



The October 15, 2015 Report of the Wyoming State Board of Education

Presented to:
Joint Education Committee
Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability



WYOMING

State Board of Education

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CHELSIE OAKS
Executive Assistant

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tania Hytrek, Legislative Service Office

FROM: Paige Fenton Hughes, Coordinator

DATE: October 15, 2015

SUBJECT: State Board of Education Reporting Requirements

Thank you for your memo earlier this year outlining the interim education reporting requirements for the Wyoming State Board of Education (SBE). The SBE is hereby submitting the October 15, 2015 report in fulfillment of the reporting requirements to both the Joint Education Interim Committee and to the Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability. The combined report contains the following sections:

- TAB A- Findings and Recommendations of the Wyoming Statewide Assessment Task Force
- TAB B- Guidelines Pertaining to District Assessment Systems
- TAB C- Request to Allow for an Exemption from No Child Left Behind Assessment Requirements
- TAB D- Results and Process of the Professional Judgment Panel and Wyoming Accountability Model Information and Updates
- TAB E- Review of Content and Performance Standards
- TAB F- Update on Comprehensive, Multi-Tiered System of Support
- TAB G- Review of Duties Prescribed by Law

The information submitted in this report was reviewed and approved by the SBE during a teleconference on October 8, 2015.

Dr. Marion has spoken to the Accountability and Assessment Committee of the SBE and has presented to the board at two meetings regarding the recommendations of the Statewide Assessment Task Force.

Both Dr. Flicek and Dr. Beck appeared before the SBE at the regular meeting on August 13, 2015, and Dr. Flicek presented again to the board about the accountability model and final PJP results on September 23, 2015.

The system of support has been an ongoing agenda item for the SBE and was one of two identified board priorities for the year. The board has heard updates from WDE about the system of support throughout the year. On September 23, 2015 the SBE heard a report from Dr. Joel Dvorak, consultant hired to design a strategic plan for a comprehensive, multi-tiered system of supports, interventions, and consequences.

The district assessment system work, convening of a review committee for the review of science standards, and requesting an exemption from the United States Department of Education regarding statewide testing requirements have all been ongoing during this interim. The SBE has heard updates and received information as appropriate throughout the year.

State board duties prescribed by law will be a topic of work the board will undertake in the next few months, in partnership with the National Association of State Boards of Education, as part of a larger review of board policies and rules.

The state board appreciates and thanks everyone who has been involved in the process of building this report and doing the hard work that the legislative committees will see reflected here. The board especially appreciates the work of the members of the Professional Judgment Panel, the science standards review committee, the assessment task force, the district assessment steering committee, and members of the WDE staff who have toiled diligently on a number of projects over the past few months.

Please let us know if you have any questions about the contents of the report. We look forward to further discussion with committee members in upcoming meetings. You can reach me at 307.349.4506 or at paige.fentonhughes@gmail.com.



TAB A

Findings and Recommendations of the Wyoming Statewide Assessment Task Force

2015 Wyoming Session Laws, Chapter 179, Section 6

(a)(iv) On or before October 15, 2015, the state board shall report to the joint education interim committee and the select committee on findings and recommendations developed from its review and evaluation conducted under this subsection. In addition to recommending an approach for the future statewide assessment system, recommendations shall provide necessary mechanisms and processes to support the transition from the statewide assessment system existing on the effective date of this act to the student assessment developed and recommended under this subsection.



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Hank Coe and Representative David Northrup, Joint Education Committee and Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability Co-chairs

FROM: Paige Fenton Hughes, Coordinator

DATE: October 15, 2015

SUBJECT: Statewide Assessment Task Force Report and Recommendations

Last spring the State Board of Education assembled a task force of diverse educational stakeholders from all geographical areas of the state as well as from all sizes of school districts. The task force has met several times both in person and by distance means and has been facilitated by consultants for the Legislative Service Office, Dr. Scott Marion and Dr. Joseph Martineau. Brent Young and Deb Lindsey and other members of the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) staff also supported the work of the task force.

You will find in your packet the report and recommendations of the task force. Dr. Scott Marion presented the report and recommendations to the Assessment and Accountability Committee of the state board in a teleconference on September 14, 2015. Dr. Marion also presented the report and recommendations in person to the state board at their regular meeting on September 23, 2015. After a lengthy discussion with board members, Dr. Marion made revisions to the report and recommendations and discussed those revisions with the entire assessment task force in a subsequent WebEx meeting. The task force recommendations were also presented at the AdvancED Continuous Improvement Conference in Casper on September 29, 2015. Dr. Marion met again with the board by WebEx on October 8, 2015. At that meeting, the board approved the report and recommendations for presentation to the Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability and the Joint Education Interim Committee.

The board thanks the members of the task force, Drs. Marion and Martineau, Brent Young and Deb Lindsey, and members of the WDE staff who have been so dedicated to bringing forth a quality report for your consideration. Drs. Marion and Martineau will appear before your committees to present

the final recommendations and hear your input and insights.

If you have questions, please contact me at 307.349.4506 or paige.fentonhughes@gmail.com.

Wyoming's Statewide Assessment System: Recommendations from the Wyoming Assessment Task Force

Written on behalf of the Wyoming Assessment Task Force
for the Wyoming State Board of Education

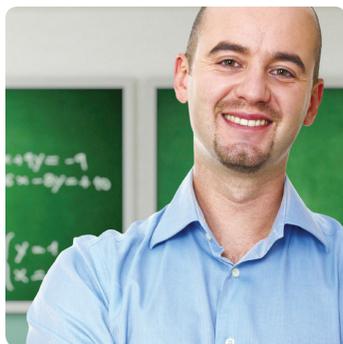
By: *Joseph Martineau, Ph.D. and Scott Marion, Ph.D.*
The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc.



WYOMING ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE MEMBERS

WRITTEN BY:
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Improvement of Educational
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- **KEVIN MITCHELL**, *Superintendent, Park County #1*
- **ANNE OCHS**, *School Board Member, Campbell County #1*
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- **MARY CHARLES PRYOR**, *Parent Representative, Park County #6*
- **KEVIN ROBERTS, Ph.D.**, *President, Wyoming Catholic College*
- **SUE STEVENS**, *Principal, Laramie County #2*
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- **DEB LINDSEY**, *Assessment Director, WDE*
- **PAIGE FENTON HUGHES**, *Interim Executive Director, State Board of Education*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the most important discussions and a constant theme throughout the Task Force deliberations was the value of a comprehensive assessment system that coherently connects the results of various assessments intentionally designed to serve multiple uses and multiple stakeholders.

The Wyoming Legislature directed the State Board of Education to convene the Wyoming Assessment Task Force to evaluate Wyoming's current state assessment system and make recommendations for its future. The twenty-four task force members¹ met seven times between June 1 and October 1, 2015 to deliberate over many technical, policy, and practical issues associated with implementing an improved assessment system. This report presents the results of those deliberations in the form of recommendations to the Wyoming State Board of Education and the Wyoming State Legislature.

A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Task Force identified key challenges associated with the current assessment system and articulated its goals and intended uses of a new system. Some of the main concerns articulated were the lack of stability of Wyoming's state summative assessment, the incoherence among the multiple required assessments, and the lack of quality of information provided to improve educational programs. To overcome these key challenges, the Task Force focused on important uses they would like to see supported by high quality assessments. These uses included having data to help make instructional decisions for students, providing meaningful information to parents, having results that contribute to school improvement efforts, and serving as meaningful indicators in a school accountability system.

One of the most important discussions and a constant theme throughout the Task Force deliberations was the value of a comprehensive assessment system that coherently connects the results of various assessments intentionally designed to serve multiple uses and multiple stakeholders. However, the Task Force recognized that creating an assessment system that links the results of local and state assessments would challenge issues of local control. Therefore, the Task Force focused its recommendations for a comprehensive system around the summative and interim assessment components. Two of the most important sets of recommendations related to comprehensive assessment systems consider high school assessments and interim assessment programs.

High School Assessments

The Task Force recommended that the state-required standards-based summative assessments extend continuously from grade 3 through grade 10. This is in contrast to the current system that requires assessments tied to one set of standards in grades 3-8 (Wyoming State Content Standards) but to a different set of content standards in high school (ACT). The Task Force felt strongly that being able to continuously and coherently measure student growth through grade 10 would provide rich data to high schools that was previously unavailable. While the Task Force acknowledged attempts by the state to document growth among the ACT high school assessments, they noted that because the ACT was not built to measure the Wyoming standards, these assessments provided little useful information about how well schools had helped students learn those standards.

The Task Force also recommended including the 10th grade assessment results as part of Hathaway scholarship eligibility requirements, but acknowledged that the mechanics of how to accomplish this goal should be left to the Hathaway Advisory Committee. The Task Force emphasized that including the 10th grade standards-based assessment results as part of Hathaway would help motivate students to take the test seriously and connect at least part of the eligibility to student performance on the Wyoming content standards.

The Task Force recommended that the state-required standards-based summative assessments extend continuously from grade 3 through grade 10.

¹ There were 26 original members, but two members resigned during the course of the project due to other commitments.

The Task Force was committed to having an assessment system that facilitated a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary-education.

Therefore, the Task Force recommended requiring all Wyoming 11th grade students take either a college-entrance or career-readiness assessment.

The Task Force recommended that interim assessments be procured as part of the summative assessment request for proposals.

A related Task Force recommendation was to provide students opportunities to pursue specialized areas of study in grades 11 and 12 for college or career readiness. Having a single statewide summative assessment at the end of 11th grade, as is currently required, works counter to this recommendation. By moving the Wyoming standards-based high school assessments to grades 9 and 10, schools will have the opportunity (and the expectation) to help students pursue individualized pathways, whether college or career-technical preparation, that will afford students meaningful postsecondary and life opportunities. Schools should be expected to expand options such as technical certifications, dual enrollment opportunities in community/technical colleges, AP or IB courses, and career specializations (“concentrators” in Perkins terminology). The Task Force was committed to having an assessment system that facilitated a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary-education. Tying the grade 10 assessment requirements to at least the minimum expectations for initial credit-bearing courses in community colleges—while allowing students to pursue specialized options in grades 11 and 12— will allow students to hit the ground running once they graduate from high school no matter which specialized path they pursue.

The Task Force appreciated the legislature’s support for ACT census testing, but members expressed concerns that given the high numbers of Wyoming students focused on career readiness, requiring essentially all students to take a college entrance examination may not be best for Wyoming’s students. Therefore, the Task Force recommended requiring all Wyoming 11th grade students take *either* a college-entrance *or* career-readiness assessment (or an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities). Further, the Task Force was concerned that the ACT was overly influential in high school accountability (WAEA) scores since it is the main or sole determinant of achievement, growth, and readiness in high school. Therefore, the Task Force strongly recommended using the Wyoming standards-based grade 9 and 10 assessments as the achievement, growth, and equity indicators in the high school WAEA and reserving use of the college-readiness assessment (ACT currently) as part of the readiness indicator. Making this adjustment should be left to the technical staff at WDE.

Interim Assessments

The Task Force recommended that interim assessments be procured as part of the summative assessment request for proposals (RFP) so that both are designed to measure the same learning targets, using the same item (test questions) specifications, and same item formats. The recommendation was based on the Task Force’s desire to create coherence between the interim and summative systems. The current state-required interim assessment is created by a different company than the state summative system, is designed to measure different learning targets than the state summative assessment, and has a very different approach to test and question design. The Task Force was concerned that such differences introduced unnecessary incoherence into the Wyoming educational system, and resolved that having the two systems linked more coherently would provide richer data to support school improvement opportunities.

The Task Force further recommended not requiring districts to administer the interim assessment according to a specific schedule (e.g., fall/spring) or even not requiring districts to administer the state-provided interim assessments at all. Such flexibility would allow each district to determine what approach will work best in its local context. The Task Force considered multiple design options for a state-provided interim assessment. These are discussed in detail in the full report and in Appendix D. Each district would also have the option of using another (non-state provided) interim assessment, but would be responsible for paying the cost on its own.

The Task Force members were adamant that district assessment results remain separate from any school accountability determinations.

The Task Force strongly recommended that formative assessment remain under the complete control of local districts and classroom teachers.

The summative assessment system selected should be used in multiple states, such as in a consortium, collaborative (in which multiple states share items and other aspects of their assessment systems) or a commercial product.

District Assessments

The Task Force had lengthy discussions about the role of the required district assessment system in a comprehensive assessment system. While all Task Force members acknowledged the importance of the district assessments for documenting that Wyoming students have received an opportunity to learn the “basket of goods,”² they were insistent about maintaining a firewall between the district assessments and state assessment, reporting and accountability systems. Task Force members acknowledged the work of the District Assessment Steering Committee and generally supported the recommendation that districts be expected to document that district assessments are aligned to the Wyoming state content standards. However, the Task Force also acknowledged the need for more support and professional development regarding local assessment development and use. Additionally, Task Force members were concerned about inconsistency in quality and lack of useful feedback from reviews of district assessment systems performed as part of the district accreditation process. To address these concerns, the Task Force recommended that WDE take various steps to improve the quality and utility of these reviews by improving the expertise of those conducting the assessment system reviews. Finally, the Task Force members were adamant that district assessment results remain separate from any school accountability determinations. Task Force members felt strongly that in order to tie district assessments to accountability scores, the quality would have to improve well beyond current levels and that doing so would be an immense burden on district staff without a clear benefit in terms of student achievement.

Formative Assessment

The Task Force strongly recommended that formative assessment remain under the complete control of local districts and classroom teachers. That said, the Task Force supported WDE’s current professional development efforts for formative assessment and would like to see increased state support for capacity building in this critical area.

KEY SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the centrality of the summative assessment in the legislature’s charge to the State Board, the Task Force made the following additional critical recommendations regarding the design and implementation of the state summative assessments:

1. The summative assessment system selected should be used in multiple states, such as in a consortium, collaborative (in which multiple states share items and other aspects of their assessment systems) or a commercial product. The Task Force argued forcefully that such a stance would allow Wyoming to capitalize on the pooled expertise of other states, make the cost structure much more efficient than a custom state assessment, and reduce the likelihood of year-to-year changes in the assessment since any change would have to be negotiated with multiple states.
2. The assessment design must start with the design of the reporting system, capitalizing on the latest data visualization and assessment literacy techniques. The Task Force recognized the importance of high-quality, transparent, data-secure reports in making educational decisions. It recommended that a rigorous report development process be implemented to target reports to various audiences (e.g., students, parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the general public) of state assessment to address each audience’s critical needs while minimizing the possibility of misinterpretation.

² As a result of school funding lawsuits and resulting legislation, Wyoming students must be provided an opportunity to learn “the basket of goods,” defined as the knowledge and skills in the nine subject areas represented by the content standards in each of those subjects.

Summative assessment testing time should require no more than one-percent (1%) of the school year.

Assessment should be developed to capitalize on the advantages afforded by online administration.

One of the key findings of the Task Force was the need for a policy environment that supports the development of a coherent set of Wyoming assessments.

3. Summative assessment testing time should require no more than one-percent (1%) of the school year. This translates to between 9-11 hours of testing, depending on the grade level. This limit provides enough time to allow for high-quality assessment of complex knowledge and skills and to restrict testing time to a reasonable level. Further, to help schools and districts minimize disruptions to daily instruction, the Task Force recommended that the Department of Education work with a group of stakeholders to provide flexibility in the amount of time devoted to each testing session in the summative assessment.
4. Summative assessment should be designed using the most up-to-date assessment design principles and should include item (question) types capable of measuring the full depth and breadth of the Wyoming state content standards. This will ensure that the assessments can provide meaningful results to key stakeholders and will serve an important signaling function for local educators in the development of their own instructional and assessment tasks. Additionally, the Task Force recommended the inclusion of writing in the English language arts assessment to ensure fully measuring the depth and breadth of the standards, to signal that the state standards on writing are important, and to improve both the learning and instruction of writing.
5. Assessment should be developed to capitalize on the advantages afforded by online administration. The Task Force recognized past problems with online assessment and provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to ensure a smooth transition. Key among these recommendations is that schools, districts, and the state be given until the spring of 2018 to implement the new state summative assessment. Such lead time is critical for a successful and smooth transition. Further, to facilitate quick return of results, assessments should be scored using automated scoring to the extent that is practical.
6. The Task Force indicated that a balance must be struck between scheduling the state summative assessment as late as possible in the instructional year and returning the results in time for use in school improvement activities. This will aid school districts in maximizing instruction time within designated school year months, while evaluating and adjusting interventions, curriculum, and programming during the late summer months. This, in essence, requires giving the test later and getting the results back sooner, which is a difficult and potentially expensive task, but essential to the assessment's instructional utility.

THE NEED FOR POLICY COHERENCE

One of the key findings of the Task Force was the need for a policy environment that supports the development of a coherent set of Wyoming assessments. The full report offers several general and specific recommendations for how the legislature and State Board of Education can support a policy environment conducive to sound assessment use in Wyoming. The Task Force strongly recommends that the legislature focus on creating statutes to set broad goals and articulate the appropriate intended uses of assessments (e.g., measuring student growth, for use in school accountability determinations). The legislature and the State Board should prioritize creating a coherent, comprehensive, and efficient assessment system designed to measure student learning of Wyoming content standards and to support school improvement efforts. On the other hand, the legislature should avoid drafting legislation that speaks to the specifics of assessment design (e.g., types of items to be included on the assessment) or even requiring assessments for specific purposes (e.g., requiring a 3rd grade reading assessment).

The Task Force recognizes that each time the legislature adds an assessment (e.g., ACT) or a specific requirement (e.g., multiple-choice items only), it is for well-intentioned reasons, often in response to constituent concerns. Unfortunately, while every action might be well-intentioned, it is not long before a once coherent assessment system is no longer so. In other words, good intentions can often lead to unintended negative outcomes. Finally, the legislature should never name a specific product in legislation or write statutory requirements so narrowly that only one product or vendor meets the qualifications. It is rare that the legislature possesses the specialized knowledge necessary to recommend a specific assessment product, but most importantly, naming a specific product or too narrowly defining requirements puts the state in a poor negotiating position. The report also points out several existing statutes that will need to be amended or eliminated in order for the recommendations in this report to be enacted.



LIMITATIONS OF THIS REPORT

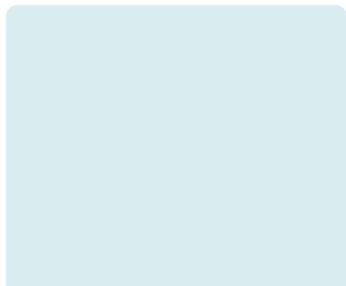
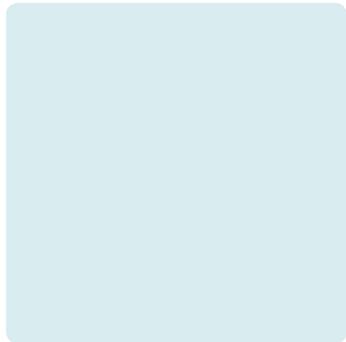
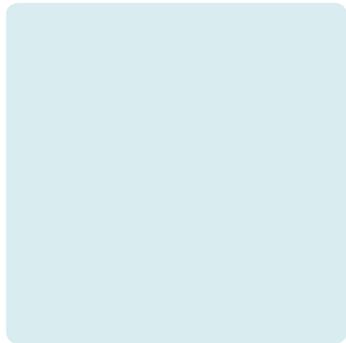
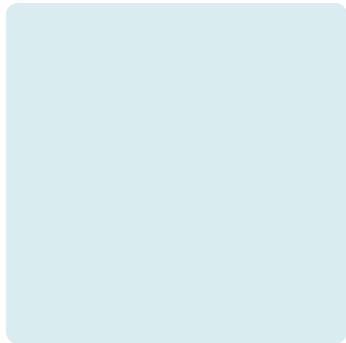
The Task Force acknowledged that there are many other assessments that comprise the Wyoming assessment system, including the Alternative Assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards, the English Language Learner Proficiency Assessment, the K-2 reading assessments, and the many assessments that make up the career and technical assessment certification and Perkins requirements. However, the Wyoming Assessment Task Force did not address these assessments in this report for two main reasons. First, the time frame for deciding on these recommendations and issuing this report was compressed. The Task Force devoted considerable effort in a short amount of time to complete this report by the deadline. Second, and more importantly, the Task Force did not feel it possessed the specialized expertise necessary to provide recommendations for many or most of these other assessments. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that WDE be charged, perhaps with legislative support, to convene small advisory groups for each of these specific assessments and issue recommendations that adhere to the general framework for comprehensive assessment systems outlined in this report.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wyoming's Statewide Assessment System:
Recommendations from the Wyoming
Assessment Task Force

OCTOBER 15, 2015



Wyoming's Statewide Assessment System: Recommendations from the Wyoming Assessment Task Force

Written on behalf of the

Wyoming Assessment Task Force

for the

Wyoming State Board of Education

By:

Joseph Martineau, Ph.D. and Scott Marion, Ph.D.
National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

October 15, 2015

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Ex Officio Members:

Brent Young

Deputy Superintendent, WDE

Deb Lindsey

Assessment Director, WDE

Paige Fenton Hughes

Interim Executive Director, State Board of Education

¹ This report represents a consensus with the exception of Dr. Roberts. We note that Dr. Roberts attended a very limited number of Task Force meetings. He did not voice any objections to multiple drafts until after the penultimate draft report had been completed and members were asked to indicate their support or opposition to the report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A Comprehensive Assessment System

The Task Force identified key challenges associated with the current assessment system and articulated its goals and intended uses of a new system. Some of the main concerns articulated were the instability of Wyoming's state summative assessment, the incoherence among the multiple required assessments, and the lack of quality information provided to improve educational programs. To overcome these key challenges, the Task Force focused on important uses they would like to see supported by high quality assessments. These uses included having data to help make instructional decisions for students, providing meaningful information to parents, having results that contribute to school improvement efforts, and serving as meaningful indicators in a school accountability system.

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High School Assessments

The Task Force recommended that the state-required standards-based summative assessments extend continuously from grade 3 through grade 10. This is in contrast to the current system that requires assessments tied to one set of standards in grades 3-8 (Wyoming State Content Standards) but to a different set of content standards in high school (ACT). The Task Force felt strongly that being able to continuously and coherently measure student growth through grade 10 would provide rich data to high schools which is currently unavailable. While the Task Force acknowledged attempts by the state to document growth among the ACT high school assessments, they noted that because the ACT was not built to measure the Wyoming standards, these assessments provided little useful information about how well schools had helped students learn those standards.

² There were twenty-six original members, but two members resigned during the course of the project due to other commitments.

The Task Force also recommended including the grade 10 assessment results as part of Hathaway scholarship eligibility requirements, but acknowledged that the mechanics of how to accomplish this goal should be left to the Hathaway Advisory Committee. The Task Force emphasized that including the grade 10 standards-based assessment results as part of Hathaway would help motivate students to take the test seriously and connect a portion of the scholarship eligibility to student performance on the Wyoming content standards.

