

Wyoming Department of Education
SCHOOL CONFIGURATION GUIDELINES
Recommendations

to the
Joint Education Interim Committee

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Casper, Wyoming

Presented by
Dr. Jim McBride
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Authority: Legislation/Statutes

- House Bill 139, Enrolled Act 23, of the 2006 Budget Session, "...the state superintendent of public instruction shall in consultation with the Wyoming school facilities commission, develop statewide guidelines on the configuration of schools for computations under the education resource block grant model and determination of school foundation program amounts under law, for recommendation to the joint education interim committee."

History: Perspective/Process

- With the extensive changes made to the funding model during recalibration, the Legislature has required the Department to develop recommended guidelines on the configuration of public schools.
- The Recalibration bill "froze" the configuration of all Wyoming public schools to "that in which students were enrolled during the 2005-06 school year".
- The State Superintendent was authorized in the same bill to approve configuration, upon requests by the districts, "based upon appropriate delivery of the required educational program, the cost effectiveness of the modified grade configuration for the delivery of adequate educational services to students and any extraordinary circumstances related to the safe and efficient delivery of the education program to students".
- The statute went on to explain that the State Superintendent's configuration of the school relates only to the application of the education resource block grant model "and not to the authority of a district to configure grade levels at each of its schools."
- In general, the Department has found that the districts do not vary their school configurations from what has been reported in the model.

Actions: Data/Participation/Trainings

- In January 2007, the Department met with the staff of the School Facilities Commission who were in agreement with the Department's proposal to align the configuration recommendations with the configurations used in the Lawrence O. Picus and Associates' report of November 30, 2005 ("An Evidence-Based Approach to Recalibrating Wyoming's Block Grant School Funding Formula").
- The Department also researched the configuration guidelines adopted by Natrona County School District #1.
- Both of the above configurations are K-5 for elementary schools, 6-8 for middle schools, and 9-12 for high schools.

Financial: Expenditures to Date/Anticipated Other Costs

- The departmental staff have worked on these recommendations while performing their other duties. There have been no costs directly attributable to the formation of these recommendations.

Results: Outcomes/Feedback

Based on the Picus report and the adoption of similar guidelines by Natrona #1, the Department recommends the following configuration guidelines:

- For new schools, elementary schools shall be configured K-5, middle schools 6-8, and high schools 9-12.
- For new schools whose total student population is below 315 in grades K-8, the configuration of K-8 shall be used.
- For new schools whose total student population is below 315 in grades K-12, the configuration of K-12 shall be used.
- For existing schools, the current configuration will be "grandfathered".
- Beginning in school year 2010-11, all co-located schools will meet the above configurations.
- Effective in the 2008-09, the State Superintendent shall not approve the configuration of any new school whose projected enrollment is less than 49 students.
- Districts who choose to provide on-site educational services in remote areas to a student population of less than 49 may, upon approval by the State Superintendent, create a satellite school administered and served by the principal and support staff from another approved school within the district.
- Beginning in school year 2010-11, all schools with less than 49 students shall become satellite schools administered and served by the principal and support staff from another approved school within the district.
- The State Superintendent may grant waivers to the above configurations based upon the appropriate delivery of the required educational program, the cost effectiveness of the modified grade configuration, and any extraordinary

circumstances related to the safe and efficient delivery of the education program to students.

Recommendations: Next Steps

- The Joint Education Interim Committee may review these recommendations for incorporation into the Wyoming system of public school finance.

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