strategies embedded in the Wyoming Funding model, by grade 3**
 - **There should be virtually NO students who don't read at grade level**
 - **So for elementary schools, set a goal for the percent below basic as less than 2 percent by grade 3**

Phase One Accountability

- **If district or school meets the target, reward is non-interference from state**
- **If district or school meets the target, reward could also be:**
 - **A monetary bonus**
 - **Funded from set aside allocation**

Phase One Accountability

- **If district or school does not meet the target, sanction is:**
 - Intervention and assistance from a WDE team
 - Implementing the improvement strategy embedded in the Wyoming Improving School
 - Required use of resources according to the funding model
- **If district or school does not meet the target, sanction could be:**
 - Superintendent or principal put on notice
 - Dismissal after 2-3 years of not meeting improvement targets

Phase One Accountability: Possible Legislative Actions

- **For resources:**
 - **Continue to provide Instructional Facilitators in a categorical program**
 - **Consider providing Tutors in a categorical program**
 - **Continue to provide Summer School and Extended Day resources in a categorical program**
 - **Constraints on PD money, especially use of the ten extra days and use of the \$100 per pupil for training and related PD expenses**

Phase One Accountability

- **Could be implemented beginning in the 2010-2011 school year**
 - **Numeric district and schools goals set over the summer**
 - **Review and initial implementation of consequences after 2011 PAWS administration**

The WDE Strategic Plan is a Beginning

- **Focuses on student outcomes – PAWS, proficient performance, Hathaway eligibility, graduation rates, but**
 - **Focuses only on grade 3 and 8 – should be all grades**
 - **Only math and reading**
 - **Add science and writing**
 - **Add almost no one at below basic by grade 3 in reading**
 - **Goals only up to the proficient level**
 - **Add goals for advanced performance**
 - **Add reduction in achievement gaps**
 - **Need to translate into district/school goals as well**

The WDE Strategic Plan is a Beginning

- **Very modest 5 year improvement goals**
- **Modest goals lead to underwhelming improvements**
- **Wyoming should be bolder – it was bold in increasing dollars for schools**
- **Aggressive, “eye popping” student outcome goals garner public support**
- **Even if the goals are not entirely attained, they can produce significant improvements over time**

The WDE Strategic Plan is a Beginning

- **Includes many items on efficient and effective operations**
- **Includes student behavioral issues**
- **Consider “slimming” the initiative to focus more on student performance outcomes**

The WDE Strategic Plan is a Beginning

- **Not clear if there are any rewards or sanctions**
- **Can't tell if they cascade down to central office leaders, schools, principals and teachers**
- **Does not address effective use of resources in the funding model**

Phase Two Accountability

- **Phase 1 accountability – getting the system into an initial accountability mode**
- **Phase 2 accountability**
 - **Delving deeper into the causes of student performance – Instructional Practice**
 - **Holding teachers and principals accountable for both instructional practice and student performance**
 - **Using data to analyze impacts and causes**

Phase 2 Accountability

- **Longitudinal Data system**
- **Measures of teaching practice**
- **Measures of teacher and principal effectiveness**

Longitudinal Data System

- **Critical for any accountability system**
- **Links students and their test scores to teachers of record (teachers who taught the subject, course)**
- **Wyoming has created a foundation for this system – unique teacher/student identifiers**
- **Could be used to calculate measures of school and classroom/teacher effectiveness – value added**

Longitudinal Data System

- **Once in place, a Longitudinal Data System can be used to:**
 - **Assess whether schools/principals and teachers are producing value-added learning gains**
 - **Evaluate the impact of any intervention for students (e.g., tutoring) or teachers (e.g., a professional development experience)**
 - **Determine the impact of varying school and class sizes and other key education variables**

Longitudinal Data System

- **Wyoming has three years of data that can link students to teachers**
- **Still need to verify “teacher of record”**
- **Could be done over the summer**
- **Would take some resources**
- **Begin now as need 3 years of results to get stable value added scores**
 - **Verify 2010 data over summer**
 - **Goal: have a solid system by summer 2012**

Phase Two Accountability

- **Create a statewide definition of effective teaching**
 - **Could start with some existing models like the Danielson Framework**
 - **Adapt it to specific Wyoming circumstances**
- **Use it to structure a statewide system to measure teaching practice**
 - **This is a complex task and cannot be delegated to local districts (Chapter 29) if state wants valid and reliable measures used for consequences**

Phase Two Accountability

- **Use the new measures and data systems to establish consequences for teachers:**
 - **Teacher licensure**
 - **Teacher tenure**
 - **Teacher promotion or dismissal**
 - **Teacher salary schedules**

Phase Two Accountability

- **For principals:**
 - **50% of a principal's evaluation based on school meeting student outcome/performance targets**
 - **Use a performance evaluation for other aspects of evaluation**
 - **Include a school wide measure of teaching practice, aggregated up from individual teacher measures**
 - **Specify that if improvement targets are not met within X years, the principal is dismissed**
 - **Create a performance pay schedule for principals**

Phase Two Accountability

- **For central office staff:**
 - **Make 50% of key central office staff evaluation based on district meeting student outcome/performance targets**
 - **Encourage local boards to replace superintendents who consistently miss performance targets**

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