A related Task Force recommendation was to provide students opportunities to pursue specialized areas of study in grades 11 and 12 for college or career readiness. Having a single statewide summative assessment at the end of grade 11, as is currently required, works counter to this recommendation. By moving the Wyoming standards-based high school assessments to grades 9 and 10, schools will have the opportunity and the expectation to help students pursue individualized pathways, whether college or career-technical preparation, affording students meaningful postsecondary and life opportunities. Schools should be expected to expand options such as technical certifications, dual enrollment opportunities in community/technical colleges, AP or IB courses, and career specializations (“concentrators” in Perkins terminology). The Task Force was committed to having an assessment system that facilitated a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary-education. Tying the grade 10 assessment requirements to at least the minimum expectations for initial credit-bearing courses in community colleges—while allowing students to pursue specialized options in grades 11 and 12—will allow students to hit the ground running once they graduate from high school no matter which specialized path they pursue.

The Task Force appreciated the Legislature’s support for census testing using a college entrance examination, but members expressed concerns that given the high numbers of Wyoming students focused on career readiness, requiring essentially all students to take a college entrance examination may not be best for Wyoming’s students. Therefore, the Task Force recommended requiring all Wyoming students in grade 11 take either a college-entrance or career-readiness assessment (or an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities). Further, the Task Force was concerned the ACT was overly influential in high school accountability scores under the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) since it is the main or sole determinant of achievement, growth, and readiness in high school. Therefore, the Task Force strongly recommended using the Wyoming standards-based assessment in grades 9 and 10 as the achievement, growth, and equity indicators in the high school WAEA scores and reserving use of the college-readiness assessment³ and career readiness assessment⁴ as part of the readiness indicator. Making this adjustment should be left to the technical staff at Wyoming Department of Education (WDE).

Interim Assessments

The Task Force recommended interim assessments be procured as part of the summative assessment request for proposals (RFP) so both are designed to measure the same learning targets, using the same item (test questions) specifications, and same item formats. The recommendation was based on the Task Force’s desire to create coherence between the interim and summative systems. The current state-required interim assessment is created by a different company than the

³ Currently ACT.

⁴ Not currently in place.

state summative system, is designed to measure different learning targets than the state summative assessment, and has a very different approach to test and question design. The Task Force was concerned that such differences introduced unnecessary incoherence into the Wyoming educational system, and resolved that having the two systems linked more coherently would provide richer data to support school improvement opportunities.

The Task Force further recommended not requiring districts to administer the interim assessment according to a specific schedule (e.g., fall/spring) or not requiring districts to administer the state-provided interim assessments at all. Such flexibility would allow each district to determine what approach will work best in its local context. The Task Force considered multiple design options for a state-provided interim assessment which are discussed in detail in the full report and in Appendix D. Each district would also have the option of using another (non-state provided) interim assessment, but would be responsible for paying the cost on its own.

District Assessments

The Task Force had lengthy discussions about the role of the required district assessment system in a comprehensive assessment system. While all Task Force members acknowledged the importance of the district assessments for documenting that Wyoming students have received an opportunity to learn the “basket of goods⁵,” they were insistent about maintaining a firewall between the district assessments and state assessment, reporting and accountability systems. Task Force members acknowledged the work of the District Assessment Steering Committee and generally supported the recommendation that districts be expected to document that district assessments are aligned to the Wyoming state content standards. However, the Task Force also acknowledged the need for more support and professional development regarding local assessment development and use. Additionally, Task Force members were concerned about inconsistency in quality and lack of useful feedback from reviews of district assessment systems performed as part of the district accreditation process. To address these concerns, the Task Force recommended that the WDE take various steps to improve the quality and utility of these reviews by improving the expertise of those conducting the assessment system reviews. Finally, the Task Force members were adamant that district assessment results remain separate from any school accountability determinations. Task Force members felt strongly that in order to tie district assessments to accountability scores, the quality would have to improve well beyond current levels and that doing so would be an immense burden on district staff without a clear benefit in terms of student achievement.

Formative Assessment

The Task Force strongly recommended that formative assessment remain under the complete control of local districts and classroom teachers. That said, the Task Force supported the WDE’s current professional development efforts for formative assessment and would like to see increased state support for capacity building in this critical area.

⁵ As a result of school funding lawsuits and resulting legislation, Wyoming students must be provided an opportunity to learn “the basket of goods,” defined as the knowledge and skills in the nine subject areas represented by the content standards in each of those subjects.

Key Summative Assessment Recommendations

Given the centrality of the summative assessment in the Legislature's charge to the State Board of Education, the Task Force made the following additional critical recommendations regarding the design and implementation of the state summative assessments:

1. The summative assessment system selected should be used in multiple states, such as in a consortium, collaborative (in which multiple states share items and other aspects of their assessment systems) or a commercial product. The Task Force argued forcefully that such a stance would allow Wyoming to capitalize on the pooled expertise of other states, make the cost structure much more efficient than a custom state assessment, and reduce the likelihood of year-to-year changes in the assessment since any change would have to be negotiated with multiple states.
2. The assessment design must start with the design of the reporting system, capitalizing on the latest data visualization and assessment literacy techniques. The Task Force recognized the importance of high-quality, transparent, data-secure reports in making educational decisions. The Task Force recommended that a rigorous report development process be implemented to target reports to various audiences (e.g., students, parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the general public) of state assessment to address each audience's critical needs while minimizing the possibility of misinterpretation.
3. The summative assessment testing time should require no more than one percent (1%) of the school year. This translates to between 9-11 hours of testing, depending on the grade level. This limit provides enough time to allow for high-quality assessment of complex knowledge and skills *and* to restrict testing time to a reasonable level. Further, to help schools and districts minimize disruptions to daily instruction, the Task Force recommended that the WDE work with a group of stakeholders to provide flexibility in the amount of time devoted to each testing session in the summative assessment.
4. The summative assessment should be designed using the most up-to-date assessment design principles and should include item (question) types capable of measuring the full depth and breadth of the Wyoming state content standards. This will ensure that the assessments can provide meaningful results to key stakeholders and will serve an important signaling function for local educators in the development of their own instructional and assessment tasks. Additionally, the Task Force recommended the inclusion of writing in the English language arts assessment to ensure fully measuring the depth and breadth of the standards, to signal that the state standards on writing are important, and to improve both the learning and instruction of writing.
5. The assessment should be developed to capitalize on the advantages afforded by online administration. The Task Force recognized past problems with online assessment and provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to ensure a smooth transition. Key among these recommendations is that schools, districts, and the state be given until the spring of 2018 (school year 2017-18) to implement the new state summative assessment. Such lead time is critical for a successful and smooth transition. Further, to facilitate quick return of results, assessments should be scored using automated scoring to the extent that is practical.
6. The Task Force indicated that a balance must be struck between scheduling the state summative assessment as late as possible in the instructional year and returning the results in time for use in school improvement activities. This will aid school districts in maximizing instruction time within designated school year months, while evaluating and adjusting

interventions, curriculum, and programming during the late summer months. This, in essence, requires giving the test later and getting the results back sooner, which is a difficult and potentially expensive task, but essential to the assessment's instructional utility.

The Need for Policy Coherence

One of the key findings of the Task Force was the need for a policy environment that supports the development of a coherent set of Wyoming assessments. The full report offers several general and specific recommendations for how the Legislature and State Board of Education can support a policy environment conducive to sound assessment use in Wyoming. The Task Force strongly recommends that the Legislature focus on creating statutes to set broad goals and articulate the appropriate intended uses of assessments (e.g., measuring student growth, for use in school accountability determinations). The Legislature and the State Board of Education should prioritize creating a coherent, comprehensive, and efficient assessment system designed to measure student learning of Wyoming content standards and to support school improvement efforts. On the other hand, the Legislature should avoid drafting legislation that speaks to the specifics of assessment design (e.g., types of items to be included on the assessment) or even requiring assessments for specific purposes (e.g., requiring a 3rd grade reading assessment).

The Task Force recognizes that each time the Legislature adds an assessment (e.g., ACT) or a specific requirement (e.g., multiple-choice items only), it is for well-intentioned reasons, often in response to constituent concerns. Unfortunately, while every action might be well-intentioned, it is not long before a once coherent assessment system is no longer so. In other words, good intentions can often lead to unintended negative outcomes. Finally, the Legislature should never name a specific product in legislation or write statutory requirements so narrowly that only one product or vendor meets the qualifications. It is rare that the Legislature possesses the specialized knowledge necessary to recommend a specific assessment product, but most importantly, naming a specific product or too narrowly defining requirements puts the state in a poor negotiating position. The report also points out several existing statutes that will need to be amended or eliminated in order for the recommendations in this report to be enacted.

Limitations of this Report

The Task Force acknowledged that there are many other assessments that comprise the Wyoming assessment system, including the Alternative Assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards, the English Language Learner Proficiency Assessment, the K-2 reading assessments, and the many assessments that make up the career and technical assessment certification and Perkins requirements. However, the Task Force did not address these assessments in this report for two main reasons. First, the time frame for deciding on these recommendations and issuing this report was compressed. The Task Force devoted considerable effort in a short amount of time to complete this report by the deadline. Second, and more importantly, the Task Force did not feel it possessed the specialized expertise necessary to provide recommendations for many or most of these other assessments. Therefore, the Task Force recommends the WDE be charged, perhaps with legislative support, to convene small advisory groups for each of these specific assessments and issue recommendations that adhere to the general framework for comprehensive assessment systems outlined in this report, and that these committees include representation from the original Task Force.

SECTION 1: APPROPRIATE CHARACTERISTICS AND USES OF ASSESSMENT

Introduction

In 2015, the Wyoming Legislature passed Senate Enrolled Act 87, authorizing the State Board of Education to evaluate Wyoming's current state assessment system and create the Wyoming Assessment Task Force. Specifically, Section 6(a)(i) of the Act authorizes:

The state board shall assemble a task force to assist with the assessment review and evaluation. The task force shall be comprised of representatives of small and large school districts and schools from all geographic regions of the state and shall at minimum include representatives from district and school administration, school district assessment and curriculum program administrators, elementary and secondary school teachers, school district board members, state higher education representatives, member of the Wyoming business community and parents of children enrolled in Wyoming public schools.

The twenty-four Task Force members⁶ met seven times between June 1 and October 1, 2015. Three of these meetings were held in person, one of which was for two full days, and the remaining four meetings were three-hour webinars. This report presents the results of the Task Force deliberations. Before moving to the discussion of the Task Force recommendations, we first present in this section of the report some critical definitions and background assessment information.

We begin by defining two broad categories of assessment use: (1) *high-stakes accountability uses* and (2) *lower-stakes instructional uses*. Stakes (or consequences) may be high for students, teachers or administrators, or schools and districts. For students, test scores may be used for making high-stakes decisions regarding grades, grade promotion, graduation, college admission, and scholarships. For educators, student test scores may formally or informally factor into periodic personnel evaluations. In addition, students, teachers and administrators are affected by high-stakes uses of test scores in school and district accountability: identification as a school or district in need of intervention often leads to required interventions intended to correct poor outcomes.

Lower-stakes instructional uses of test scores for teachers and administrators include informing moment-to-moment instruction; self-evaluation in teaching a unit and adjusting subsequent plans accordingly, evaluating one's own instructional effectiveness; and evaluating the success of a curriculum, program, or intervention.

As described above, within the *high stakes accountability* and *lower stakes formative* categories of use, there are many potential uses and there can be many uses that blur these distinctions. The multiple appropriate uses of the various types of assessment introduced below may fall into both broad categories.

⁶ There were twenty-six original members, but two members resigned during the course of the project due to other commitments.

Types of Assessments and Appropriate Uses

While there are several possible categorizations of assessment by type, we focus on the distinction among *summative*, *interim*, and *formative* assessment⁷ because of the direct relevance to the Task Force's work. We define and outline the appropriate uses of the three types of assessment below. These definitions are critical to understanding what each type of assessment can and cannot do. Appendix B provides an at-a-glance summary of the typical characteristics, appropriate uses, and examples of each type of assessment.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment, when well-implemented, could also be called formative instruction. The purpose of formative assessment is to evaluate student understanding against key learning targets, provide targeted feedback to students, and adjust instruction on a moment-to-moment basis.

In 2006, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and experts on formative assessment developed a widely cited definition (Wiley, 2008):

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievements of intended instructional outcomes (p. 3).

The core of the formative assessment process is that it takes place during instruction (i.e., “in the moment”) and under full control of the teacher to support student learning. Further, unless formative assessment leads to feedback to individual students to improve learning, it is not formative! This is done through diagnosing on a very frequent basis where students are in their progress toward learning goals, where gaps in knowledge and skill exist, and how to help students close those gaps. Instruction is not paused when teachers engage in formative assessment. In fact, instruction should be inseparable from formative assessment processes.

Formative assessment is not a product, but an instruction-embedded process tailored to monitoring the learning of and providing frequent targeted feedback⁸ to individual students. Effective formative assessment occurs frequently, covering small units of instruction (such as part of a class period). If tasks are presented, they may be targeted to individual students or groups. There is a strong view among some scholars that because formative assessment is tailored to a classroom and to individual students that results cannot (and should not) be meaningfully aggregated or compared.

Data gathered through formative assessment have essentially no use for evaluation or accountability purposes such as student grades, educator accountability, school/district accountability, or even public reporting that could allow for inappropriate comparisons. There are at least four reasons for this:

- 1) if carried out appropriately, the data gathered from one unit, teacher, moment, or student will not be comparable to the next;

⁷ In defining formative, interim, and summative assessment, this section borrows from three sources (Perie, Marion, & Gong, 2009; Michigan Department of Education, 2013; Wiley, 2008).

⁸ See Sadler (1989).

- 2) students will be unlikely to participate as fully, openly, and honestly in the process if they know they are being evaluated by their teachers or peers on the basis of their responses;
- 3) for the same reasons, educators will be unlikely to participate as fully, openly, and honestly in the process; and
- 4) the nature of the formative assessment process is likely to shift (i.e., be corrupted) in such a way that it can no longer optimally inform instruction.

Because there is considerable confusion about what formative assessment is, further definition and four vignettes⁹ describing formative assessment in action are provided in Appendix A to clarify the meaning using concrete ideas. The first two vignettes are also presented in condensed form in the one-page summary of formative, interim, and summative assessment in Appendix B.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are generally infrequent (e.g., administered only once to any given student) and cover major components of instruction such as units, semesters, courses, credits, or grade levels. They are typically given at the end of a defined period to evaluate students' performance against a set of learning targets for the instructional period. The prototypical assessment conjured by the term "summative assessments" is given in a standardized manner statewide (but can also be given nationally or districtwide) and is typically used for accountability or to otherwise inform policy. Such summative assessments are typically the least flexible of the various assessment types. Summative assessments may also be used for "testing out" of a course, diploma endorsement, graduation, high school equivalency, and college entrance. Appropriate uses of such standardized summative assessments include school and district accountability, curriculum/program evaluation, monitoring educational trends, and informing policymakers and other stakeholders. Depending on their alignment to classroom instruction and the timing of the administration and results, summative assessments may be appropriate for grading (e.g., end-of-course exams).

Less standardized summative assessments are also found in the majority of middle- and high-school classrooms. Such assessments are typically completed near the end of a semester, credit, course, or grade level. Common examples are broad exams or projects intended to give a summary of student achievement of marking period objectives, and figure heavily in student grading. Such assessments tend to be labeled "mid-terms," "final projects," "final papers," or "final exams" in middle and high school grades. Elementary school classrooms also have similar summative assessments but these do not have a consistent label in elementary grades. Classroom summative assessments may be created by individual teachers or by staff from one or more schools or districts working together.

Summative assessments tend to require a pause in instruction for test administration. They may be controlled by a single teacher (for assessments unique to the classroom), groups of teachers working together, a school (e.g., for all sections of a given course or credit), a district (to standardize across schools), a group of districts working together, a state, a group of states, or a test vendor. The level at which test results are comparable depends on who controls the assessment. They may be comparable within a classroom, across a few classrooms, within a school, within a district, across a few districts, within a state, or across multiple states.

⁹ Informed by Wiley (2008).

Assuming they are well-designed, appropriate uses of such summative assessments include:

- student grading in the specific courses for which they were developed,
- evaluating and adjusting curriculum, programming, and instruction the next time the large unit of instruction is taught,
- servicing as a post-test measure of student learning, and
- as indicators for educational accountability.

Interim Assessment

Many periodic standardized assessment products currently in use that are marketed as “formative,” “benchmark,” “diagnostic,” and/or “predictive” actually belong in the interim assessment category. They are neither formative (e.g., they do not facilitate moment-to-moment targeted analysis of and feedback designed to student learning) nor summative (they do not provide a broad summary of course- or grade-level achievement tied to specific learning objectives).

Many interim assessments are commercial products and rely on fairly standardized administration procedures that provide information relative to a specific set of learning targets—although generally not tied to specific state content standards—and are designed to inform decisions at the classroom, school, and/or district level. Although infrequent, interim assessments may be controlled at the classroom level to provide information for the teacher, but unlike formative assessment, the results of interim assessments can be meaningfully aggregated and reported at a broader level. However, the adoption and timing of such interim assessments are likely to be controlled by the school district. The content and format of interim assessments is also very likely to be controlled by the test developer. Therefore, these assessments are considerably less instructionally-relevant than formative assessment in that decisions at the classroom level tend to be *ex post facto* regarding post-unit remediation needs and adjustment of instruction the next time the unit is taught.

Common assessments developed by a school or district for the purpose of measuring student achievement multiple times throughout a year may be considered interim assessments. These may include common mid-term exams and other periodic assessments such as quarterly assessments. Many educators refer to “common formative assessments,” but these tend to function more like interim assessments. This is not a negative connotation because there is tremendous transformative power in having educators collaboratively examine student work.

Standardized interim assessments may be appropriate for a variety of uses, including predicting a student’s likelihood of success on a large-scale summative assessment, evaluating a particular educational program or pedagogy, identifying potential gaps in a student’s learning after a limited period of instruction has been completed, or measuring student learning over time.

There are three other types of interim assessments currently in use beyond the “backward looking” interim assessments described above. All are “forward-looking.” One useful but less widely used type is a pre-test given before a unit of instruction to gain information about what students already know in order to adjust plans for instruction before beginning the unit (teachers may do these pre-instruction checks on a more frequent, formative basis). Such forward-looking assessments may be composed of pre-requisite content or the same content as the end-of-unit assessment. A second type of forward-looking assessment is a placement exam used to personalize course-taking according to

existing knowledge and skills. Finally, a third type of forward-looking assessment is intended to predict how a student will do on a summative assessment before completing the full unit of instruction. The usefulness of this last type of interim assessment is debatable in that it is unlikely to provide much instructionally relevant information and there is often other information available to determine who is likely to need help succeeding on the end of year summative assessment.

SECTION 2: DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS AND USES

The Task Force recognized that assessment design is always a case of optimization under constraints¹⁰. In other words, there may be many desirable purposes, uses, and goals for assessment, but they may be in conflict. Any given assessment can serve only a limited number of purposes well. Finally, assessments always have some type of restrictions (e.g., legislative requirements, time, and cost) that must be weighed in finalizing recommendations. Therefore, a critical early activity of the Task Force was to identify the purposes and uses for a new Wyoming assessment system.

Task Force members initially were asked to ignore constraints, and identify their highest priority purposes and goals for assessment and their desired uses of assessment data. Task Force members, working in small groups, identified their highest priority uses and then reviewed the work of other subgroups. After each subgroup's highest priority uses and purposes were reviewed, each individual panelist identified their three highest priorities. The full Task Force then discussed possible patterns emerging from the activity.

In general, Task Force members desired a Wyoming assessment system that is capable of serving the following broad purposes:

- Provide instructionally-useful information to teachers and students (with appropriate grain-size and timely reporting),
- Provide clear and accurate information to parents and students regarding students' achievement of and progress toward key outcomes, such as progress toward meeting grade-level standards and progress toward readiness for post-secondary education and/or career training,
- Provide meaningful information to support evaluation and enhancement of curriculum and programs, and
- Provide information to appropriately support federal and state accountability determinations.

Detailed top priority uses and characteristics that were similar were consolidated in the broad purposes listed above. In consolidating, important differences in each contributing uses/characteristics were incorporated into the consolidated description. Appendix B provides more detailed information regarding this prioritization activity.

An important outcome of this activity is that no single type of assessment (formative, interim, or summative) is applicable to all of the high-priority desired uses and characteristics and that all three types would be needed to address the various purposes and uses. In other words, to accomplish the full set of uses and characteristics, a system of assessments would be required that span the range of assessment type (formative, interim, and summative) and assessment level (classroom, district, and state). This can be accomplished by combining state and local assessments to create a coherent system and eliminating unnecessary assessment.

¹⁰ See Braun (in press).

SECTION 3: INTENDED OUTCOMES AND ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

In developing recommendations for a new state summative assessment, the Task Force deliberated on issues it intended to address in three areas: state summative assessment, interim assessments, and district assessment systems. In other words, Task Force members were asked what “problems” they were trying to solve with their recommendations. What follows is a brief discussion of these issues. The bulleted statements characterize information reported by Task Force members and, in fact, each statement can start as follows: “Task Force members reported that...”

State Summative Assessment

Timing, Stability, and Comparability

- The state summative assessment is administered too early in the year to reflect a full year of instruction, and on the flip side results sometimes come too late for use in school improvement activities such as program and curriculum evaluation. The assessment needs to be administered later in the year *and* results need to be returned in time for use in school improvement activities, which is generally by the beginning of August.
- The use of state test scores for school improvement activities is tenuous because the test or the cut scores defining achievement levels on the test change too often. The state assessment needs to remain stable for many years to allow for analysis of policies, programming, and curriculum over time.
- Comparing results from Wyoming state assessment to other states is not possible because the assessment is unique to Wyoming. It is important that Wyoming be able to compare its results with other states with similar content standards to inform state and local policy.

Test Quality

- The quality and usefulness of student achievement and growth reports needs to be improved, given the high-stakes use of state test results.
- It is important that the state assessment include tasks and questions that require deep thinking from students intended to signal the kind of activities the Task Force expects Wyoming students to engage with as part of classroom instruction. Multiple-choice-only tests are inadequate in that they signal that Wyoming puts a priority on easy-to-measure knowledge and skills.

Concerns about Appropriate Use

- Educators need adequate professional development in appropriate uses of state assessment data and appropriate preparation for success on the assessment. Teachers need confidence that they can appropriately use state assessment data to improve their own practice.
- Current use of ACT goes beyond what is appropriate. The ACT is a college entrance examination that is designed to measure ACT’s college readiness standards. It was not developed to measure the Wyoming state content standards. As such, it is inappropriate to use the ACT as the sole accountability assessment in high school. The use of college entrance assessment scores should be limited to the use for which it has been validated: predicting first year grade point average in postsecondary institutions.

- The use of ACT as the sole high school accountability assessment has resulted in confusion about the high school learning targets: the official Wyoming state standards or the ACT college readiness standards? Wyoming high school educators need the high school learning targets to be clear in order to appropriately focus their instruction.

Interim Assessment

The Task Force expressed concern about the incoherence between the existing state assessment and the current interim assessment product. It is important for the state and interim assessments to provide consistent information about individual students and groups of students to assure that differences seen in the results are not simply artifacts of differences between the tests in terms of format, quality, and content coverage. Put simply, Task Force members were concerned that the first questions asked when interpreting assessment results should not be: “did I even teach this or was I supposed to?”

District Assessment Systems

While Wyoming districts have been responsible for developing local assessment systems for a long time, the review of the technical quality of such assessment systems has been inconsistent over time. The following general issues with district assessments were identified:

- There are varying levels of coherence of district assessment systems with the state assessment and with interim assessments, leading to confusion in conclusions drawn from the various assessments.
- The quality of district assessment systems is inconsistent across the state.
- There is inadequate local capacity to develop and validate high-quality local assessment systems.
- The evaluation and support of the quality of local assessment systems has been inconsistent over time.

Intended Outcomes of a Comprehensive Assessment System

Based on desired characteristics and uses of assessment developed in Section 2 and on issues identified above, the Task Force developed intended outcomes of a new Wyoming Comprehensive Assessment System in several broad areas, as shown below.

Integrate Assessment and Instruction

- Prioritize the Wyoming state content standards in a transparent way so that educators clearly know what knowledge and skills will be included on the test and that the complete set of test-eligible content is feasible to teach in the allotted instructional time.
- Improve day-to-day integration of assessment with instruction by encouraging both teacher-level collaboration and ongoing professional development for teachers and leaders.
- Provide teachers and administrators with timely data on individual students’ strengths and weaknesses, and their current and predicted future achievement of desirable outcomes.

Improve Student Engagement

- Assist students to become more engaged in their own education through a greater knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses and their current academic achievement by providing feedback from formative assessment as well as from interim and summative assessment. Further, students should be provided opportunities to learn to become self-assessors and to develop the skills to direct their own learning.

Provide Useful Information to Parents

- Provide parents and guardians with rich information about their student's current academic achievement by providing feedback from classroom, interim, and summative assessments.

Achieve Alignment, Coherence, and Stability

- Achieve alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the officially adopted Wyoming state standards in every district to ensure every Wyoming student is provided a high-quality opportunity to learn the “basket of goods.”
- Achieve coherence of local, interim, and state assessments.
- Achieve stability of local and state assessments to allow for a single-minded focus on improving instruction rather than adapting to new assessments.

Improve Student Academic Achievement and Growth

- Better inform educational policy improvement by providing high-quality data, stable across many years, to high-level policymakers.
- Hold schools and districts appropriately accountable for better measured and more desirable student outcomes.
- Provide valid data to local educators in order to adjust programs and curriculum to target areas of weakness.

Improve the Quality of Assessment

- Improve the quality of district assessment systems.
- Expand beyond multiple-choice items to include other types of tasks on the state assessment better suited to measuring high-level knowledge and skills.
- Convey to all Wyoming education stakeholders that writing is a valuable skill that must be effectively taught and learned in Wyoming public schools.

Enhance the Grade 11 and 12 Experience

- Reserve testing time in grade 11 and 12 for individualized college entrance, work readiness, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) testing.
- Provide freedom for students in grades 11 and 12 to pursue individualized pathways in Career & Technical Education (CTE) including competency-based certificates (e.g., Microsoft, Cisco), college preparation programs such as AP, and dual enrollment options.

Section 4 provides an overview of the system recommended by the Task Force. Section 5 provides detailed recommendations. Sections 4 and 5 are presented separately because it is difficult to get a coherent picture of what the assessment system would look like from the various detailed recommendations.

SECTION 4: OVERVIEW OF THE RECOMMENDED WYOMING ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Introduction and Context

Wyoming stakeholders have determined they want an assessment system that will serve multiple purposes, including documenting Wyoming student academic achievement and growth rates as well as supporting local instructional and program evaluation needs. A thoughtfully-designed system of state, local, and classroom assessments will be necessary to achieve these goals. Such a system will yield high-quality data from all levels of the education system to support a variety of purposes. The Task Force strongly supported minimizing redundant assessments while maximizing coherence of the results. The Task Force prioritized the following broad purposes for the Wyoming Assessment System:

- Producing instructionally-useful information for teachers and students,
- Providing clear and accurate information to parents and students regarding students' achievement of and progress toward key outcomes,
- Producing meaningful and useful information for school administrators and policymakers to support evaluation and enhancement of curriculum and programs, and
- Providing appropriate information to support state and federal accountability determinations.

This section of the report describes the Task Force's recommendations for a Comprehensive Wyoming Assessment System, attempting to paint a picture of an assessment system that blends high-quality state and local assessment results to support the multiple purposes described above. Wyoming's educational system is strongly based on local control. Therefore, the Assessment Task Force recommended an approach to assessment that supports the multitude of uses described above, but that strongly values and improves the quality of locally-generated information.

The assessment system recommended by the Task Force is comprised of statewide, standards-based summative assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science; a set of interim assessments intentionally linked with the summative assessments; district assessments designed to ensure students have had an opportunity to learn the "basket of goods;" and formative assessment practices controlled at the school and classroom levels. The Task Force supported employing summative and interim assessments that can accurately measure deeper levels of student thinking, but to do so as efficiently as possible so the summative assessment does not occupy an oversized place in the overall system. The Task Force emphasized that implementation of formative assessment is exclusively a local endeavor, but welcomed expanded partnership and support from the WDE to increase local assessment literacy to support high-quality practice at the local level. Finally, the Task Force recognized that the perceived and actual usefulness of any assessment system is limited by the quality of data and reporting capabilities. While the WDE has made significant strides in capitalizing on modern data visualization techniques to facilitate accurate interpretation of the school accountability results through the WAEA, more work is required to develop a reporting structure that enhances the utility of the results from state-provided assessments while minimizing potential misinterpretations.

Proposed Wyoming Assessment System

Because the Task Force was generally comprised of general stakeholders of Wyoming education, the Task Force provided the recommendations in this report for general academic assessments administered to the general population of students in Wyoming's public schools. Therefore, the recommendations in this report are not necessarily applicable to alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities, English language proficiency assessment, early (K-2) literacy assessment, or Wyoming's career/technical education assessments. For these specialty assessments, the Task Force recommended that WDE convene small committees of specialists to review the recommendations in this report. The purpose would be to identify recommendations in this report that should apply to the specialty assessments, those that should not apply, those that should be modified, and additional recommendations that should apply to specialty assessments. To assure the most coherent system possible, the small committees should attempt to depart as little as possible from the recommendations in this report.

The Task Force recommended designing and implementing an assessment system that relies on local assessment results to provide rich information to support instructional and evaluative decisions (such as curriculum and program evaluation), while relying on state summative assessments to support accountability decisions. This is done by focusing on improving assessment practice and the quality of data produced by four main assessment system components:

1. Classroom formative assessment practices designed and implemented by teachers to inform moment-to-moment monitoring of student learning and allow for immediate adjustment of instruction, and to provide high-quality feedback to engage students in monitoring and furthering their own learning.
2. District assessment system used to document students' opportunities to learn the "basket of goods."
3. State-supported interim assessments in English language arts and mathematics are designed to provide checks on student performance a few times during the school year and/or provide feedback on how well students have learned key clusters of academic knowledge and skills.
4. State, standards-based summative assessments in grades 3-10 designed to support school (and perhaps district) accountability systems, serve program evaluation needs at local, regional, and state levels, and to audit local assessment results.
5. State-provided college entrance or career readiness assessments in grade 11 designed to give students choices matching individual goals for pursuing post-secondary education at institutes of higher education, career training, or technical education.

For the various categories of assessments to work coherently in Wyoming, they must, at a minimum, be designed to measure student learning of the appropriate Wyoming content standards.

Classroom Formative Assessment

The Task Force acknowledged the critical importance of classroom formative assessment practices for improving student learning, but emphatically argued it should remain relatively silent on recommendations in that area. Task Force members noted that formative assessment is the purview of districts (actually, schools and classrooms) and, for the most part, should not be considered a state program. The Task Force, however, acknowledged it would make sense for the state and

districts to partner in providing high-quality professional development to support improvements in local formative assessment practices.

District Assessment System

In response to State Supreme Court decisions and legislative mandates, Wyoming requires districts to document that students have had an opportunity to learn the “basket of goods,” defined as the content standards in nine subject areas. A comprehensive assessment system must address how the state will monitor student learning of this basket of goods. The combination of district assessment systems and state summative assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science are required to meet these mandates. The Legislature and State Board of Education have had quality assurance requirements for district assessment systems in place for more than 15 years. In spite of this history, the Task Force members expressed concern about the effectiveness of these requirements and the utility of the feedback and supports provided to districts for improving their assessment systems.

The Task Force noted that district assessments play multiple roles, contingent upon their intended uses. Districts have designed a variety of approaches to meet local needs and work within the constraints of capacity. District summative assessments are expected to be aligned to the relevant Wyoming content standards in the given grade level or course, but the specific assessment approach may vary considerably across districts. For example, districts may choose to use single, large-scale tests at the end of a grade or grade span or they may rely on multiple unit-based assessments tied to the applicable Wyoming content standards. In another example, district assessments may serve both an auditing function for individual teachers’ understanding of their students’ learning, and a signaling function of the kinds of knowledge and skills that should be prioritized in daily instruction and classroom assessment.

Even so, Task Force members expressed frustration that in spite of the mandate that districts design and implement local assessment systems in at least nine content areas, there was little clarity regarding the state-required purposes and intended uses of these systems. As explained previously, assessments work best when designed for a specific use (in fact, we argue that is the only way assessments are useful) and if the intended purposes of the district assessment systems are vague, the utility of the results will be limited. Many districts have designed assessment systems that meet local needs. This may be appropriate, but it makes it difficult to outline specific quality criteria if the assessments across districts are designed for considerably different purposes. The Task Force strongly recommended having common requirements of assessment quality, but supported local flexibility on specific assessment designs and uses.

There was interest among some legislators, as expressed in Senate Enrolled Act 87, in using district or other local assessments for state and/or federal accountability purposes while reducing the amount of statewide summative testing. However, the Task Force declined to move in that direction at this time. Task Force members were concerned that meeting the quality requirements for district assessments to serve accountability uses could overwhelm district personnel. After examining the data and reviewing the existing literature, the Task Force recommended that, at the current time, district assessment results should not be used as part of school accountability determinations. The Task Force acknowledged such a stance may relegate district assessment results to a lower status than the state assessment. At the same time, Task Force members were concerned it was not

practically feasible in the short term to dramatically improve the quality of district assessments so they could be used as accountability indicators fairly across the state.

However, the Task Force recognized the need for improving the quality of district assessments through the use of multiple strategies including increasing the assessment expertise of those who reviewed district assessments as part of district accreditation processes and to foster local assessment expertise through state support of district assessment consortia.

Interim Assessments

The Legislature has required and appropriated funds¹¹ for the implementation of a common interim assessment program for all Wyoming school districts. The state supported two administrations of the interim assessment each year—fall and spring—but many districts paid to support winter administration as well. Many district leaders found value in the commercially-selected interim assessment products, using them for a variety of purposes including documenting within-year growth and identifying students in need of remediation. On the other hand, the Task Force members expressed some concern that it was difficult to coherently interpret the results of the interim assessments in light of the summative assessment expectations because the two were designed to measure different learning targets and to do so in different ways (e.g., different item formats).

The Task Force’s major recommendation on the interim assessment was that the State should require the development of an interim assessment system based on the same assessment framework and tied to the same learning targets as the state required summative assessment. Districts could optionally administer the state-provided interim assessments, and would have local control over how they would administer the tests and use the results. Additionally, districts would have the option of purchasing/developing an interim assessment system not tied to the state assessment system, but such districts would be responsible for the costs.

In a critically-important move to help inform WDE’s procurement process the Task Force made additional recommendations regarding the specific interim assessment design. A key consideration for interim assessment design is whether the assessments are “forward-looking,” “backward-looking,” or a “mini summative assessment” design. Forward-looking assessments are provided prior to instruction to gain an understanding of student readiness for learning new concepts and skills. Conversely, backward-looking assessments are those that are designed to help educators and students know how well students learned material that had been taught, generally recently. They can be designed as modules to evaluate student learning of discrete aspects of grade level content (e.g., numbers and operations).

Mini-summative designs are those in which each instance of the interim assessment (2, 3, or 4 or more times each year) is designed to replicate the summative assessment blueprint¹². Because they

¹¹ Funding for interim assessments is provided through the education resource block grant model to school districts at the rate of \$37 per student.

¹² A test blueprint is generally in the form of a matrix where the content categories (e.g., standards, objectives) to be tested are represented on one axis and the level of cognitive demand (in the form of process skills or depth of knowledge) required is represented on the other axis. The cells then document the number of test items or score points for each content category by each level of cognitive demand that can be expected to appear on the test.

are intended to be on the same scale (often a vertical score scale), such mini-summative interim assessment designs are often used for evaluating student growth throughout the year. On the other hand, there is a substantial body of research indicating vertical scales are not necessary for documenting student progress. Many Task Force members indicated it is important for interim assessments to “predict” end-of-year summative assessment performance, and thought the mini-summative designs were the best way to meet this need. However, the technical facilitators (Martineau and Marion) pointed out it would be relatively easy to create prediction equations for almost any pair of reasonably well correlated assessments.

Task Force members were intrigued by having a set of modules, tied to key aspects of grade-level content, as the potential interim assessment design. In order to keep costs in check, the modules would be focused on a limited number of the major concepts of the discipline (e.g., 3-5 modules) and designed so districts could administer the modules when and where they fit best within each district’s curriculum. The modules offer promise for providing feedback to educators and students on more narrowly-specified sets of knowledge and skills than the broader set of content associated with a mini-summative design. See Appendix D for a pictorial representation and detailed explanation of the different designs. Such modules could also effectively serve an auditing function for district assessments, which should be designed to measure similar knowledge and skills. Finally, a modular approach to interim assessment offers the potential for simultaneously reducing the time associated with the summative assessment and generating more instructionally-useful information for educators, because it could eliminate the need for “subscores” on the summative assessment. Because this possibility may seem counterintuitive, additional explanation is provided in Appendix E.

In order to achieve this goal, it may be necessary to customize an existing assessment to some degree. Given the recommendations that follow about not using a custom-designed large-scale summative assessment in Wyoming, existing assessments would need to be capable of a degree of customization without the loss of the benefits that an existing assessment offers. This will likely be possible by 2018. Another potential benefit that such an approach offers is reducing the amount of student time devoted to state summative assessments.

The Task Force also discussed types of questions that should appear on the interim assessments. The members knew using selected-response items (e.g., multiple-choice) to populate the interim assessments would allow for instant reporting and would keep costs down. However, the Task Force recommended that interim assessment questions reflect the types of questions found on the large-scale summative assessment designed to probe students’ deep understanding of critical content and skills. At the same time, the Task Force also strongly recommended that the interim assessment scores must be returned to schools within one week of completing the test. This tradeoff would allow for questions that might take a little longer to score than instant multiple-choice items, but might not allow for the full array of extended-response tasks.

Finally, the Task Force issued recommendations around existing and future requirements associated with the interim assessments. The Task Force recommended that requiring districts to implement assessments in order to conduct evaluations of specific programs could easily become unwieldy and result in a hodgepodge of assessments instead of the coherent system the Task Force promoted. The Bridges program is a case in point. This intervention program is designed to provide supplemental educational opportunities to traditional educationally-disadvantaged student groups or other students struggling with grade-level knowledge and skills. These opportunities are often provided

during the summer, but may be offered after school and on weekends during the regular school year. While well-meaning, the notion of requiring the administration of interim assessments early in the school year to help evaluate the Bridges program has the effect of making the “state” assessment a three times per year event and, most importantly, may miss important aspects of the Bridges program. It is generally assumed a fall interim assessment allows for calculation of change in students’ scores from spring to fall after experiencing the Bridges summer school. However, as noted above, Bridges funds are commonly used to implement instructional interventions other than summer school, such as weekend programs throughout the school year, meaning a fall interim test for Bridges evaluation may be limited. It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss alternative evaluation designs for the Bridges program. Rather, the Task Force emphasized that the Legislature and other policy bodies should avoid requiring additional assessments without carefully thinking about how such assessments fit within a comprehensive assessment system.

State Summative Assessment

The Task Force indicated the state summative assessment must comply with state and federal laws, industry best practices, and professional standards. Further, the assessment should be designed using a principled-assessment design approach. The Task Force strongly recommended that in content areas where it is possible, the state summative assessment selected for Wyoming should be used in at least one other state (preferably many states). There are two reasons for this: to allow for comparison of Wyoming educational outcomes to other states and to encourage a stable state summative assessment over time. In other words, changes to the state summative assessment should be minimized by requiring negotiation with other states and/or a vendor in order to make changes to the assessment system.

The Task Force recommended limiting testing time for state-required summative assessments to no more than *one percent* of the Wyoming required instructional hours for any grade. This translates to a limit of 9, 10.5, and 11 hours of testing time for elementary, middle, and high school grades, respectively. The Task Force did *not* recommend that the full limit of hours be used, only that this should be the maximum allowable, while allowing the time to include questions measuring high-level knowledge and skills on the assessment. State tests are not timed in Wyoming so the Task Force recommended that required testing time be estimated as the amount of time needed for at least 85 percent of students to complete testing. These estimates will improve in accuracy over time.

The Task Force recommended that state, standards-based summative assessments be required in English language arts (including writing) and mathematics in grades 3-10 as well as in science in at least one grade each in elementary, middle, and high school. These assessments must be designed to fully measure the Wyoming content standards and to assess whether students are on track towards college and career ready outcomes. The Task Force recommended that the grade 10 state summative

assessment count as part of the Hathaway scholarship¹³ determinations to explicitly tie the scholarship to the official Wyoming content standards and to assure adequate student motivation¹⁴.

The Task Force pointed out it is not appropriate to include all of the Wyoming high school standards on a test given in grade 10, because students still have at least two more years of school remaining. Therefore, the Task Force recommended having the WDE convene a standards review committee to determine which of the state high school content standards are eligible for testing by the end of grade 10. Because grades 11 and 12 remain important, the Task Force recommended that district assessment systems be required to cover the Wyoming high school content standards that do not appear on the state summative assessment. The Task Force acknowledged this should be relatively easy to accomplish for English language arts, but mathematics could be more challenging. For example, should the grade 9 assessment focuses largely on algebra 1 standards while the grade 10 assessment targets geometry knowledge and skills. This sounds intuitively sensible, but is not without its challenges. The Task Force noted such prioritization could occur easily with a custom assessment program, but would have to be negotiated if the state procures a consortium, collaborative, or other existing assessment system.

The Task Force also recommended that the state continue to fund in-school administration of a college entrance examination in grade 11. However, the Task Force argued career readiness was as important as or more important than college readiness in many parts of Wyoming. Therefore, the Task Force recommended requiring all students to participate in *either* a college entrance examination *or* an analogous career readiness assessment. The provision of an in-school opportunity for college entrance or career readiness testing (rather than a traditional Saturday administration) is intended to maximize the number of students thinking about post-secondary opportunities.

The recommendations to have the last required state standards-based summative assessment at the end of grade 10 was designed to encourage students to specialize during their last two years of high school. The lack of state mandated standards-based testing in grade 11 and 12 was designed to help junior and senior students focus on highly individualized pathways through either college preparation (e.g., through Advanced Placement (AP), dual enrollment, or other programs) or specific career/technical areas where students may become “concentrators.” It also facilitates the transition from high school into college or career training by strengthening the connection between grades 11-12 and post-secondary education or training.

In order to improve reporting timelines for use in school improvement and other evaluation activities, the Task Force recommended administering state summative assessments online except in isolated situations with emergent needs for paper and pencil. Safeguards for assuring a successful transition to online testing are described near the end of this section of the report. The Task Force

¹³ The Hathaway scholarship is a program where Wyoming high school students who complete a required set of courses, have a certain grade point average (GPA), and achieve the required composite score on the ACT receive a scholarship. There are various levels of the scholarship award ranging from \$1,640 to \$840 per semester (for 2015 graduates) depending on the specific GPA and ACT scores. It was beyond the scope of the Task Force’s work to recommend exactly how the grade 10 scores may be included as part of the Hathaway determination, but the Task Force was confident this was not an insurmountable problem.

¹⁴ The Task Force does not have a specific recommendation for how the grade 10 assessment results should be incorporated into the Hathaway determination, but suggests that the Legislature direct the Hathaway Advisory Committee investigate how best to accomplish this goal.

recommended administering the summative tests in a three-week window near, but not at, the end of the school year to maximize the amount of instructional time before the test, but also to assure return of results in time to support summer school improvement activities and district program evaluation needs.

The Task Force recommended that the state summative assessments serve both an auditing function for district assessment results and a signaling function of the kinds of knowledge and skill that should be prioritized in district assessments (e.g., deeper levels of thinking).

However, the Task Force was concerned that including too many performance or other extended-response tasks on the state summative assessment may lead to unacceptable testing times. Therefore, the Task Force strongly recommended that the state summative assessment include only the number of such test questions necessary to both signal the types of assessment tasks the state would like to see on classroom and district assessments and ensure the state assessments can provide information about achievement on the full depth of the Wyoming state content standards.

Supports and Conditions

To improve fidelity of implementation at the classroom, school, district, and state levels, the Task Force noted that certain supports are critical.

Data and Reporting Systems

The Task Force recommended the use of a comprehensive assessment system to maximize the coherence of information produced from various assessment tools. However, without a well-designed and implemented reporting system, the hopes for a comprehensive assessment system will fall well short. The world of data visualization has opened up exciting new possibilities for placing useable information in the hands of users in ways they can easily understand. Score reports are the only ways assessment designers communicate with stakeholders, yet it is often the last thing attended to in design deliberations¹⁵. Therefore, the Task Force strongly recommended that Wyoming devote the resources necessary to produce a high-quality digital reporting system that capitalizes on modern data visualization techniques and facilitates accurate assessment interpretations while minimizing opportunities for misconceptions. Such a reporting system could be included in vendors' bid in response to the state assessment RFP, but the Task Force was aware such systems would likely come from more specialized vendors. The Task Force commended the WDE's efforts in reporting the results of WAEA system, but wanted to go much further to help users understand the assessment results and potential educational implications of the scores.

Assessment Literacy

Having high-quality and intuitively useable reporting systems is a big step toward improving assessment literacy. Unfortunately, it is probably not enough. The Task Force recognized WDE's current efforts to promote formative assessment practices, but recommended expanding the state's efforts to promote assessment literacy and effective assessment. It is beyond the scope of this report to fully outline approaches to meet these goals. The Task Force recommended implementing a

¹⁵ Attributed to Ron Hambleton.

thoughtful approach or set of approaches to improve local assessment practices and products (e.g., classroom and district assessments).

Evaluation

Finally, the Task Force recommended that the state should contract for an ongoing evaluation of (1) the quality of the state assessment; (2) the degree to which intended outcomes are being achieved; (3) the degree to which anticipated and unintended consequences have been observed and minimized (for the unintended, negative consequences); and (4) after three to five years, a summary report including potential improvements to the system to address any issues identified.

Ensuring a Successful Transition

The Task Force recommended a multi-year transition strategy to ensure a successful transition to online state summative assessment and high-quality interim assessment systems. Allowing enough time to act on these recommendations is critical to assuring that the transition is successful. The first all-online administration of the state summative assessment should take place in the spring of 2018 (school year 2017-18) and the transition must be smooth. The Task Force recommends a comprehensive, detailed set of safeguards to assure a smooth transition, presented in subsequent sections.

SECTION 5: DETAILED DESIGN AND TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Before presenting the specific, detailed design and technical recommendations, it is important to note that Task Force members and State Board of Education members wanted to ensure the recommendations in this report did not unreasonably limit the number of *potential* products that could qualify if these recommendations are enacted. To address those concerns, *potential* qualifying vendors and products are listed in Appendix F.

I. Classroom Formative Assessment

The Task Force acknowledged the critical importance of classroom formative assessment practices for improving student learning, but emphatically argued that other than briefly discussing formative assessment in this report, the Task Force should remain relatively silent on the issue. Task Force members noted formative assessment is the purview of districts (actually, schools and classrooms) and for the most part should not be part of the “state” comprehensive assessment system. The Task Force, however, acknowledged it would make sense for the state and districts (perhaps organized regionally) to partner in providing high-quality professional development to support high-quality local formative assessment practices.

II. District Assessment System

The major issues identified with district assessment systems by the Task Force include uneven quality, uneven coherence with state assessment, and practical challenges for districts to design and implement high quality assessment systems. The following recommendations attempted to address these concerns:

- A. To improve quality and assure consistency of reviews, the Task Force recommended that the WDE take various steps to improve the quality and utility of these reviews by improving the expertise of those conducting the assessment system reviews.
- B. The state should incentivize and/or support collaborative efforts among districts to improve the quality of locally-developed assessment tasks and the quality of data use for informing educational decisions. This could include hosting for educators to obtain access to intact assessments, banks of high-quality tasks and test questions, and appropriate professional development on using the resources.

The Task Force recommended NOT using the district assessment results as an indicator in the WAEA at this time because considerable improvements in district assessment systems would be required to support high-stakes use and there is concern districts do not have the time and capacity to meet such requirements at this time.

III. State-Provided Interim Assessment

A. Governing Principles

The Task Force recommended that the state support an interim assessment system tied directly to the summative assessment to encourage consistency across the state and coherence with the accountability performance targets. The use of interim assessments should be governed by the following principles:

1. To reduce required testing time and to tailor to specific uses, districts should not be required to administer any interim assessments, but may choose to use interim assessments as the district sees fit to support identified local uses.
2. Districts choosing to use the state-provided interim assessment would not be responsible for the cost of the assessment. Districts choosing to administer a different interim assessment would do so at their own expense.
3. The interim assessment supported by the state should be coherently tied to the state summative assessment. It should be constructed to measure the same content standards, and should use the same types and formats of test questions to assure a consistent experience for students and educators across state summative and interim assessment.
4. To assure coherence with the summative assessments and to achieve competitive pricing, the interim assessment should be procured as part of the summative assessment.
5. To provide an outside audit of the district and other local assessment results, interim assessments should provide a check on the big ideas associated with the grade level learning targets.

B. Two “Flavors” of Interim Assessment

The Task Force discussed two basic forms of interim assessment (see Appendix D):

1. A “mini-summative” version in which the interim assessment is a shorter version of the end-of-year state summative assessment (e.g., the interim assessment blueprint is representative of the summative assessment blueprint, but results in a shorter test¹⁶). This allows for monitoring students’ growth within a school year on an overall content area and for predicting student performance on the end-of-year summative test.
2. A module-based version in which the blueprint of the summative assessment is broken into 3-5 subsets of content categories, and each interim assessment module measures only one subset. Each module should allow for at least two subscores to be reported within the subset. This allows for measuring achievement of mid-sized units of instruction.

The Task Force recommended that an RFP for state assessments should include both mini-summative and module-based interim assessment designs with the timing of interim assessments being left entirely to local discretion to best meet local needs. However, because of concerns about potential cost increases from providing both types of interim assessments, the Task Force indicated a preference for the module design starting with at least 3-5 modules per grade and subject if a choice of either modular or mini-summative must be made.

¹⁶ A test blueprint is generally in the form of a matrix where the content categories (e.g., standards, objectives) to be tested are represented on one axis and the level of cognitive demand (in the form of process skills or depth of knowledge) required is represented on the other axis. The cells then document the number of test items or score points for each combination of content category and level of cognitive demand that can be expected to appear on the test.

D. Item and Task Types

The Task Force recognized the importance of the interim assessment mirroring the summative assessment as much as possible to assure complex knowledge and skills are measured on both. The Task Force also recognized near-immediate reporting is needed to maximize the usefulness of interim assessments. The inclusion of complex item types (see the section on *Alignment to the Wyoming State Standards* starting on page 23) means human scoring may be required, which increases the time between completing an assessment and reporting. To address this conflict, the Task Force recommended the following compromise:

1. Interim assessment results should be returned no more than one week after completion of an assessment.
2. All items types used on the summative assessment should also be included in the interim assessment, so long as they do not preclude returning interim assessment results in no more than one week.

IV. State Summative Assessment

A. Governing Principles

To assure Wyoming is able to procure a high-quality assessment, the Task Force recommended that the technical quality of the assessment should be well-documented according to research and/or best practices as referenced by some or all of the following:

- Principled assessment design (e.g., *Evidence Centered Design*¹⁷, *Knowing What Students Know*¹⁸)
- Universal Design for Learning¹⁹
- The AERA/APA/NCME *Standards*²⁰
- CCSSO/ATP *Best Practices for Statewide Assessment*²¹
- Applicable state and federal law and regulation
- Federal peer review requirements

B. Avoiding an Exclusive Wyoming Assessment

In order to provide stability, cost savings, enhanced quality, and comparability of Wyoming test results to other states, the Task Force recommended the following:

1. Each content area test must be used in some form in at least one other state (preferably several other states) for the following reasons:
 - Improve technical quality through the increased capacity and expertise in collaboration among multiple states.

¹⁷ Mislevy & Riconscente (2006).

¹⁸ Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser (2001).

¹⁹ Thompson, Johnstone, & Thurlow (2002).

²⁰ APA, AERA, & NCME (2014).

²¹ CCSSO & ATP (2013).

- Facilitate comparison of results from the Wyoming assessment to results from other states.
 - Reduce cost through collaboration among multiple states.
 - Provide stability by requiring changes to the assessment to be negotiated with at least one other state and/or vendor.
2. To maximize market competition, the ability to meet Wyoming’s needs, and negotiating power, recommendations in this section should be required only where there are at least two options available.

C. Standards-Based Assessment vs. College/Career Entrance Assessment

The Task Force recommended that a distinction be made between assessments up to grade 10 and assessments after grade 10 in order to maintain the benefits of a college entrance examination, and to provide greater freedom for juniors and seniors to pursue individualized pathways.

1. Assessments after Grade 10.
 - a. Reserve grade 11 and 12 for college entrance, work skills, CTE and other certifications, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate assessments. Do not add standards-based state summative assessment in grade 11 or 12.
 - b. To provide schools incentives to help upper level high school students develop individualized pathways through a career and technical education program or a college preparation program, do not use grade 11 and 12 assessments for school accountability purposes other than as part of the “readiness indicator” of WAEA.
 - c. Require grade 11 students to take *either* a college entrance examination or a work skills examination. This should be administered in school on a regular school day.
 - d. The WDE should be provided with funding for a contract to provide districts with one or more resources to gather and report on students’ career/college interest to facilitate local development of individualized high-school pathways.
2. Assessments in Grades 3-10
 - a. Require standards-based, state summative accountability assessment in grades 3-10.
 - b. The WDE should be provided with funding for a contract to conduct studies to develop predictive relationships between the grade 9 and 10 assessments and the college readiness and work skills assessments.
 - c. To ensure both student motivation on the grade 10 assessments and alignment of the Hathaway scholarship criteria with the official Wyoming content standards, the Task Force requests the Legislature and the Hathaway Advisory Committee investigate how the grade 10 assessment might be incorporated into the criteria for Hathaway scholarship eligibility.

D. Alignment to the Wyoming State Standards

The Task Force recommended signaling the importance of complex knowledge and skills described in the Wyoming state standards through the following:

1. The grade 3-10 assessments should be aligned to the depth and breadth of Wyoming’s state content standards, including complex knowledge and skills that are not easily measured.

2. The assessment should include both multiple choice items and more complex item types better suited to measuring more complex knowledge and skills (e.g., enhanced multiple choice, technology enhanced items, short constructed response, extended constructed response, performance tasks). However, the number of more complex item types included in the assessment must allow for meeting the testing time limits.
3. To avoid market restriction, vendors proposing “naked” writing tasks may still be considered “qualified bidders” assuming they meet other requirements. However, after qualified bidders have been identified, vendors proposing writing tasks that require a text (evidence)-based response should receive more points for writing than vendors proposing naked writing tasks²².

E. Content Coverage

To ensure compliance with federal laws and to signal the importance of the core content areas of English language arts (including writing), mathematics, and science, the Task Force recommended the following:

1. Require assessment of English language arts and mathematics in every grade.
2. Require coverage of writing (as a part of English language arts) in *at least* one grade each in the elementary, middle, and high school grade spans.
 - a. If it is possible to do so within the limits for testing time, include writing in each of grades 3-10.
 - b. The English language arts assessment should include at least two writing samples per student to adequately measure the Wyoming writing standards.
 - c. Contextualized writing tasks should be preferred over “naked” writing tasks (e.g., writing tasks should require referring to provided text, charts, and/or tables).
3. Require coverage of science in *at least* one grade each in the elementary, middle, and high school grade spans.
 - a. Wait to bring the state science assessment into compliance with the requirements of this report until new Wyoming state science standards are adopted.
 - b. Include in the RFP for state assessment services a range of dates in which the contractor could reasonable expect new science standards to be adopted.
4. To clearly identify what content is eligible to appear on the grade 10 test in each content area, the following should be enacted:
 - a. The WDE should facilitate a standards review committee with the charge of specifying which of the Wyoming content standards are expected to be taught and learned by end of grade 10.
 - b. The committee should be comprised of K-12 content specialists, district curriculum directors, and higher education content specialists.

²² This assumes a bid evaluation process in which vendor bids are first scored to determine whether they meet a threshold for qualifying to provide the state with assessment services, followed by a review of the qualifying bids for a few areas in which select vendors may receive extra credit for proposing “value added” beyond the requirements of the request for proposals (RFP).

- c. After the standards review committee completes its work, the WDE should convene a small advisory group of educators to assist it with determining appropriate content to appear on specific grade 9 and 10 assessments in mathematics²³.
- d. Any remaining high school content in the Wyoming state standards should be covered in district assessment systems.

F. Testing Time

In combination with eliminating the requirement to use a state-provided interim assessment, the Task Force recommended limiting the amount of time that may be required for the state summative assessment.

1. Limit actual testing time for state-required summative assessment to no more than one percent of the required instructional hours for a given grade level (based on Chapter 22 of WDE rules; this translates to approximately 9, 10.5, and 11 hours of testing time for elementary, middle, and high school, respectively)²⁴.
2. “Actual testing time” means the time students are actually responding to assessment tasks (not additional time used for test preparation, breaks, gathering students, logging students, or reading test instructions)²⁵. Because Wyoming state assessments are not timed, “actual testing time” should be based on estimated testing time needed for 85 percent of students to complete the test. These estimates should be updated annually based on actual test administration.

G. Test Timing and Test Windows

In order to balance maximizing the amount of instructional time before state summative assessments and typical end-of-year school activities, and the need to receive results in time for school improvement activities, the Task Force recommended the following:

1. State testing should occur during a three- to four-week testing window which is the same for every grade, with the last allowable testing day being in the first half of May.
2. All aggregate reports (other than statewide aggregate reports) should be available by August 1 to facilitate school improvement activities (with consideration that in the first year of any new program, reports are likely to be delayed).
3. Acting within the constraints of the first bullet in this list, the WDE should work with a committee of stakeholders to finalize testing windows (e.g., the first and last allowable testing days each year) and to address local needs for flexibility in scheduling assessment activities²⁶. If possible, start and end dates should be later to maximize instruction before

²³ The content of English language arts is reasonably well specified by high school grade level, but mathematics content standards are not. This requires a careful parsing of the high school mathematics content standards for not only what must be taught by the end of grade 10, but also for what should appear on each of the grade 9 and grade 10 assessments in mathematics.

²⁴ Required testing time may be less than these limits.

²⁵ This definition of “actual testing time” is provided to avoid district-to-district variation in the time devoted to activities wrapped around actual testing.

²⁶ For example, allow for flexibility in length of test sessions to coincide with the length of class periods (to avoid unnecessary disruption of daily instructional activities).

assessment, but should also consider typical year-end school activities and the time needed to return data to schools in time for use in school improvement activities. This committee of stakeholders should include school and district staff with two sets of responsibilities: (1) calendaring, and (2) managing state assessment activities.

H. Moving Assessment Online

The Task Force recommended that test administration be moved fully online to expedite return of assessment results and the use of data in school improvement activities. While other states generally less ready than Wyoming have successfully made the transition to online assessment, Wyoming's previous experience with statewide online assessment prompted the Task Force to recommend several safeguards to assure a smooth transition. The most important of these is the new assessment system should be developed and implemented in a deliberative manner. If these recommendations are acted upon quickly, a new assessment system could be in place by spring of 2018. The recommended safeguards include the following:

1. Schools and districts should be notified immediately, upon acceptance by the Legislature of the recommendations in this report, they must be ready for online assessment by spring of 2018.
2. The state should contract as soon as possible for a high-quality comprehensive technology infrastructure audit for the state as a whole and for every school and district. The state audit should, at a minimum, cover adequacy of the state internet backbone. District audits should, at a minimum, cover adequacy of available bandwidth, stability of connections to the state backbone and/or other networks. School audits should cover adequacy of available bandwidth, stability of connections to district/state systems, adequacy of wireless school network capacity, adequacy of the number of devices capable of administering the assessment, and the adequacy of the operating systems used on those devices.
3. The state contractor should work with each school district to assist in performing the audit (including fully conducting the audit if necessary) to assure a consistent application across all districts.
4. The state contractor should produce a public report including sections for the state as a whole (including a summary of district and school reports), each district (including a summary of each school report), and each school. The report should identify specific gaps in technology infrastructure in each section of the report and identify minimum actions required to close those gaps.
5. After the full set of audit reports has been produced, it may be necessary for the Legislature to consider whether there are any critical, targeted funding needs to fill the identified gaps.
6. To improve schools' confidence in the process, all appropriate state agencies that support school technology infrastructure should clearly describe how they will support preparing all schools and districts for online assessment by spring 2018.
7. At least ten months in advance of the first statewide online administration, all schools, districts, and the state contractor should conduct a simultaneous load test simulating all of Wyoming's students logging on and taking the test simultaneously to attempt to "break" the system. Any breaks or near breaks in the system as a result of the load test should be used to increase capacity in any areas necessary before the first administration.
8. A paper and pencil option should be available to address isolated emergent needs that cannot be resolved in a reasonable amount of time to allow for online testing.

9. Schools should have reasonable flexibility on scheduling testing within the test window to accommodate the use of online assessment with a limited number of devices (e.g., the length and number of test sessions for each student).
10. It should be communicated often to both parents and educators that prior to taking assessments online, students should be provided with adequate experience in the classroom using devices they will take the test on. This should include at a minimum specific focus on navigating a screen and keyboarding. The WDE should gather a workgroup of educators to develop guidelines for providing adequate experience.

I. Claims to Be Supported for Individual Students

In order to support important educational decisions made by parents, students, and teachers, the Task Force recommended that the assessment must support the following claims for each individual student:

1. How each student achieves relative to Wyoming standards, including more difficult to measure, higher-level knowledge and skills.
2. How each student's year-to-year growth compares relative to peers.
3. Student achievement and growth scores are accurate across the range of student achievement, meaning:
 - a. Scores are generally free of floor or ceiling effects.
 - b. Scores support claims about whether novice, typical, and advanced students are being well educated.

J. Claims to Be Supported for Classrooms, Schools, Districts, and the State

In order to support important educational decisions made by teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the public, the Task Force recommended that the assessment must support the following claims for each classroom²⁷, school, district, and the state:

1. The magnitude of achievement and growth gaps for key demographic groups (e.g., sex, race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage, special education, and English learners).
2. The change in achievement and growth gaps over time.
3. The percentage of Wyoming students meeting proficiency targets.
4. The percentage of Wyoming students meeting growth targets adequate to remain proficient (for already proficient students) or to achieve proficiency (for not yet proficient students) within a reasonable number of years.
5. Produces valid and reliable group reports (at the class, school, district, and state level) on strengths and weakness in both proficiency and growth in a small number of sub-areas of each content area. To the degree that these sub-scores provide different information (see Appendix E for detail on issues with sub-scores), this supports school improvement activities, post hoc evaluation of instructional practices, curriculum, and programming, and high level policies. This could be accomplished using green/yellow/red light reports that

²⁷ Access to classroom-level aggregate reports should be limited to educators responsible for that classroom to protect student privacy.

show for each group the sub-areas in which a group's achievement is better than, similar to, or worse than its overall content area achievement²⁸.

K. Reporting

Without thoughtfully designed and useful reports, the quality of the assessment system is moot. To assure the investment in the quality of the assessment is returned, the Task Force recommended the following:

1. Reports must be designed to meet the needs of the following four key groups of stakeholders:
 - a. Students and parents,
 - b. Teachers,
 - c. School and district leadership teams, and
 - d. Business community, media, State Board of Education, State Superintendent, Legislature's education committees, Legislature at large, Governor, and general public.
2. Individual student reports must be designed with stakeholder groups "a" and "b" in mind.
3. Aggregate reports (e.g., classroom and school reports) showing individual student data must be designed with stakeholder groups "b" and "c" in mind.
4. Aggregate reports showing group summary data must be designed with all four groups of stakeholders in mind.
5. Unless it is possible to adequately serve the needs of multiple stakeholder groups with a single report format, each report should be developed with a format specific to each audience.
6. The format and elements of each report should be determined by conducting focus groups and/or multiple rounds of workshopping, with a focus on the following for each report element:
 - Identifying the critical "so-what" message(s) for the intended audience(s).
 - Assuring the "so-what" message(s) are clearly and transparently conveyed.
 - Designing reports to minimize probable misinterpretations.
 - Assuring consistency with AERA/APA/NCME standards for score reporting²⁹.
7. The reporting system should allow for teachers to receive dynamic individual reports for their current students, and aggregate reports for their current and past students.
8. The reporting system should allow for each audience to obtain the desired information using intuitive navigation and assistance in finding reports to answer specific questions. Report users should be able to retrieve data to answer their questions with a minimum number of clicks through a guided selection of options. Where access to data is appropriate, report users should be able to easily retrieve data about achievement and growth for individual students and demographic groups at the student, classroom, school, district, and state level; with simple navigation between levels.

²⁸ For example, group average subscores can be compared to overall scores within a content area to identify whether in each sub-area, the group perform better than, similar to, or worse than they did in the overall content area. Each of those group average scores could also be compared to the thresholds for the different performance levels.

²⁹ APA, AERA, & NCME (2014).

L. Wyoming Educator Participation in Ongoing Development

After qualified bidders have been identified, vendors whose proposals are consistent with recommendations in this section should receive extra credit³⁰. Although avoiding an exclusive Wyoming assessment means development will already be completed, it is desirable Wyoming educators have the opportunity to be involved in ongoing development and maintenance of the assessment. Therefore, in order to improve the fit of the assessment to the Wyoming context, and to assure understanding of the assessment by Wyoming educators, the Task Force recommended the following:

1. Wyoming educators have substantive say in ongoing development activities including item development, item review, range-finding, and other development activities.
2. Wyoming educators have the opportunity to review test questions for specific Wyoming sensitivities.
3. If there are alternative test questions available to replace those flagged as problematic by Wyoming educators, WDE is able to replace the flagged questions.
4. Wyoming educators are involved in scoring student responses requiring human scoring for tests completed by Wyoming students
5. The WDE defines and oversees Wyoming educator involvement.

M. Test Security

In order to avoid the considerable stress and disruption to students, educators, and families caused by test security breaches, the Task Force recommended the following:

1. The WDE should review its existing policy documents and associated training using industry standards on test security.
2. The policy documents and training must include clear policies, protocols, and guidelines to comprehensively address test security in all aspects of testing including at least the following areas:
 - Professional development,
 - Prevention of test security breaches,
 - Detection of test security breaches (including balancing protection for whistleblowers and minimizing the impact of malicious allegations),
 - Investigating potential security breaches,
 - Protocols for evaluating evidence to make conclusions,
 - Protocols for appeals of conclusions, and
 - Follow-up activities to a substantiated or suspected security breach.
3. The WDE's test administration vendor must assist with test security to supplement agency capacity in each of the areas listed in the previous recommendation.

³⁰ This assumes a bidding process in which vendor bids are first scored to determine whether they meet a threshold for qualifying to provide the state with assessment services, followed by a review of the bids for a few areas in which select vendors may receive extra credit for proposing "value added" beyond the requirements of the request for proposals (RFP).

4. The WDE's test administration vendor must document its own security procedures throughout its processes.

N. Data Security and Privacy

In order to protect the privacy of individual student data and to comply with state and federal student privacy laws, the Task Force recommended that the vendor must document its corporate policies on data security and privacy comply with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations, those policies are adequately strong to prevent data security breaches, and those policies are rigorously enforced.

O. Program Evaluation and Its Relationship with System Stability

In order to determine whether the state's investment in a new comprehensive assessment system is achieving the intended results, the Task Force recommended the following:

1. The state should contract for an independent summary report evaluating the degree to which the intended outcomes of the state summative assessment have been realized after five years of implementation.
2. The evaluation should include the following at a minimum:
 - The quality of the state assessment,
 - The degree to which intended short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes are being realized, and
 - The degree to which anticipated, unanticipated, and unintended consequences have been observed.
3. In addition to its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) responsible for consulting with the WDE to monitor the technical quality of its assessments, the WDE should empanel from this point forward a statewide assessment policy advisory committee (PAC) that meets at least twice a year to monitor for concerns from the perspective of Wyoming education stakeholders. This panel should include teachers, administrators, technology coordinators, and assessment coordinators. Because stability of the state assessment is paramount, the first activity of this committee should be defining thresholds for recommending changes to the system. These definitions should strongly privilege stability of the system over time, meaning threshold for concerns about the assessment must be high before changes are made.

P. Specialty Assessments

The Task Force focused its efforts on designing a coherent assessment system for the general student population in the content areas comprising the basket of goods. The Task Force also recognized the importance of coherence of its recommendations in four additional specialty areas:

1. Alternate assessments based on alternative achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities (the "1%").
2. English proficiency assessment for English language learners.
3. Early literacy assessment in grades K-3.
4. Wyoming Career Technical Assessment (WyCTA) for career and technical education concentrator students.

However, the Task Force was largely comprised of general educators, and recognized the need for specialists in each of these areas to make appropriate recommendations for these assessments. Therefore, the Task Force recommended that in each of these areas, the WDE convene small committees of experts (including some members of the original Task Force) to review the recommendations for state summative assessment presented in this report and then make recommendations for those assessments to be coherent with the general content area assessments by determining which of the recommendations in this report are appropriate for those assessments, which are inappropriate, which need to be modified, and to identify any additional recommendations that may be needed.

SECTION 6: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY COHERENCE

Introduction

The Task Force took great care in ensuring the recommendations put forth in this report are technical and practically sound. However, the Task Force was aware and concerned several of the recommendations contradict existing statute, and current state procurement policies may lead to problems with maintaining a stable state assessment system. In this section, we therefore list specific statutes that will need to be amended or repealed in order to implement the. Prior to offering specific recommendations to the Legislature, we offer general guidelines for legislating assessment requirements.

General Guidelines for Legislating Assessment Requirements

The Task Force spent considerable time discussing and trying to outline a coherent and efficient assessment system for Wyoming. One of the key features of a coherent assessment system is each assessment in the system is designed to measure the same learning targets in complimentary ways. Further, in order to create an efficient system that minimizes redundancy, each assessment must be carefully designed to produce the intended inferences and to thoughtfully occupy a place in the overall system. It is easy to start adding assessments to meet specific needs (e.g. to support the evaluation of the Bridges program), but this can quickly lead to an incoherent and inefficient set of assessments that no longer function as a system.

Therefore, the Task Force strongly recommended that the Legislature create statutes to set broad goals and articulate the intended uses of assessments (e.g., measuring student growth, for use in school accountability determinations). The Legislature should prioritize creating a coherent, comprehensive, and efficient assessment system designed to measure student learning of Wyoming content standards and to support school improvement efforts. On the other hand, the Legislature should avoid legislating the specifics of assessment design (e.g., types of items to be included on the assessment) or even requiring assessments for specific purposes (e.g., requiring a grade 3 reading assessment). The Task Force was aware each time the Legislature adds an assessment (e.g., ACT) or adds a specific requirement (e.g., multiple-choice items only), it is for well-intentioned reasons often in response to constituent concerns. Unfortunately, while every action might be well-intentioned, when we look back after a few years, a once coherent assessment is no longer so. Finally, the Legislature should never name a specific product in legislation or write statutory requirements so narrowly only one product or vendor meets the qualifications. It is rare the Legislature possesses the specialized knowledge necessary to recommend a specific assessment product, but most importantly, naming a specific product puts the state in a terrible position for negotiating a contract.

Designing and implementing a stable, efficient, and coherent assessment system requires high levels of technical and practical knowledge. Therefore, we compliment the Legislature for appointing the Assessment Task Force, a representative group of citizens, to try to bring more coherence and stability to the Wyoming assessment system. Further, codified statutes tend to last longer than rules and they are often much more difficult to change, especially considering the Legislature meets only 20 days in even years and 40 days in odd years (absent special sessions), while the State Board of Education meets more frequently to allow for more rapid modification of rules and requirements.

Thus, the Task Force recommended that whenever a new potential purpose for assessment arises in state-level policymaking, the following activities should take place:

1. The Legislature (and other responsible policymakers) should evaluate with education stakeholders whether the purpose is sufficiently important to justify expanding and disrupting the current assessment system.
2. If deemed sufficiently important, the Legislature (and other responsible policymakers) should request a plan from the WDE for how existing assessments could reasonably fulfill that purpose, how existing assessments might be minimally expanded, or how a new assessment might fulfill the purpose (in order of preference).
3. The WDE should develop a plan to avoid introducing new assessments if possible. If additional testing time or a new assessment is required, the plan should address thoughtful integration into the existing assessment system in a manner that will minimize disruption of student and educator activities. The WDE should include stakeholders in developing the plan from both a broad cross section of education stakeholders and experts in the area of the intended purpose.

Wyoming State Statutes Needing Amendment or Repeal

With that framework, we outline the following recommended changes to existing statute to allow the recommendations presented here to be enacted.

1. *W.S. 21-2-202(a)(xxx)³¹: Effective school year 2012-2013 and each school year thereafter, in consultation and coordination with local school districts, by rule and regulation establish a program of administering a standardized, curriculum based, achievement college entrance examination, computer-adaptive college placement assessment and a job skills assessment test selected by the state superintendent to all students in the eleventh and twelfth grades throughout the state in accordance with this paragraph.* This clause basically requires the ACT and a placement exam such as Accuplacer. The Task Force recommendations would still require the provision of a college entrance or work readiness exam, but the Task Force made no such recommendation for a placement exam. Such an exam may be useful once students enroll in a postsecondary institution, but not as part of the state assessment system. Further, the language of “curriculum based, achievement college entrance exam” is an example of trying to limit the potential successful bidders and the Task Force recommends a more neutral requirement for a college entrance and career readiness exam.
2. *W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv)³². Effective school year 2013-2014, and each school year thereafter, require district administration of common benchmark adaptive assessments statewide in reading and mathematics for grades one (1) through eight (8) in accordance with W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxiv).* The Task Force recommended the optional (at the district level) use of interim assessments, but most importantly to have the interim assessment procured as part of the state assessment RFP. The Task Force did not recommend the use of an adaptive assessment, per se, but for an interim system that best fits the instructional needs of districts. This is an example of what might be considered over-specification of the interim assessment requirement.

³¹ Also found in W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxix)

³² Also found in W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxiv)

3. *W.S. 21-2-304(a)(v)(B). Effective school year 2012-2013, and each school year thereafter, be administered in specified grades aligned to the student content and performance standards, specifically assessing student performance in reading and mathematics at grades three (3) through eight (8). In addition, the statewide assessment system shall assess student performance in science in grades four (4) and eight (8).* As seen earlier in this report, the Task Force is recommending administering the state assessment system in English language arts and mathematics continuously in grades 3-10. The Task Force suggests leaving the science assessment in place until new content standards are adopted.
4. *W.S. 21-2-304(a)(v)(C). In addition to subparagraph (a)(v)(B) of this section, measure student performance in Wyoming on a comparative basis with student performance nationally.* While this requirement has not been implemented previously, except through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the Task Force supports the intention of this clause.
5. *W.S. 21-2-304(a)(v)(E). Use only multiple choice items to ensure alignment to the statewide content and performance standards.* The Legislature already knows this is a problematic clause, but has been waiting for recommendations from the Task Force to deal with this clause. The Task Force has made clear that it wants to be able to include the types of test questions necessary to fully and deeply measure the Wyoming content standards and not be limited in the types of questions available to use. This is also an example of the type of specification that should not be in statute.
6. *W.S. 21-3-401: Reading assessment and intervention.* The Task Force did not have the time or the specific expertise necessary to address the reading assessment requirements, but recommends that WDE convene an expert advisory panel to make recommendations regarding K-3 reading assessment. While there is often a desire to produce comparable (standardized) data, early childhood reading assessments must yield information so teachers can understand students' unique strengths and weaknesses. This might require the use of individually-administered assessments tied to each district's specific reading program.
7. *W.S. 21-13-334(b)(iv) Implement a structured common assessment evaluation of program effectiveness.* While not specified in this clause, the common, adaptive interim assessment required under *W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv)* has been the defacto common assessment used as the evaluation instrument for this program. As noted in this report, the Task Force argued the timing of the common interim assessment was not necessarily appropriate for providing data to evaluate the efficacy of the program. Therefore, the Task Force recommends removing this requirement and replacing it with a requirement for districts to provide an appropriate evaluation of their specific program. The WDE should be charged with providing guidance to districts on how best to collect evaluation data tied to the specific requirements of each program.

There are likely other statutes related to statewide and district assessment requirements, but the statutes outlined above are the highest priority targets for modification in order to implement the Task Force recommendations.

A Recommended Variance in Standard Wyoming Procurement Practice

The Task Force understood that typical Wyoming state procurement practices limit contracts to three years. However, this can cause instability in a state assessment program. Changes in contractors introduce changes in the assessment program, even if the same product is used. The changes to the product may be minor, but the state, districts, and schools have to divert attention from other important activities to adapting to new processes and/or products used by a new vendor.

To maximize stability of the state assessment system over time, the Task Force recommended the Legislature direct Wyoming procurement officials to grant a variance from standard procurement practice as detailed below.

1. A new contract to provide Wyoming's state assessments should be awarded for five to eight years, with the option for extension ranging from one to five years, with the length of the original contract and number of extension years being negotiated between state procurement officials and the WDE.
2. The number of contract years available through both the original contract and extension years should be targeted at nine years to coincide with the required lifespan of Wyoming content standards.
3. Vendors should be required to include in their pricing specific costs for each of the five to eight original contract years.
4. Vendors should be required to include in their pricing objective methods for determining costs for each of the extension years, based primarily on pricing for the original contract years and national economic conditions.
5. Because in long-term contracts, contract changes are inevitable, vendors should propose fair methods for determining contract change prices, based primarily on pricing for the original contract years and pricing for similar activities carried out for other clients.
6. The larger number of available contract years should not limit the state's ability to respond to issues of contract non-performance.
7. When the program is rebid, the cost of a change to the assessment system should be weighed against any cost savings proposed by vendors proposing a different product to determine best value for the state. However, to avoid market restriction, the weighting of the costs to schools and districts should be relatively weak compared to the weights assigned to ratings of the proposals themselves. This is intended to assure competitors have a reasonable probability of success if they propose a high-quality assessment at a competitive price.

SECTION 7: ABBREVIATED THEORY OF ACTION

This section does not provide a complete theory of action for the recommendations in this report³³. Instead, in Table 1, this section gives an abbreviated theory of action showing connections between a few key recommendations and specific intended outcomes, potential unintended negative consequences of implementing key recommendations, and potential mechanisms to deter such unintended negative consequences. The intended outcomes are summarized from other sections in this report. Mechanisms for deterring unintended consequences tend to be drawn from other recommendations made by the Task Force in anticipation of the unintended consequences.

Table 1. *Abbreviated Theory of Action for Key Task Force Recommendations.*

Key Recommendation(s)	Intended Outcomes	Potential Unintended Negative Consequences	Deterring Unintended Negative Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards-Based Assessment in Grades 3-10. • <i>Either</i> College Entrance <i>or</i> Career Readiness Assessment in Grade 11. • Add grade 10 assessment results to Hathaway eligibility criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators and policymakers use continuous achievement and growth data from grade 3-10 to inform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yearly instructional planning ○ Yearly curriculum and program evaluation ○ Policymaking • Clarify that the Wyoming High School learning targets are the official Wyoming state standards. • Retain the benefits of a college entrance examination. • Better meet the needs of high school students with career and technical education goals. • Allow and encourage specialized pathways for grade 11 and 12 students, improving student engagement and opportunity. • Strengthen ties between Wyoming high schools and Wyoming institutions of higher education, career training, and technical education. • Limit testing time by ending standards-based accountability assessment in grade 10. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Wyoming state standards are ignored in grade 11 and 12. • Hathaway scholarship eligibility may become more difficult to attain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District assessment systems address high school standards not eligible to appear on the grade 10 assessment. • Improve quality control of district assessment systems through accreditation, training, and support. • Leave the mechanics of inclusion in Hathaway scholarship eligibility to a committee capable of investigating effects of changes.

³³ A full theory of action would explicitly tie together issues identified with the current system; intended uses of a new system; recommendations for a new assessment system and how they address the issues with the current system and the intended uses of the new system; connections between various components; near-term, mid-term, and long-term intended outcomes associated with each component as well as the whole; and measures to monitor those outcomes. Each of these components is addressed in this report. However, the critical connection is between recommendations and intended outcomes so an evaluation plan can be developed.

Key Recommendation(s)	Intended Outcomes	Potential Unintended Negative Consequences	Deterring Unintended Negative Consequences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align Hathaway eligibility to state standards and motivate students to take grade 10 assessment seriously. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a standards-based summative assessment used in multiple states. Allow an extended contracting period beyond that normally allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve stability of the state summative assessment by requiring changes to be negotiated with other states and/or a vendor. Increase the number of years between considerable changes to the state assessment because of changes in contractors and/or products. Allow comparison of Wyoming students' achievement and growth to that of students in other states. Increase Wyoming's leverage to address issues as they arise through applying collaborative pressure with other states. Reduce costs through economies of scale available through collaboration among multiple states. Reduce costs through the incentive of an extended contracting period. Increase test quality by gaining access to a broader set of expertise available through collaborative efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow collaborative response to critical needs. Contractor becoming too comfortable and/or inadequately responsive. Costs increase unacceptably over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split contracting years between guaranteed contract years and optional extension years. Tie cost increases in extension years to original costs and economic conditions. Maintain strong remedies for contract non-performance. Require a defined process for developing costs for contract changes keyed to original contract costs and costs to other clients for similar services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move all state-provided assessment online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow state summative test administration closer to the end of the school year (to maximize instruction time before assessment). Allow return of results before August 1 of each year (to make results available for school improvement activities in the summer). Eliminate logistical challenges inherent in paper and pencil testing. Increase flexibility for test administration, scoring, and reporting through use of information technology tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide breakdown of the test administration system. Localized breakdowns of the needed information technology infrastructure. Test security breach. Data security breach. Increased logistical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguards recommended to assure a smooth and successful transition to online assessment. Review and enhance test security sections of existing state policy documents to address new issues in test security posed by online assessment.

Key Recommendation(s)	Intended Outcomes	Potential Unintended Negative Consequences	Deterring Unintended Negative Consequences
		challenges for districts and schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require vendors to demonstrate strong security policies and adherence to those policies. • The WDE should empanel a policy advisory committee to monitor and advise on logistical and other issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure state-provided interim assessments with the state summative assessments • Implement modular interim assessment design at a minimum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate inconsistencies between state summative assessments and interim assessments. • Eliminate inconsistencies between the Wyoming state content standards and the interim assessment. • Signal the importance of high-level student knowledge and skills on both state summative assessment and interim assessments. • Improve the usefulness of interim assessment results by targeting smaller units of content and reporting on finer-grained categories. • Control costs by bundling multiple products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns from districts accustomed to the current interim assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design reports for interim assessments to assure usefulness to educators. • Increase flexibility for districts on timing and number of interim assessments. • Eliminate requirement to use interim assessment (provide as a state service for districts to implement to best serve local needs).

This table should be used as a starting point for the recommended five-year evaluation of the new system.

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APPENDIX A: UNDERSTANDING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Definition of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment has also been called formative instruction. The purpose of formative assessment is to evaluate student understanding against key learning targets, provide targeted feedback to students, and adjust instruction on a moment-to-moment basis.

In 2006, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and experts on formative assessment developed a widely cited definition (Wiley, 2008):

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievements of intended instructional outcomes (p. 3).

In addition, Wiley (paraphrased from p. 3) lists five critical attributes of formative assessment:

1. They are based on clear articulations of learning goals as steps toward an ultimate desirable outcome.
2. Learning goals and the criteria for success are clearly identified and communicated to students in language they can understand.
3. Students are frequently provided with feedback directly linked to the learning goals and criteria for success.
4. Students engage in self- and peer-assessment against the criteria for success.
5. Students and teachers jointly own (collaborate on) monitoring student progress over time.

While the practice of formative assessment in general embodies these five attributes, not every example of formative assessment incorporates every attribute. The definition and five critical attributes are based on research linking such practices to student learning gains. The core of the formative assessment process is that it takes place during instruction (i.e., “in the moment”) and under full control of the teacher to support student learning while it is developing. Thus, formative assessment is an integral part of instruction; instruction need not be paused to engage in formative assessment. This embedded assessment is done through diagnosing on a very frequent basis where students are in their progress toward fine-grained learning targets such as those covered by a single class period. This ongoing diagnosis shows both teachers and students where gaps in knowledge and skill exist, and helps both teacher and student understand how to close those gaps.

The definition and critical attributes make clear that formative assessment is not a product, but a process tailored to the details of ongoing instruction to individual students. Effective formative assessment practices occur very frequently, covering very small units of instruction (such as part of a class period). If tasks are presented, they may vary for students depending on where they are in their learning. However, formative assessment processes often occur during regular and targeted questioning of students in small or large groups, observing students as they work in groups and/or engage in tasks. Formative assessment practices may be facilitated using certain technology and related tools. There is a strong view among some scholars that because formative assessment is tailored to the specific context of the classroom and to individual students that results cannot be meaningfully aggregated or compared. Many of these scholars question whether the observations from formative assessment should even be scored.

Another implication is the critical importance of providing frequent feedback to individual students. Providing each student such frequent and targeted feedback develops his or her ability to continuously monitor the quality of their own work against a clear learning target. It is this targeted and frequent feedback to students that is the most crucial part of the formative assessment process³⁴.

The nature of formative assessment implies that the frequently used term *common formative assessment* is a result of confusion about the nature of formative assessment. Other types of assessment may be used formatively for periodic progress monitoring (e.g., to inform mid-course corrections or modifications to curriculum and programming), but only formative assessment as described above is capable of informing instruction on a moment-to-moment basis. Effective formative assessment is tailored to a specific instructional plan and a specific group of students at defined points in their attainment of learning targets. The critical characteristics of formative assessment practices should be common across all teachers, and tools teachers use to implement formative assessment may be common across many teachers, but formative assessment is too tailored to a unique classroom to be common.

Data gathered through formative assessment have limited to no use for evaluation or accountability purposes such as student grades, educator accountability, school/district accountability, or even public reporting that could allow for inappropriate comparisons. There are at least four reasons for this: (1) if carried out appropriately, the data gathered from one unit to the next, one teacher to the next, one moment to the next, and one student to the next will not be comparable; (2) students will be unlikely to participate as fully, openly, and honestly in the process if they know they are being evaluated by their teachers or peers on the basis of their responses; (3) for the same reasons, educators will be unlikely to participate as fully, openly, and honestly in the process; and (4) the nature of the formative assessment process is likely to shift in such a way that it can no longer optimally inform instruction.

These implications create a distinct difference from summative and interim assessment (described below), which are intended to assess student achievement after an extended period of learning. Simply giving students an assessment in the classroom does not mean that the assessment is formative. Use of assessment evidence in a formative manner requires teachers to achieve insight into individual student learning in relation to learning targets, to provide effective feedback to students about those insights, and to make instructional decisions based on those insights. During the formative assessment process, feedback to students and student involvement is essential. Teachers seek ways to involve the student in “thinking about their thinking” (metacognition) to use learning evidence to close the gap and get closer to the intended learning target.

Because there is a great deal of confusion over what constitutes formative assessment, the next part of this appendix provides vignettes of formative assessment in practice. The four vignettes describe the work of four different educators to help readers to better understand what is meant by “formative assessment.”

³⁴ See Sadler (1989).

High School – Chemistry Mid-Period Check In

As part of instructional planning, a high school chemistry teacher develops both true and false statements related to a micro-unit covering a half hour in high school chemistry. Statements were strategically developed to assess whether students hold anticipated misconceptions. Following the micro-unit, students show thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs to the side to indicate whether each statement is true, false, or they don't know. Based on the prevalence of thumbs down and to the side, the teacher may select one of at least four options:

1. Reteach that micro-unit using a different instructional plan the next day.
2. Use pre-planned strategies to address a small number of misconceptions.
3. Strategically group students who put thumbs down or to the side with confident students to discuss their conclusions and monitor group discussions.
4. Work briefly with a one or two students needing additional assistance while the rest of the class engages in the next activity.

Middle School – English End of Period Check In

At the beginning of a seventh grade English class period, a middle school English teacher shares with her students what the three learning targets are for the day. At the end of the period, she asks each student to fill out and hand in a slip confidentially rating their attainment of each learning target in one of the following four categories:

1. I can teach this.
2. I can do this on my own.
3. I need some help with this.
4. I don't get this at all.

The teacher adjusts the next day's lesson plan by creating a simple task asking small groups of students to practice a learning target on which about half the students felt confident. The small groups are strategically selected to include students that are both confident and not confident with the learning target. She also reviews with the entire class another learning target on which few students felt confident. To do so, she asks two students to explain their approach on a specific problem. After gauging current understanding, she decides whether to instruct on that learning target again using a different strategy and different examples than the previous day.

Elementary School – Monitoring Development of Mathematical Understanding

After a successful unit on simple two-digit addition (without regrouping), an elementary school teacher wants students to learn both a regrouping algorithm and why the algorithm works. He demonstrates to his students that their current knowledge and skills are inadequate to accurately deal with two-digit addition requiring regrouping. He does this by assigning small groups of students to solve a problem either using the addition algorithm they already know or by using counting objects.

³⁵ Informed by Wiley (2008).

In a subsequent whole-class discussion, the teacher highlights the conflicting answers and asks his students to think about how place value place might explain why the groups got different answers. He then asks each small group to work on developing its own solution to the problem. After visiting and probing each group to survey current understanding and developing strategies, he asks strategically chosen groups to share their developing solutions, and builds post-activity instruction on the regrouping algorithm around them.

High School – English Capstone Project

As a capstone project for a unit on persuasive writing, a high-school English teacher assigns her students to individually write a persuasive essay incorporating each of the unit learning targets. Each student is to:

- Choose a position on a controversial topic important to him,
- Identify reliable resources for information on his position and a contrary position commonly taken on the topic,
- Summarize the arguments for both positions,
- Use the logical devices taught in the unit to argue for his position,
- Use logical tools to argue the logical superior of his position, and
- Incorporate work in all five previous steps into a coherent persuasive essay.

The teacher divides the capstone project into four subunits (with associated assignments):

1. Choosing a topic, a personal position, an opposing position, and identifying reliable resources;
2. Summarizing arguments for at least two positions on the topic;
3. Arguing for the personal position and against an opposing position on a logical basis;
4. Incorporating into a complete and coherent persuasive essay.

Along with other formative practices, the teacher spends class time making each sub-unit's learning targets explicit and instructing on them. She also uses class time on the day each assignment is due to have students peer-review each other's work, focusing on the learning targets and working on revisions. As assignments are turned in, the teacher provides formative feedback based on the learning target rather than grading each assignment. Only after providing at least one round of formative feedback on each assignment does the teacher grade the final product. She does this to ensure that the formative feedback fulfills its purpose and her evaluation of each student's performance represents what was learned by the end of the unit.

APPENDIX B: ONE-PAGE SUMMARY OF FORMATIVE, INTERIM, AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

	Formative Assessment	Interim Assessment	Summative Assessment
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate effective instruction (does not pause instruction) Learning goals and criteria are clear to students Students self-/peer-monitor progress toward learning goals Students and teachers receive frequent feedback Jointly controlled by each teacher and her students Covers a micro unit of instruction Very frequent (e.g., multiple times per period) Tailored to a set of students and an instructional plan Might be comparable for a classroom, but not beyond <i>Not a product (e.g., quiz, test, bank of questions/tests)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pauses instruction for evaluation Controlled solely by a teacher, school, district, or state (or by a consortium of teachers, schools...) Covers a mid-sized unit of instruction Somewhat frequent (e.g., weekly to quarterly) Administered before and/or after a mid-sized unit Based on who controls assessment, results may be comparable across students, teachers, schools, districts, and/or states A product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pauses instruction for evaluation Controlled solely by a teacher, school, district, or state (or by a consortium of teachers, schools...) Covers a macro unit of instruction (e.g., semester, course, credit, grade) Infrequent (e.g., yearly, finals week) Administered after completing a macro unit Based on who controls assessment, results may be comparable across students,...., and/or states A product
Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage students in learning/metacognition through frequent feedback and self-/peer-evaluation Monitor moment-to-moment student learning Diagnose individual students' immediate instructional needs Diagnose immediate group instructional needs Immediately adjust instruction Differentiate instruction Self-evaluate micro-unit instructional effectiveness <i>Student results from formative assessment are not appropriate for use in grading or accountability; however, ratings of the quality of formative assessment practice may be appropriate for use in accountability</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate achievement after a mid-sized unit Monitor progress within a macro-unit (e.g., semester, course, credit, grade) Corroborate formative assessment Pre-test to tailor unit instructional plans for the group and individual students Identify post-unit remedial needs Mid-course self-evaluation and adjustment of teacher classroom practices Mid-course evaluation and adjustment of school and district policies and programs Predict performance on summative assessment Grading (and possibly accountability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate achievement after a macro unit Monitor progress across multiple macro-units Corroborate interim assessment Evaluate readiness for the next macro unit After-the-fact evaluation/adjustment of broad instructional practices by individual teachers and of curriculum/programming policies by administrators Predict later student outcomes Grading and accountability
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a micro-unit, students show thumbs up/thumbs down to indicate whether statements developed around anticipated misconceptions are true. Based on prevalence of misconceptions, the teacher reteaches parts of his lesson using a different instructional strategy, strategically groups students to discuss their conclusions, or works briefly with one or two students. At the end of class, students hand in a slip confidentially rating their attainment of each learning target as: (1) <i>I can teach this</i>, (2) <i>I can do this on my own</i>, (3) <i>I need some help with this</i>, or (4) <i>I don't get this at all</i>. The teacher adjusts her next-day group assignments and planned activities accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom unit quizzes and homework Individual and group unit projects Pre-unit exams of unit pre-requisites Pre-unit exams of unit content End of unit exams Mid-term exams Marking period exams not covering a full macro-unit Quarterly assessments District placement tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom final exams, projects, and papers School or district final exams, projects, or papers District/state assessments for testing out of a credit District graduation/diploma-endorsement tests Typical state accountability tests High school equivalency tests District graduation tests College admission tests

APPENDIX C: DETAILED HIGHEST PRIORITY USES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Task Force’s highest priority uses and characteristics are presented in detail in Table 2 below. These uses and characteristics were evaluated by the facilitators using the definitions and appropriate uses of formative, interim, and summative assessments discussed in Section 2 of this report. The evaluation also incorporates differences between classroom-, district-, and state-owned assessments to show the complexity of an assessment system that would be needed to fulfill all of the Task Force’s highest priority uses and characteristics. This evaluation is reflected in additional elements added to Table B1. Those elements identify whether each type and level of assessment has full, some, minimal, or no applicability to the use or characteristic in each row. In addition, in each row the applicability of the various types and levels of assessment to each use or characteristic is briefly explained.

Table 2. *Task Force Highest Priority Uses and Characteristics.*

Total ¹ Score	Number of Votes by Priority			Desired Uses and Characteristics of Wyoming Assessment	Applicability ²					
					Type			Level		
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		Formative	Interim	Summative	Classroom	District	State
38	10	3	2	Provide information to parents, students, and educators regarding individual student achievement and growth within and across years, including readiness for the next level in a student's K-12 progression - Classroom formative: continuous achievement/growth/readiness data on micro-units - Classroom/district/state interim: periodic achievement/growth/readiness data on mid-sized units - Classroom/district/state summative: yearly achievement/growth/readiness data on macro-units	●	●	●	●	●	●
27	6	4	1	Provide feedback on progress toward standards to inform instruction on more than a yearly basis - Classroom formative: continuous achievement and progress data inform daily instruction - Classroom/district/state interim: periodic unit achievement & progress data informs remediation - District/state summative: interim results might be rolled up for summative determinations	●	●	◐	●	●	●
16	0	5	6	Allow for comparisons within the state and across states - State interim: provides within-state comparability if adopted statewide - State summative: provides within-state comparability - State interim/summative: provides cross-state comparability if the assessment is used in multiple states	○	●	●	○	○	●
13	2	2	3	Provide reliable and valid data to evaluate program/curriculum effectiveness and alignment to standards - District/state interim: can provide information to inform within- and between-year evaluations - District/state summative: can provide information to inform between-year evaluations	○	●	●	○	●	●

Total ¹ Score	Number of Votes by Priority			Desired Uses and Characteristics of Wyoming Assessment	Applicability ²					
					Type			Level		
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		Formative	Interim	Summative	Classroom	District	State
11	3	1	0	Be student-centered (e.g., student is not a number) - Classroom formative: micro-unit diagnostic data to tailor instruction - Classroom/district/state interim: unit diagnostic data to tailor remediation - Classroom/district/state summative: macro-unit data to inform critical yearly decisions	●	●	○	●	●	●
8	0	3	2	Encourage collaboration and sharing best practices - Classroom formative/interim/summative: foster teacher collaboration on teacher practices - District/state interim/summative: foster teacher collaboration on using non-classroom data - District/state interim/summative: foster educator collaboration on curriculum/programming - Limit use of classroom assessment for evaluation to quality of practices and support for collaboration	●	●	●	●	●	●
7	1	2	0	Continually inform instruction with timely feedback - Classroom formative: continual micro-unit diagnostic data to inform daily instruction - Classroom/district/state interim: periodic unit data to inform post-unit remediation	●	○	○	●	○	○
6	1	1	1	Validly inform decisions about post-secondary education/training - State summative: likely to provide based on ties to post-secondary outcomes (onerous for a district)	○	○	●	○	○	●
2	0	0	2	Consistency over time to facilitate the intended outcomes of assessment in Wyoming - District interim/summative: stable longitudinal data can improve decision making - State interim: stable longitudinal data can improve decision making - State summative: likely to improve decision-making because of school/district accountability uses	○	○	●	○	○	●
X				Number of desired uses/characteristics with unique and full applicability	2	0	3	3	0	3
				Number of desired uses/characteristics with full applicability	4	3	5	4	2	5
				Number of desired uses/characteristics with some applicability	1	4	1	1	4	3
				Number of desired uses/characteristics with unlikely applicability	0	1	2	0	2	1
				Number of desired uses/characteristics with no applicability	4	1	1	4	1	0

1. Each panelist identified one characteristic as her highest priority, second highest priority, or third highest priority. These were given scores of 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The scores were summed across panelists to give a total score for each desired use/characteristic.

2. ●, ○, ○, and ○ indicate desired uses or characteristics for which the type or level of assessment has full applicability, some applicability, minimal or unlikely applicability, and no applicability, respectively.

APPENDIX D: MINI-SUMMATIVE VS. MODULAR INTERIM ASSESSMENT DESIGNS

To help illustrate the differences between a mini-summative and modular design, we present an abbreviated pictorial representation of the two designs below. In a mini-summative design, the interim assessments are in essence, just shorter versions of the summative assessment. In a modular design, the interim assessments focus on specific portions of what was covered by the complete summative assessment to give more fine-grained information about student achievement within the content area of the summative assessment. A more detailed explanation of how this might be accomplished is given on the following pages.

Figure 1. Mini-summative Interim Assessment Design Schematic.

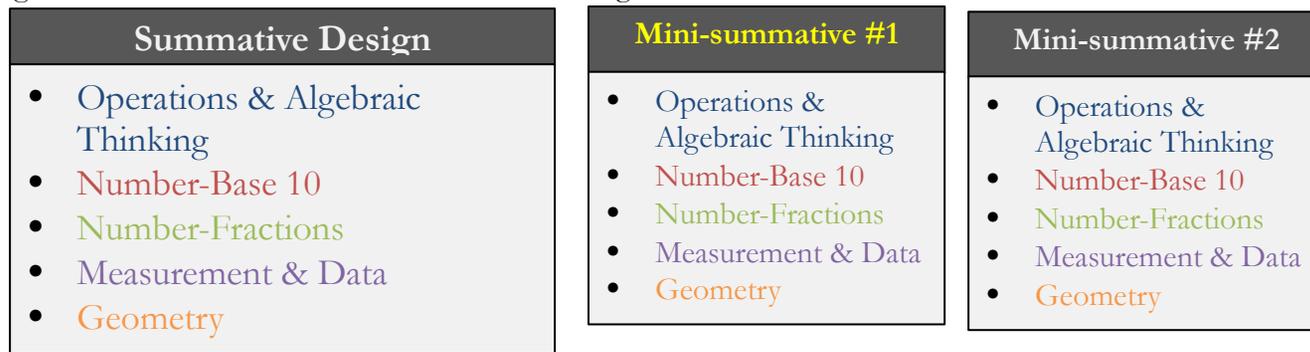
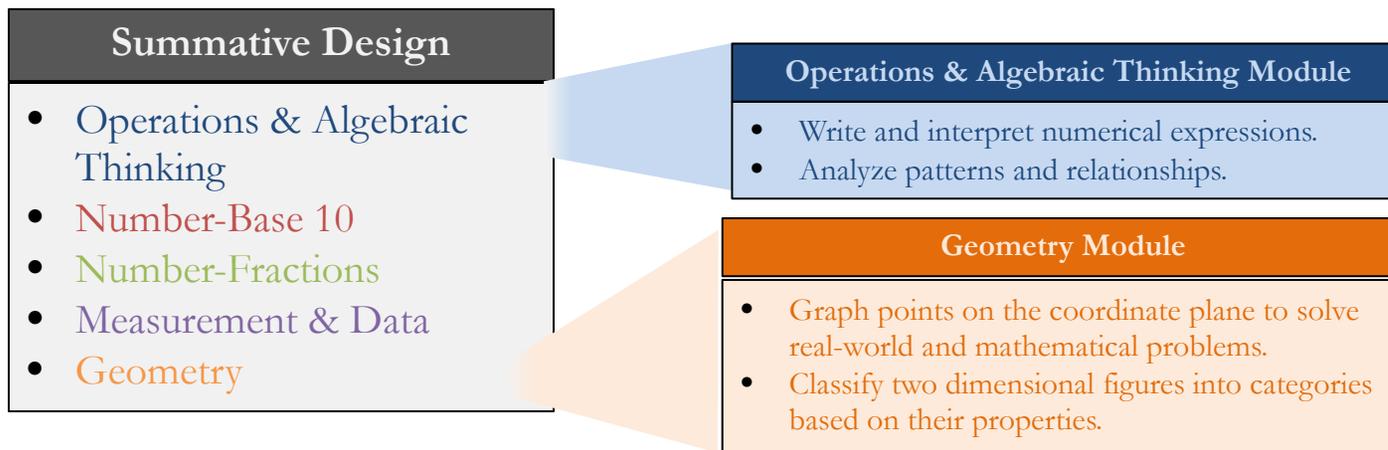


Figure 2. Modular Interim Assessment Design Schematic.



As an aid in further understanding assessment design, we first describe the general hierarchical format that content standards take by providing an example from grade-5 mathematics:

Content Category
<p>Operations & Algebraic Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write and interpret numerical expressions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Use parentheses, brackets, or braces...</i> <i>Write simple expressions that record calculations...</i> Analyze patterns and relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Generate...numerical patterns...given rules...</i>
<p>Number & Operations in Base Ten</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the place value system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Recognize [digit values increase tenfold when one place... left]</i> <i>Explain patterns in...multiplying by powers of 10...</i> <i>Read, write, and compare decimals to thousandths</i> <i>Use place value understanding to round decimals to any place</i> Perform operations...to hundredths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers...</i> <i>Find whole-number quotients of whole numbers...</i> <i>Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to hundredths...</i>
<p>Number & Operations—Fractions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use equivalent fractions...to add and subtract fractions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators...</i> <i>Solve [fraction word problems by comparison...]</i> Apply and extend...multiplication and division <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Interpret a fraction [as a division problem]...</i> <i>[Extend whole number] multiplication to...fractions...</i> <i>Interpret multiplication as scaling (resizing)...</i> <i>Solve...problems [with] multiplication of fractions...</i> <i>[Extend division to involve unit fractions]</i>
<p>Measurement & Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convert like measurement units [in the same] system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Convert among different sized measurement units...</i> Represent and interpret data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Make a line plot to display [data with fractional units]...</i> Geometric measurement: understand...volume <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Understand volume as an attribute of solid figures...</i> <i>Measure volumes by counting unit cubes...</i> <i>Relate volume to [multiplication and division]...</i>
<p>Geometry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graph points on the coordinate plane to solve... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Use [two] perpendicular lines...to define a coordinate...</i> <i>Represent... points in the first quadrant...</i> Classify two-dimensional figures...on...properties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>[Know category] attributes [apply] to all sub-categories...</i> <i>Classify...figures in a hierarchy based on properties</i>

To aid in explanation, the broadest content categories (at the top of the hierarchy) are displayed in bold. Sub-categories are indented presented in the same color as the broad category they belong to. Sub-sub-categories are further indented and presented in italics.

In a *highly simplified* version of test design, the number of test questions or score points that come from each sub-sub-category is clearly specified to reflect the relative importance of each category. For example, if every sub-sub-category were considered equally important, a reasonable test design

might specify that every sub-sub-category be measured using two test questions, resulting in the following hypothetical summative test design:

Content Category	# of Items
Operations & Algebraic Thinking	6
Write and interpret numerical expressions	4
<i>Use parentheses, brackets, or braces...</i>	2
<i>Write simple expressions that record calculations...</i>	2
Analyze patterns and relationships	2
<i>Generate...numerical patterns...given rules...</i>	2
Number & Operations in Base Ten	14
Understand the place value system	8
<i>Recognize [digit values increase tenfold when one place... left]</i>	2
<i>Explain patterns in...multiplying by powers of 10...</i>	2
<i>Read, write, and compare decimals to thousandths</i>	2
<i>Use place value understanding to round decimals to any place</i>	2
Perform operations...to hundredths	6
<i>Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers...</i>	2
<i>Find whole-number quotients of whole numbers...</i>	2
<i>Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to hundredths...</i>	2
Number & Operations—Fractions	14
Use equivalent fractions...to add and subtract fractions	4
<i>Add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators...</i>	2
<i>Solve [fraction word problems by comparison...]</i>	2
Apply and extend...multiplication and division	10
<i>Interpret a fraction [as a division problem]...</i>	2
<i>[Extend whole number] multiplication to...fractions...</i>	2
<i>Interpret multiplication as scaling (resizing)...</i>	2
<i>Solve...problems [with] multiplication of fractions...</i>	2
<i>[Extend division to involve unit fractions]</i>	2
Measurement & Data	10
Convert like measurement units [in the same] system	2
<i>Convert among different sized measurement units...</i>	2
Represent and interpret data	2
<i>Make a line plot to display [data with fractional units]...</i>	2
Geometric measurement: understand...volume	6
<i>Understand volume as an attribute of solid figures...</i>	2
<i>Measure volumes by counting unit cubes...</i>	2
<i>Relate volume to [multiplication and division]...</i>	2
Geometry	8
Graph points on the coordinate plane to solve...	4
<i>Use [two] perpendicular lines...to define a coordinate...</i>	2
<i>Represent... points in the first quadrant...</i>	2
Classify two-dimensional figures...on...properties	4
<i>[Know category] attributes [apply] to all sub-categories...</i>	2
<i>Classify...figures in a hierarchy based on properties</i>	2
Total	52

A *mini-summative interim assessment design* is intended to reasonably replicate the summative assessment experience with the exception of being shorter. For example, on an interim assessment with five testing opportunities, this could be accomplished by measuring each content standard with 1 rather than 2 items, giving the following mini-summative interim assessment design, making each interim assessment half as long as the summative assessment:

Content Category	# of Items on Interim Assessment				
	1	2	3	4	5
Operations & Algebraic Thinking	3	3	3	3	3
Write and interpret numerical expressions	2	2	2	2	2
<i>Use parentheses, brackets, or braces...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Write simple expressions that record calculations...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Analyze patterns and relationships	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Generate...numerical patterns...given rules...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Number & Operations in Base Ten	7	7	7	7	7
Understand the place value system	4	4	4	4	4
<i>Recognize [digit values increase tenfold when one place... left]</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Explain patterns in...multiplying by powers of 10...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Read, write, and compare decimals to thousandths</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Use place value understanding to round decimals to any place</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Perform operations...to hundredths	3	3	3	3	3
<i>Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Find whole-number quotients of whole numbers...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to hundredths...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Number & Operations—Fractions	7	7	7	7	7
Use equivalent fractions...to add and subtract fractions	2	2	2	2	2
<i>Add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Solve [fraction word problems by comparison...]</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Apply and extend...multiplication and division	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Interpret a fraction [as a division problem]...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>[Extend whole number] multiplication to...fractions...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Interpret multiplication as scaling (resizing)...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Solve...problems [with] multiplication of fractions...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>[Extend division to involve unit fractions]</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Measurement & Data	5	5	5	5	5
Convert like measurement units [in the same] system	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Convert among different sized measurement units...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Represent and interpret data	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Make a line plot to display [data with fractional units]...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Geometric measurement: understand...volume	3	3	3	3	3
<i>Understand volume as an attribute of solid figures...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Measure volumes by counting unit cubes...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Relate volume to [multiplication and division]...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Geometry	4	4	4	4	4
Graph points on the coordinate plane to solve...	2	2	2	2	2
<i>Use [two] perpendicular lines...to define a coordinate...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Represent... points in the first quadrant...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Classify two-dimensional figures...on...properties	2	2	2	2	2
<i>[Know category] attributes [apply] to all sub-categories...</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Classify...figures in a hierarchy based on properties</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Total	26	26	26	26	26

Multiple interim assessments built to this design would have different sets of test questions, but with the same emphasis on each of the content categories as on the summative assessment.

Modular interim assessment designs are different, however. Modular designs are intended to focus in on strategically selected subsets of the content standards (typically selected to represent potential moderate-sized units of instruction). Therefore, modular interim assessment designs are not similar to the summative test design. For example, in a highly simplified approach, each of the five broadest content categories could be selected as the focus for each of five interim assessment modules, giving

the following modular interim assessment design of approximately the same length as the mini-summative designs:

Content Category	# of Items on Interim Assessment				
	1	2	3	4	5
Operations & Algebraic Thinking Write and interpret numerical expressions <i>Use parentheses, brackets, or braces...</i> <i>Write simple expressions that record calculations...</i> Analyze patterns and relationships <i>Generate...numerical patterns...given rules...</i>	27 18 9 9				
Number & Operations in Base Ten Understand the place value system <i>Recognize [digit values increase tenfold when one place... left]</i> <i>Explain patterns in...multiplying by powers of 10...</i> <i>Read, write, and compare decimals to thousandths</i> <i>Use place value understanding to round decimals to any place</i> Perform operations...to hundredths <i>Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers...</i> <i>Find whole-number quotients of whole numbers...</i> <i>Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to hundredths...</i>		28 16 4 4 4 4 12 4 4 4			
Number & Operations—Fractions Use equivalent fractions...to add and subtract fractions <i>Add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators...</i> <i>Solve [fraction word problems by comparison...]</i> Apply and extend...multiplication and division <i>Interpret a fraction [as a division problem]...</i> <i>[Extend whole number] multiplication to...fractions...</i> <i>Interpret multiplication as scaling (resizing)...</i> <i>Solve...problems [with] multiplication of fractions...</i> <i>[Extend division to involve unit fractions]</i>			28 8 4 4 20 4 4 4 4 4		
Measurement & Data Convert like measurement units [in the same] system <i>Convert among different sized measurement units...</i> Represent and interpret data <i>Make a line plot to display [data with fractional units]...</i> Geometric measurement: understand...volume <i>Understand volume as an attribute of solid figures...</i> <i>Measure volumes by counting unit cubes...</i> <i>Relate volume to [multiplication and division]...</i>				25 5 5 5 15 5 5 5	
Geometry Graph points on the coordinate plane to solve... <i>Use [two] perpendicular lines...to define a coordinate...</i> <i>Represent... points in the first quadrant...</i> Classify two-dimensional figures...on...properties <i>[Know category] attributes [apply] to all sub-categories...</i> <i>Classify...figures in a hierarchy based on properties</i>					28 14 7 7 14 7 7
Total	27	28	28	25	28

The benefit of a modular interim assessment design is that it can provide much more granular and instructionally useful information because there are enough items measuring fine-grained categories of content to inform broad (not day-to-day) instructional and/or remedial decisions.

APPENDIX E: DETAIL ON ISSUES IN SUB-SCORE REPORTING

Subscores serve as achievement reports on subsets of the full set of knowledge and skill represented by a total score. For example, many English language arts summative assessments produce a total score for English language arts, subscores for at least reading and writing, and often finer-grained subscores for topics such as informational and literary reading. Similarly, a mathematics test typically yields an overall math score and potential subscores in topics such as numbers and operations, algebraic reasoning, measurement and geometry, and statistics and probability. One of the greatest challenges in current large-scale summative assessment design is to create tests that are no longer than necessary to produce a very reliable total score (e.g., grade 5 mathematics) while yielding adequately reliable subscores to help educators and others gain more instructionally-relevant information than gleaned from just the total score.

Unfortunately, there is a little known aspect of educational measurement (outside of measurement professionals) that large-scale tests are generally designed to report scores on a “unidimensional” scale. This means the grade 5 math test, for example, is designed to report overall math performance, but not to tease out differences in performance on things like geometry or algebra because the only questions that survive the statistical review processes are those that relate strongly to the total score of overall math. If the test was designed to include questions that better distinguish among potential subscores, the reliability (consistency) of the total score would be diminished. There are “multidimensional” procedures that can be employed to potentially produce reliable and valid subscores, but these are much more expensive to implement and complicated to ensure the comparability of these subscores and the total score across years. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the one example of a well-known assessment designed to produce meaningful results at the subscore level, but NAEP has huge samples to work with and more financial resources and psychometric capacity at its disposal than any state assessment. In other words, it is not realistic at this time to consider moving away from a unidimensional framework for Wyoming’s next statewide summative assessment, which means the subscores will unfortunately be much less reliable estimates of the total score than useful content-based reports. This is true for essentially all commercially-available interim assessments as well so in spite of user reports they like assessment X or Y because it produces fine-grain subscores useful for instructional planning, any differences in subscores are likely due to error rather than anything educationally meaningful.

In spite of this widely-held knowledge by measurement professionals, every state assessment designer knows they need to produce scores beyond the total score otherwise stakeholders would complain they are not getting enough from the assessment. Recall, producing very reliable total scores is critical for accountability uses of statewide assessments and, all things being equal, the reliability is related to the number of questions (or score points) on a test. Therefore, most measurement experts recommend having at least 10 score points for each subscore with to achieve at least some minimal level of reliability, so statewide summative tests tend to get longer to accommodate subscore reporting. Therefore, one way to lessen the time required on the statewide summative assessment is to focus the summative assessment on reporting the total score and use the optional modules for districts that would like more detailed and accurate information about particular aspects of the content domain.

APPENDIX F: POTENTIAL QUALIFYING PRODUCTS/VENDORS

The Task Force put a premium on ensuring assessment quality, practical usefulness of assessment data, and on state-provided assessments not being exclusive to Wyoming. At the same time, the Task Force and the State Board of Education at its September 23, 2015 meeting expressed concern about whether the recommendations in this report may unreasonably reduce the number of potential qualified bidders. While the Task Force presents these companies as potential bidders, this in no way means the company would either respond to a Wyoming RFP or they would be able to meet the requirements of the RFP. In fact, the Task Force does not believe any of the products listed below currently meet all of the recommendations contained herein. Any potential Wyoming assessment vendor would have to provide evidence their product can meet the requirements outlined in the RFP.

Language Arts and Mathematics

Table 3 below presents the potential companies and products would be likely or possibly available for Language Arts and Mathematics. This information is based on the knowledge of the two facilitators as a result of their work in other states and knowledge of the industry.

Table 3. *Likely and possibly qualifying products.*

Source	Type of Source	Status as of Spring 2015
ACT Aspire	Test Vendor	Administered in 2015 in two (2) states
<i>Data Recognition Corporation</i>	<i>Test Vendor</i>	<i>Ready for use</i>
<i>Educational Testing Service</i>	<i>Test Vendor</i>	<i>Under development</i>
<i>Measured Progress</i>	<i>Test Vendor</i>	<i>Under development</i>
PARCC	Consortium of States	Administered in 2015 in eleven (11) states
Smarter Balanced	Consortium of States	Administered in 2015 in eighteen (18) states
University of Kansas	State University	Administered in 2015 in two (2) states
Utah	State sells test items	Administered in 2015 in four (4) states

Based on Table 3, it appears there are sufficient sources of likely and possibly qualifying products to assure there is adequate and competitive bidding. Three potential sources in Table 3 are listed in italics even though (1) no documentation is currently available for the products they have developed or are in the process of developing, and (2) no other state is currently using products from those sources for statewide summative assessment. We include these potential sources because by the time a request for proposals (RFP) is issued, these vendors may have adequate documentation and their products may have been adopted by at least one other state.

Finally, for Language Arts and Mathematics there are a few additional important considerations about collaboration with each potential source that may be probed in an RFP and in scoring bids on the RFP. Wyoming must consider the degree of control it wants in any new assessment system. Several of the potential products—such as ACT Aspire, University of Kansas, and Utah—would afford Wyoming very little, if any, control over the assessment program. On the other hand, if Wyoming becomes a governing member of an assessment consortium (PARCC or Smarter Balanced), it may have a limited amount of influence over the nature of the assessment system. In either case, Wyoming may extend its influence by convincing other states of the importance of its position and together with other states recommend a change to the assessment program. It is unknown to what degree DRC, ETS, and Measured Progress would afford clients control over their

products, but they would be proprietary products over which final decisions would rest with the vendors.

Second, the division of labor differs across potential assessment providers. In the case of ACT Aspire, PARCC, University of Kansas, and likely DRC, ETS, and Measured Progress, the assessment provider is solely responsible for product development and for test administration, scoring, and reporting; and the state is responsible for overseeing contract performance. Smarter Balanced is responsible for product development and monitoring consistency across member states and states are responsible for procuring a state-specific vendor for test administration, scoring, and reporting and for monitoring the contract performance of that vendor. On the other hand, PARCC manages all assessment activities centrally. States such as Florida, Tennessee, and Arizona have purchased the rights to use Utah test items in 2015, but there is no cross-state collaboration beyond that financial transaction.

Science

Science is addressed separately because whereas there is considerable similarity of the Wyoming state standards in Language Arts and Mathematics to those of many other states, the Wyoming state standards in science are unique. Therefore, there may or may not be sources with qualified products (meaning an exclusive Wyoming science assessment may be needed). The potential assessment options available for science will depend on the new science content standards adopted by the Wyoming State Board of Education.

Of the sources listed in Table 3, ACT Aspire, Utah, and the University of Kansas offer science assessments. The DRC, ETS, and Measured Progress products may include science assessments when they become available. PARCC and Smarter Balanced products do not include science assessments.

The Task Force recommended keeping the existing science assessment until new Wyoming science standards have been adopted, but the RFP issued for a new assessment system include requirements to immediately begin development of a new science assessment consistent with the recommendations in this report when the new Wyoming state science standards are adopted. They further recommended collaboration with other states with sufficiently similar science standards be investigated as a first option. Finally, the Task Force recommended that depending on the instructional shifts required by any new science standards, the state may choose to adjust the timing of a new science assessment to best accommodate the required instructional shifts.



TAB B

Guidelines Pertaining to District Assessment Systems

2015 Wyoming Session Laws, Chapter 179, Section 6

(b) The state board and department of education, in implementing W.S. 21-2-202, 21-2-304 and 21-3-110, as amended by sections 1 and 2 of this act, pertaining to school district assessment systems and high school graduation requirements, shall periodically report progress to the joint education interim committee and the select committee. A report with final recommendations on guidelines shall be included within the October 15, 2015, report required under subsection (a) of this section.



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MEMORANDUM

October 15, 2015

To: Senator Hank Coe and Representative David Northrup, Co-chairs, Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability and Joint Education Interim Committee

From: Paige Fenton Hughes, Coordinator

RE: District Assessment Systems

Since the passage of Senate File 8, now Enrolled Act 87, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) has been working to provide information and guidance to districts about how to respond to the changes in the requirements related to district assessment systems.

The documents in this tab are information shared with districts and proposed guidance for districts developed by the District Assessment Steering committee under the direction of WDE staff.

Changes in Chapter 31 rules regarding graduation requirements are in the process of being updated at this time. Further information about the rules changes is also included in this section.

If you have questions, please contact me at 307.349.4506 or paige.fentonhughes@gmail.com.



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MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Brent Young, Chief Policy Officer
DATE: October 6, 2015
SUBJECT: District Assessment System Update

The WDE's work on District Assessment Systems (DAS) has focused around three areas during the past year. This includes review and recommended revisions to Chapter 31, Graduation Requirements, the development of a district assessment system guidebook to support schools and districts as they transition to the new review and reporting requirements, and statewide professional development on assessment literacy and formative assessment resource development.

For 3 years, the WDE has collaborated with a group of district curriculum directors and a University of Wyoming College of Education representative who serve as the DAS Steering Committee. This ensures that the Department is responsive to needs and interests of the field as well as consistent with statutory requirements.

Chapter 31, Graduation Requirements

Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) No. 87 (2015 Session Laws, Chapter 179) eliminates the requirement for tiered diplomas (W.S. 21-2-304 (a)(iv)). Previously, districts were required to transcript one of the three following endorsements related to a student's level of proficiency in the areas of the common core of knowledge and skills: A) advanced endorsement, B) comprehensive endorsement, or C) general endorsement.

This legislation also eliminates district assessment system annual reporting requirements and requires a review of the district assessment system as part of the accreditation review process every five years on a staggered basis (W.S. 21-2-304 (a)(iv)).

The WDE provided information to districts regarding these statutory changes in Memorandum to Superintendents 2015-053, Changes to District Assessment Systems, found here:

<http://edu.wyoming.gov/downloads/communications/memos/2015/2015-053.pdf>

Given that changes in statute were effective immediately, emergency Chapter 31 rules were necessary. Following a preliminary review by the DAS Steering Committee, the Department finalized the revisions and, upon approval by the State Board of Education (SBE), requested approval for emergency rules simultaneous to the regular rules proposal. The Governor approved the emergency rule on August 18, 2015. Public comment for regular rules closed on October 4, 2015. The SBE is currently considering all comments received and will move forward with adoption and promulgation of regular rules accordingly.

District Assessment System Guidebook

During the past year, the DAS Steering Committee has responded to changing legislation by developing and then updating a *District Assessment System Guidebook* that aligns with the design and reporting requirements required in law and rules at the time. The first comprehensive document provided guidance on all required DAS design criteria (alignment, consistency, fairness, standard setting), the revised standards implementation timeline, and the annual reporting process including information on recommended supporting documentation. This document was later simplified to address only the alignment criterion in more detail and statements of assurance by districts to support the inclusion of the other criteria within their systems. All documents were presented to the SBE for consideration.

The 2015 General Session of the Legislature resulted in new legislation that eliminates the annual reporting requirement, focuses district assessment system requirements on alignment to the state's adopted content and performance standards, and integrates the review of district assessment systems within the annual accreditation process. Every five years, as a component of the comprehensive accreditation review process, there will be a thorough review of each district's assessment system. And, under WAEA, the district assessment system may also be reviewed more frequently if districts have schools that are low performing.

The current draft of the *District Assessment System Guidebook* outlines the following:

- Components of a district assessment system (state assessments, district assessment, school assessments, and classroom assessments)
- Types of assessments (formative, interim, summative)
- Information on AdvancED Standards and Indicators that specifically reference assessment (Standards 3.2 and 5.1).

Members of the DAS Steering Committee have been careful to ensure consistency with both the new Wyoming Comprehensive School Plan and the AdvancEd accreditation process as well as with the recommendations of the Assessment Task Force relative to district assessment systems. The document will be finalized and presented to the State Board for consideration at a meeting in the near future.

Professional Development

Assessment Literacy and Formative Assessment Resource Development

The WDE worked with the committee to develop a scope of work related to assessment literacy and formative assessment resource development. The Department contracted with Marzano Research, LLC, and specifically named Jan Hoegh, Associate Vice President to provide 15 two-day training sessions across the state. These trainings were organized into three sessions, spring 2015, summer 2015 and fall 2015. To date, over 775 educators have registered and/or attended this training with all 48 districts represented. Participants include UW professors, pre-services students, district administrators, and building principals. However, the primary audience has been classroom teachers and instructional facilitators. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. A sample of the session evaluation is attached.

The second phase of this formative assessment professional development is being designed and will be offered in the spring, 2016. One general session on assessment literacy and formative assessment will be offered. Other sessions will include separate modules for elementary and secondary work on performance scales and priority standards. Additional sessions with a focus on specific content areas will also be included. This approach will contribute to differentiated support for schools with performance ratings that indicate a need for professional development in specific content areas.

MAP

For the second year in a row, the WDE is offering customized workshops on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. NWEA will create the Applying Reports, Informing Instruction and Focusing on Growth professional development to assist teachers in their application of MAP data to inform instruction in the classroom. The locations for the four training sessions were selected based on the most recent WAEA school performance rating information.

For further information on the district assessment system work, please contact Shelly Andrews, shelly.andrews@wyo.gov, 307-777-3781.

Attachments

Memorandum to Superintendents 2015-053, Changes to District Assessment Systems

District Assessment System Guidebook, September 2015 DRAFT 2

Assessment Literacy and Formative Assessment Resource Development Session Evaluation (shared with permission from presenter)



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MEMORANDUM NO. 2015-053

TO: District Superintendents
Principals
Curriculum Directors
High School Counselors

FROM: Deb Lindsey, Director of State Assessment,
Accountability Division

DATE: May 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Legislative Changes Related to District Assessment
System Requirements

CHANGES TO DISTRICT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

2015 Session Laws, Chapter 0179 (Senate File 0008/Senate Enrolled Act 87 [SF0008/SEA87]) includes significant changes to district assessment system design, reporting, and review requirements. This memo provides an outline of changes as a result of language that has been eliminated and/or added. The timing and guidance on when and how these changes will be implemented and supported through the Department of Education are included, when possible. Guidance documents related to the district assessment system design requirements and the review processes are being developed and those materials will be provided as soon as possible.

In summary, the statutory changes streamline requirements for district assessment systems and associated graduation requirements by:

- Eliminating annual reporting of district assessment systems (formerly due August 1), effective immediately; instead, reviews of district assessment systems will be integrated with the accreditation process by
 - a. Requiring districts to annually attest that their district assessment systems and graduation requirements are consistent with state board requirements via the AdvancEd ASSIST assurances, by November 1 of each year, and

- b. Requiring districts to provide evidence of alignment of their district assessment systems every five years as a part of the AdvancEd accreditation review, beginning with the 2015-16 school year (more frequent reviews may be required when schools are rated as “not meeting expectations” in the school accountability system authorized under the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act)
- Eliminating “measure or multiple measures” (the former body of evidence) proficiency requirements for high school graduation, and substituting course completion (sufficient Carnegie units/credits) as the graduation requirement, effective March 9, 2015
- Eliminating tiered diplomas, effective for students graduating after March 9, 2015

Specifics related to each of the changes are provided below, along with relevant statutory excerpts. Please note that statutory citations and page numbers relate to the following document: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/2015/Enroll/SF0008.pdf>.

Changes as a result of language that has been eliminated:

Districts are no longer required to submit an annual report on the district assessment system beginning August 1, 2015.

21-3-110 (a) (xxiv)

The district shall ~~on or before August 1, 2015, and each August 1 thereafter,~~ report to the state board in accordance with W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv) on its assessment system established under this paragraph. (pg. 14)

Districts are no longer required to include a measure or multiple measures for purposes of determining completion of high school graduation requirements.

21-2-304 (a) (iv)

~~Beginning school year 2014-2015, and each school year thereafter, each district's assessment system shall include a measure or multiple measures for purposes of determining completion of high school graduation requirements. The state board shall by rule and regulation establish guidelines for district development of this measure or measures, and shall through the department of education, provide support to districts in developing each district's measure or measures.~~ (pg. 10)

21-3-110 (a) (xxiv)

~~Beginning school year 2014-2015 and each school year thereafter, a component of the district assessment system shall include a measure or multiple measures used to determine satisfactory completion of high school graduation requirements and developed in accordance with guidelines established by the state board.~~ (pg. 14)

The associated requirement to describe performance levels in order to achieve proficiency of the common core of knowledge and common core of skills related to high school graduation is no longer required.

21-2-304 (a) (iii)

Student content and performance standards prescribed under this paragraph shall include standards for graduation from any high school within any school district of this state. ~~and shall describe required performance levels in order to achieve proficiency of the common core of knowledge and common core of skills prescribed under W.S. 21-9-101(b).~~ (pg. 9)

Effective for the 2015 high school graduation class, the requirement for high school diploma endorsements has been eliminated.

21-2-304 (a) (iv)

~~A high school diploma shall provide for one (1) of the following endorsements which shall be stated on the transcript of each student:~~ (pgs. 10, 11)

21-3-110 (a) (xxv)

~~At minimum, provide the three (3) endorsements on high school transcripts specified under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv) and may provide additional endorsements.~~ (pgs. 14, 15)

The WDE950 Collection for the 2015 graduating class will make reporting endorsements an “optional” data field. Districts may choose to continue this practice, but it is no longer a state requirement. However, transcripts for students graduating before the effective date of this law (March 9, 2015) must still include an endorsement.

Changes as a result of language that has been added:

The bill adds language to identify “course completion” as the standard to be met for graduation from high school. Completion of the required number of Carnegie Units will be evidence of meeting this requirement.

21-2-304 (a) (iv)

The board shall also establish, in consultation with local school districts, requirements for students to earn a high school diploma as evidenced by course completion and as measured by each district's assessment system prescribed by rule and regulation of the state board and required under W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxiv). (pg. 10)

This bill added an annual report of evidence on 1) district assessment alignment to the content and performance standards, and 2) graduation standards.

21-3-110 (a) (xv)

...and on or before November 1 of each school year, report to the department evidence of the alignment of its assessment system with the uniform state standards provided within its schools; (pg. 12)

21-3-110 (a) (xxv)

...and on or before November 1 of each school year, report to the department of education evidence that the district is compliant with high school graduation standards imposed by the state board under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii); (pg. 15)

Meeting this requirement will be accomplished by adding to or revising the existing WDE assurance statements submitted by November 1 through the AdvancED ASSIST system.

The AdvancED five (5) year accreditation review cycle will include a specific review of the district assessment system. This review will be implemented with the 2015-2016 school year.

21-2-202 (a) (xxxvi)

(xxxvi) Commencing school year 2015-2016, in conjunction with the school district accreditation process required under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(ii) and as a component of the statewide education accountability system created under W.S. 21-2-204, conduct a review of each school district's assessment system once every five (5) years to ensure alignment with the uniform state education standards promulgated by the state board, and to ensure district adherence to the uniform graduation standards prescribed by the state board under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii). Reviews undertaken pursuant to this paragraph, together with findings, shall be reported to the state board and any deficiencies determined by the review shall be addressed through the statewide system of support established under W.S. 21-2-204(f). (pg. 3)

21-2-204 (a) (iv)

Once every five (5) years and on a staggered basis, the state board shall through the department, annually review and approve each district's assessment system designed to determine the various levels of student performance as aligned with the uniform state standards and the attainment of high school graduation requirements. (pg. 10)

21-3-110 (a) (xxxiv)

Effective school year 2015-2016, in conjunction with district accreditation, as a component of the statewide education accountability system and in accordance with W.S. 21-2-202(a)(xxxvi), be subject to a review by the department of education once every five (5) years on the alignment of the district's assessment system with the uniform state education standards promulgated by the state board, and the district's adherence to the uniform graduation standards prescribed by the state board under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii). (pg. 15)

Current Chapter 31 Rules require district assessment systems to be aligned, consistent, fair, and have a defensible standard setting method. The new language places the emphasis on alignment to the unified state standards. The Chapter 31 rules will be revised and a guidance document will be developed and provided to support districts in the near term.

In addition to the review that will be conducted in conjunction with the five (5) year accreditation review cycle, if a school is designated as “not meeting expectations” through the

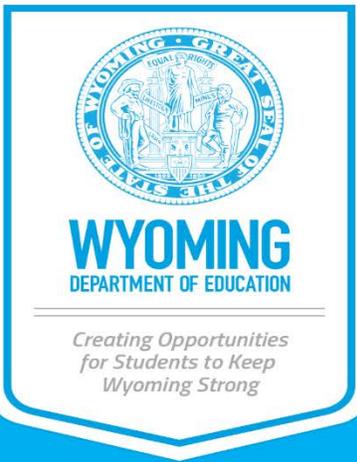
accountability model calculation, the representative(s) identified for this district may conduct a specific review of the district's assessment system as part of the statewide system of support.

21-2-204 (f) (vi)

In addition, the evaluation of a district's student assessment system as provided by paragraph (vii) of this subsection may be undertaken in that school year immediately following any school year in which a school within the district has been designated as not meeting expectations. (pg. 5)

The guidance document noted above will provide support for districts and the representatives as they review the district assessment system in light of the “not meeting expectations” accountability rating.

For questions or concerns, please contact Shelly Andrews at shelly.andrews@wyo.gov or 307.777.3781.



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DISTRICT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

GUIDEBOOK

September 2015

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Purpose of this Guidebook

The Wyoming Department of Education is committed to ensuring that all educators receive guidance to support the development of a robust district assessment system (DAS) that will meet student needs, system needs and accreditation and accountability requirements. (See Appendix 1)

Purpose of the District Assessment System

The purpose of the K-12 District Assessment System is to ensure equity of opportunity for students by demonstrating alignment of district assessments to the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards in all nine content areas. The DAS should be designed and implemented so that inferences pertaining to equity of educational opportunity are supported by the assessment system.

Components of a District Assessment System

1. **State-required assessments, including currently mandated interim assessments.** These are specific assessments that the state requires districts/schools to administer. These assessments are typically used for school and program accountability and/or evaluation. Examples include PAWS, ACT, and MAP.
2. **District assessments.** These are specific assessments that a district requires that schools administer. Examples may include a common end-of-course, final examination or end of unit examination.
3. **School assessments.** These are assessments that a school requires. Examples may include grade specific common end-of-course, final examination or end of unit examination.
4. **Classroom assessments.** These are assessments that classroom teachers select and choose to administer. Examples may include pre-tests, end of chapter tests, performance assessments, etc.

Types of Assessments Defined

For consistency purposes, the text that follows comes directly from the September 4, 2015 draft document *Recommendations from the Wyoming Assessment Task Force*.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment has also been called formative instruction. The purpose of formative assessment is to evaluate student understanding against key learning targets, provide targeted feedback to students, and adjust instruction on a moment-to-moment basis.

In 2006, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and experts on formative assessment developed a widely cited definition (Wiley, 2008):

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievements of intended instructional outcomes (p. 3).

In addition, Wiley (paraphrased from p. 3) lists five critical attributes of formative assessment:

1. They are based on clear articulations of learning goals as steps toward an ultimate desirable outcome.
2. Learning goals and the criteria for success are clearly identified and communicated to students in language they can understand.
3. Students are frequently provided with feedback directly linked to the learning goals and criteria for success.
4. Students engage in self- and peer-assessment against the criteria for success.
5. Students and teachers jointly own (collaborate on) monitoring student progress over time.

While the practice of formative assessment in general embodies these five attributes, not every example of formative assessment incorporates every attributes. The definition given above and five critical attributes are based on research linking such practices to student learning gains. The core of the formative assessment process is that it takes place during instruction (i.e., “in the moment”) and under full control of the teacher to support student learning while it is developing. This is done through diagnosing on a very frequent basis where students are in their progress toward learning goals, where gaps in knowledge and skill exist, and how to help students close those gaps.

Another important conclusion one can draw from the definitions and critical attributes is that formative assessment is embedded within instruction. Instruction does not stop when teachers engage in formative assessment. Formative assessment covers fine-grained learning targets that are often the focus of a single unit of instruction.

Interim Assessment

Many interim assessments are commercial products and rely on fairly standardized administration procedures that provide information relative to a specific set of learning targets—although not always tied to specific state content standards—and are designed to inform decisions at the classroom, school, and/or district level. In some cases, interim assessments may be controlled at the classroom level to provide information for the teacher, but unlike formative assessment, the results of interim assessments can be meaningfully aggregated and reported at a broader level. However, the adoption and timing of such interim assessments are likely to be controlled by the school district. The content and format of interim assessments is also very likely to be controlled by the test developer. Therefore, these assessments are considerably less instructionally-relevant than formative assessments in that decisions at the classroom level tend to be ex post facto regarding post-unit remediation needs and adjustment of instruction the next time the unit is taught.

Common assessments developed by a school or district for the purpose of measuring student achievement multiple times throughout a year may be considered interim assessments. These may include common mid-term exams and other periodic assessments such as quarterly assessments.

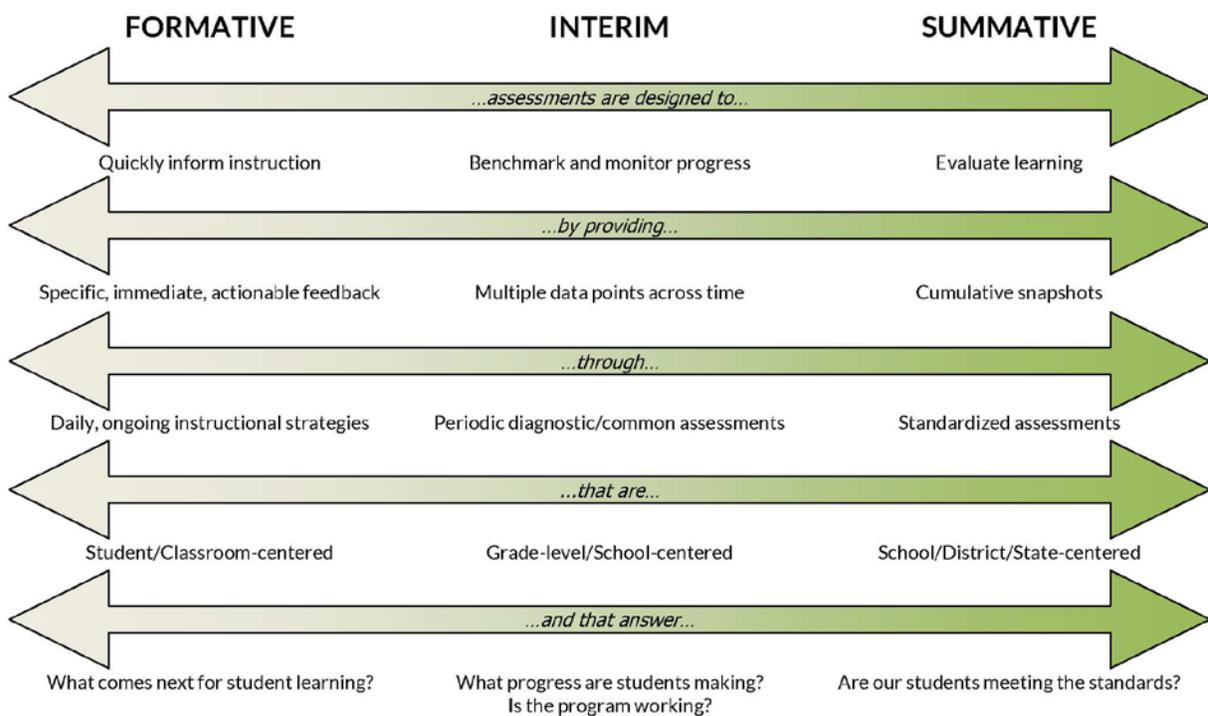
Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are generally infrequent (e.g., administered only once to any given student) and cover major units of instruction such as semesters, courses, credits, or grade levels. They are typically given at the end of a defined period to evaluate students' performance against a set of learning targets for the instructional period. The prototypical assessment conjured by the term "summative assessments" is given in a standardized manner statewide (but can also be given nationally or district-wide) and is typically used for accountability or to otherwise inform policy. Such summative assessments are typically the least flexible of the various assessment types. Summative assessments are also used for testing out of a course, diploma endorsement, graduation, high school equivalency, and college entrance.

Comprehensive Assessment System Graphic

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

By Type: *What are the differences between assessment types within a balanced system?*



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; April 30, 2015 as modified by Wyoming Department of Education; September 18, 2015.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

By Purpose: *What are the purposes of various assessment types?*

	Formative <i>Quickly informs instruction by providing specific, immediate, actionable feedback</i>	Interim <i>Benchmarks and monitors progress by providing multiple data points across time</i>	Summative <i>Evaluates learning by providing a cumulative snapshot</i>
To PLAN learning <i>PRIOR to instruction</i>	Feedback that identifies student learning goals and needs	Data points that show a teacher the instructional starting point for a chapter, unit, semester, or year	Snapshot that aids in planning future instruction, reflecting on general patterns, or establishing the big picture within a class of students
<i>Examples*</i>	<i>Pre-tests/quizzes Student self-assessment Visual organizers (i.e. KWL)</i>	<i>Inventory Pre-tests/quizzes Universal screener</i>	<i>Prior year summative data (i.e., AP exams, screeners, benchmarks/CBMs, statewide assessments)</i>
To SUPPORT learning <i>DURING instruction</i>	Feedback that informs both student and teacher in order to make real-time adjustments to teaching and learning	Data points that show what learning objectives have been mastered, what needs to be addressed next, and what requires more attention	Snapshot that informs classroom, grade level, or department decisions such as groupings, alterations to curriculum maps, etc.
<i>Examples*</i>	<i>Journals Questioning Observations, visual signals</i>	<i>Rubric Running records Graded class work</i>	<i>Benchmarks/CBMs End of unit grades Item/sub-group/gap analysis</i>
To MONITOR learning <i>BETWEEN instruction</i>	Feedback that allows the teacher to see what progress has been made by the student since last check-in	Data points that track student progress over time, providing periodic and multiple data points against benchmarks throughout the year for program improvement and instructional change	Snapshot that provides information about what students know and can do in order to promote program improvement, curricular changes, or PD needs
<i>Examples*</i>	<i>Portfolios Running records Student conferences</i>	<i>Rubric Running records Graded class work</i>	<i>Benchmarks/CBMs End of semester grades Item/sub-group/gap analysis</i>
To VERIFY learning <i>AFTER instruction</i>	Feedback that confirms what the student knows and can do	Data points that are used, along with other information, to establish a grade or score, and to make decisions about and adjustments to instruction, curriculum, and programs	Snapshot that contributes to decision-making, typically on an annual basis, at macro levels, about subgroups, schools, districts, and states
<i>Examples*</i>	<i>Portfolios Exit activities Projects/demonstrations</i>	<i>Post-test Local benchmarks Curriculum-based measures (CBMs)</i>	<i>Statewide assessments School Improvement Planning</i>

*Note: Examples listed above are not an exhaustive or definitive list, and may serve multiple purposes.

WI DPI: April 30, 2015.
Modified by WDE
September 18, 2015.

Alignment of the DAS to the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards

The DAS must be aligned with the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards, both in terms of content and cognitive complexity within three (3) full school years following adoption of revised standards. The combination of assessments that comprise the system should be aligned so that the full set of standards in the common core of knowledge and skills are assessed. The following table provides the full implementation timeline for each content standard.

Year Revised	Content Standard	Implementation Deadline
2008	Science	Fully implemented now
2012	Language Arts	On or before the first day of 2015-2016 school year
2012	Mathematics	On or before the first day of 2015-2016 school year
2012	Health	On or before the first day of 2015-2016 school year
2013	Foreign Language	On or before the first day of 2016-2017 school year
2013	Fine and Performing Arts	On or before the first day of 2016-2017 school year
2014	Social Studies	On or before the first day of 2017-2018 school year
2014	Physical Education	On or before the first day of 2017-2018 school year
2014	Career/Vocational Education	On or before the first day of 2017-2018 school year

Preparing for the five-year accreditation external review of the DAS

Alignment of the assessments to the standards is the focus of legislation. AdvancED accreditation requires some additional evidence under Indicators 3.2 and 5.1. Specifically, Indicator 3.2 requires that districts provide evidence that they are routinely using data from local assessments to “monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment.” Districts rated as Effective “use data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.” Indicator 5.1 addresses consistency within districts and across classrooms along with “reliable and bias-free assessments.” Further, Indicator 5.1 creates the expectation that school systems regularly evaluate their local assessment system in the context of “improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning.”

The following tables provide information on what the External Review Team will be looking for in order to evaluate DAS in place. Use the DAS self- assessment rubrics in Appendix 2 to evaluate your DAS for alignment with the standards and with the AdvancED review criteria.

AdvancED Indicators 3.2 and 5.1

3.2 Monitoring and Adjusting Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Curriculum, instruction and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT		ACCEPTABLE	EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
System personnel rarely or never monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment or alignment with the goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose.	System personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure for vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with the goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose.	Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for	Using data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel systematically monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and

		achievement and instruction and statements of purpose.	instruction and statements of purpose.
No process exists to ensure alignment when curriculum, instruction and/or assessments are reviewed or revised.	A process is implemented sometimes to ensure alignment when curriculum, instruction and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level.	There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level.	There is a systematic, collaborative process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level.
There is little or no evidence that the continuous improvement process is connected with vertical and horizontal alignment or alignment with the system's purpose in curriculum, instruction and assessment.	There is limited evidence that the continuous improvement process ensures vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with the system's purpose in curriculum, instruction and assessment.	The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction and assessment.	The continuous improvement process has clear guidelines to ensure that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction and assessment.

5.1 Student Assessment System

The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT		ACCEPTABLE	EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
System and school personnel use an assessment system that produces data from assessment measures.	System and school personnel use an assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures.	System and school personnel maintain and use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from	All system and school personnel maintain and consistently use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data

These measures include assessments about student learning as well as school and system performance.

The assessment system provides a limited degree of consistency of measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions.

Assessments seldom are proven reliable and bias free.

The assessment system is rarely or never evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning.

These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system performance.

The assessment system provides consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions.

Some assessments are proven reliable and bias free.

The assessment system is evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning.

multiple assessment measures.

These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance.

The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions.

Most assessments are proven reliable and bias free.

The comprehensive assessment system is regularly evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning.

from multiple assessment measures.

These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance.

The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across all classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions.

All assessments are proven reliable and bias free.

The comprehensive assessment system is regularly and systematically evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning.

Appendix 1. Wyoming Statutes Related to DAS -- excerpts as well as links to Title 21 complete and complete sections

21-2-202. Duties of the state superintendent.

(a) In addition to any other duties assigned by law, the state superintendent shall:

(xxxvi) Commencing school year 2015-2016, in conjunction with the school district accreditation process required under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(ii) and as a component of the statewide education accountability system created under W.S. 21-2-204, conduct a review of each school district's assessment system once every five (5) years to ensure alignment with the uniform state education standards promulgated by the state board, and to ensure district adherence to the uniform graduation standards prescribed by the state board under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii). Reviews undertaken pursuant to this paragraph, together with findings, shall be reported to the state board and any deficiencies determined by the review shall be addressed through the statewide system of support established under W.S. 21-2-204(f).

21-2-204. Wyoming Accountability in Education Act; statewide education accountability system created.

(f)...Commencing with school year 2014-2015, and each school year thereafter, the state superintendent shall take action based upon system results according to the following:

(vi) Schools designated as not meeting expectations shall file an improvement plan in accordance with paragraph (iv) of this subsection that identifies and addresses all content and indicator areas where performance is below target levels. In addition, the evaluation of a district's student assessment system as provided by paragraph (vii) of this subsection may be undertaken in that school year immediately following any school year in which a school within the district has been designated as not meeting expectations.

21-2-304. Duties of the state board of education.

(a) The state board of education shall:

(iv) Effective school year 2013-2014, and each school year thereafter, require district administration of common benchmark adaptive assessments statewide in reading and mathematics for grades one (1) through eight (8) in accordance with W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxiv). The board shall also establish, in consultation with local school districts, requirements for students to earn a high school diploma as evidenced by course completion and as measured by each district's assessment system prescribed by rule and regulation of the state board and required under W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxiv). Once every five (5) years and on a staggered basis, the state board shall through the department, review and approve each district's assessment system designed to determine the various levels of student performance as aligned with the uniform state standards and the attainment of high school graduation requirements as evidenced by course completion. In addition and following review, refinement and revision of student content and performance standards adopted under paragraph (a)(iii) of this section and reviewed under subsection (c) of this section,

the board shall establish a process to ensure district assessment systems are aligned with the refined and revised standards within three (3) full school years following adoption of revised standards;

(vii)...Among other duties as may be requested by the district or department, the representative shall review and provide suggestions on the improvement plans submitted by schools in accordance with paragraphs (iv) through (vi) of this subsection, and may review and evaluate district student assessment systems implemented under W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxiv) to ensure alignment with the uniform state education standards.

21-3-110. Duties of boards of trustees.

(a) The board of trustees in each school district shall:

(xv) Provide an educational program within the schools under its jurisdiction in compliance with uniform state standards prescribed under W.S. 21-9-101 and 21-9-102 and by rule and regulation of the state board and on or before November 1 of each school year, report to the department evidence of the alignment of its assessment system with the uniform state standards provided within its schools;

(xxiv) Establish a student assessment system to measure student performance relative to the uniform student content and performance standards in all content areas for which the state board has promulgated standards pursuant to W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii). To the extent required by W.S. 21-2-204 and 21-2-304(a)(vi), the district assessment system shall be integrated with the statewide assessment system and the statewide accountability system. Components of the district assessment system required by this paragraph shall be designed and used to determine the various levels of student performance in all content areas of the uniform student content and performance standards relative to the common core of knowledge and skills prescribed under W.S. 21-9-101(b). The district shall report to the state board in accordance with W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv) on its assessment system established under this paragraph.

(xxxiv) Effective school year 2015-2016, in conjunction with district accreditation, as a component of the statewide education accountability system and in accordance with W.S. 21-2-202(a)(xxxvi), be subject to a review by the department of education once every five (5) years on the alignment of the district's assessment system with the uniform state education standards promulgated by the state board, and the district's adherence to the uniform graduation standards prescribed by the state board under W.S. 21-2-204(a)(iii).

Link: Title 21 Complete - accessed from Wyoming Legislative website 9-18-15

Link: Title 21 with complete referenced sections - accessed from Wyoming Legislative website 9-18-15

Appendix 2. DAS self-assessment rubrics

Alignment to the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards: The District Assessment System (DAS) is aligned with Wyoming Content and Performance Standards, both in terms of content and cognitive complexity. The district has a documented process used to demonstrate alignment.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets criterion (bullets checked are met) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet criterion	Artifacts may include:	Comments
<input type="radio"/> The DAS adequately addresses the standards, K-12; and, <input type="radio"/> the process ensures two-way alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> all assessment items and tasks align to the standards; <input type="radio"/> adequate sampling of the standards is represented in the assessments; and, <input type="radio"/> The process ensures that assessments reflect the cognitive depth and complexity of the standards.	<input type="radio"/> sample assessment blueprints <input type="radio"/> sample assessment matrices <input type="radio"/> sample curriculum maps <input type="radio"/> procedures for assuring alignment among the course curriculum, standards, assessments, and/or grading/scoring practices <input type="radio"/> evidence of procedures to ensure alignment of assessment items/tasks to the cognitive levels called for in the standards	

AdvancED Indicator 3.2: Curriculum, instruction, and assessments throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets criterion (bullets checked are met) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet criterion	Artifacts may include:	Comments
<input type="radio"/> Using data from student assessments and an examination of professional practice, system and school personnel monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment and alignment with goals for achievement and instruction and statements of purpose. <input type="radio"/> There is a process in place to ensure alignment each time curriculum, instruction and/or assessments are reviewed or revised at the system or school level; and <input type="radio"/> The continuous improvement process ensures that vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment with the system's purpose are maintained and enhanced in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	<input type="radio"/> Curriculum writing process <input type="radio"/> Description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment <input type="radio"/> Sample curriculum maps <input type="radio"/> Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum <input type="radio"/> Common assessments <input type="radio"/> Program descriptions	

AdvancED Indicator 5.1: The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets criterion (bullets checked are met) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet criterion	Artifacts may include:	Comments
<input type="radio"/> System and school personnel maintain and use a comprehensive assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures. <input type="radio"/> These measures include locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning as well as school and system (including non-instructional divisions) performance. <input type="radio"/> The comprehensive assessment system ensures consistent measurement across classrooms, courses, educational programs and system divisions. <input type="radio"/> Most assessments are proven reliable and bias free. <input type="radio"/> The comprehensive assessment system is regularly evaluated for reliability and effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning.	<input type="radio"/> Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results. <input type="radio"/> Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning. <input type="radio"/> Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model	

Appendix 3. Professional development opportunities/resources

Associated Links:

<http://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/pd/>

References/Readings:

Marzano, R. (2010). *Formative Assessment & Standards-Based Grading*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Chappuis, J., Stiggins, R., Chappuis, S. & Arter, J. (2012). *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning. Doing it Right – Using it Well*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Martineau, J. & Marion, S. (October 2015). *Wyoming’s Statewide Assessment System: Recommendations from the Wyoming Assessment Task Force*.

**Assessment Literacy and Formative Assessment Resource
Development
Jan Hoegh, Associate Vice President
Marzano Research, LLC**

<i>Spring Sessions</i>	
April 13 - 14, 2015	Gillette
April 21 - 22, 2015	Cody
April 23 - 24, 2015	Riverton
May 4 - 5, 2015	Evanston
May 6 - 7, 2015	Rawlins
<i>Summer Sessions</i>	
July 21 - 22, 2015	Laramie
July 23 - 24, 2015	Casper
July 28 - 29, 2015	Thermopolis
August 4 - 5, 2015	Gillette
<i>Fall Sessions</i>	
October 1 - 2, 2015	Green River
October 12 - 13, 2015	Powell
October 14 - 15, 2015	Buffalo
October 19 - 20, 2015	Casper
October 21 - 22, 2015	Cheyenne,
<i>All session from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm daily PTSB and UW credit available</i>	



TAB C

Request to Allow for an Exemption from No Child Left Behind Assessment Requirements

2015 Wyoming Session Laws, Chapter 179, Section 6

(e) The state board, with assistance from the state superintendent, shall immediately request the United States department of education allow an exemption from the requirements under the federal No Child Left Behind Act to allow for administration of the statewide student assessment in grades three (3), five (5), seven (7), nine (9) and eleven (11), or an alternative grade band assessment configuration, to assess reading, math and science for purposes of complying with the assessment requirements of the federal act. The state board shall report each month to the select committee on statewide education accountability and the joint education interim committee on the status of this request. Not later than October 15, 2015, the state board shall submit a final report to the select committee on statewide accountability and the joint education interim committee on the action taken under this subsection and any additional waivers or exceptions necessary to administer the statewide student assessment system contemplated under this subsection.



WYOMING

State Board of Education

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KATHRYN SESSIONS
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WALT WILCOX
Casper

BELENDIA WILLSON
Thermopolis

CHELSIE Oaks
Executive Assistant

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Hank Coe and Representative David Northrup, Joint Education Committee and Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability Co-chairs

FROM: Paige Fenton Hughes, Coordinator

DATE: October 15, 2015

SUBJECT: Exemption request from the assessment requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act

The state board and Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) have communicated with your committees over the past few months regarding the request to the United States Department of Education (USDOE) regarding an exemption from assessment requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

In this tab you will simply find copies of correspondence you have already received via the Legislative Service Office (LSO). There is a letter from WDE Chief Policy Officer, Brent Young, to the USDOE requesting the exemption from assessment requirements. There is a letter from the USDOE to Brent Young denying the exemption request and outlining possible consequences of implementing an alternative assessment plan. And finally, there is a memo from the state board to the LSO summing up the work around the exemption request.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding any of this correspondence. You can contact me at 307.349.4506 or at paige.fentonhughes@gmail.com.



WYOMING
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Creating Opportunities
for Students to Keep
Wyoming Strong*

Wyoming

Jillian Balow
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dicky Shanor
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On the Web
edu.wyoming.gov
www.wyomingmeasuresup.com

May 18, 2015

Patrick Rooney, Deputy Director
Office of State Support
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Mr. Rooney,

Thanks for spending the time on May 5th to discuss our pending request to ED seeking approval for modifying our statewide assessment program. Consistent with Enrolled Act 87 from the 2015 Legislative Session, we'll propose to test Wyoming students in every other grade (3, 5, 7, 9 and 11) and include with our proposal the results of our examination of the concurrent effects on the school accountability system required under the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act. As we discussed, it was the Wyoming Legislature's intent to reduce the burden of standardized testing in our 48 districts without sacrificing the reliability and validity of our state's school accountability system.

Accountability staff at the Wyoming Department of Education will conduct a number of analyses to determine how we can best measure and report our indicators of school quality at the elementary and middle school level (achievement, growth, and equity) and at high school (achievement, equity, and readiness). For reference, summaries of our current accountability system can be found here: <http://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/accountability/state-school-accountability/>

We understand that the purpose in NCLB of requiring every grade testing (3-8 and once in high school) is to ensure that states can – in a transparent manner -- hold all schools accountable for their performance and to provide sufficient information to inform school improvement efforts over time. We look forward to providing you with this information over the next few months.

Sincerely,

Brent Young, Chief Policy Officer

BY/dl



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Brent Young
Chief Policy Officer
Wyoming Department of Education
Hathaway Building, Second Floor
Cheyenne WY 82002

JUN 15 2015

Dear Mr. Young:

Thank you for your May 18, 2015, letter to Deputy Director Patrick Rooney, Office of State Support, U.S. Department of Education (ED) concerning recently passed legislation, Act 87, regarding Wyoming's Statewide assessment system. ED understands that under Act 87 Wyoming will propose to test Wyoming students in every other grade, specifically grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. This proposal would be in direct violation of requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA).

First, please let me emphasize the importance of the assessment requirements under the ESEA. The assessment requirements are focused on ensuring that parents and educators have the information they need to help every student be successful and on protecting equity for all students by maintaining a consistent measure of what students know and are able to do regardless of where they live. High-quality, annual Statewide assessments are essential to providing critical information about student achievement and growth to parents, teachers, principals, and administrators at all levels. When that system is aligned with the academic content and achievement standards that a State expects all children to know and be able to do, it provides the road map for aligning instruction to the academic needs of students identified by the assessment system. High-quality, annual Statewide assessments provide information on *all* students so that educators can improve educational outcomes, close achievement gaps among subgroups of historically underserved students, increase equity, and improve instruction.

ESEA section 1111(b)(3) (20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(3)) requires a State educational agency (SEA) that receives funds under Title I, Part A of the ESEA to implement in each local educational agency (LEA) in the State a set of high-quality, yearly academic assessments that includes, at a minimum, assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science.

Under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(C) (20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(3)(C)) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.2, the State assessments must —

- Be the same academic assessments used to measure the achievement of all children (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(i); § 200.2(b)(1));

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

- Be designed to be valid and accessible for use by the widest possible range of students, including students with disabilities and English learners (§ 200.2(b)(2));
- Be aligned with the State’s challenging academic content and achievement standards and provide coherent information about student attainment of the standards (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(ii); § 200.2(b)(3));
- Be used for purposes for which they are valid and reliable and be consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical standards (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(iii); § 200.2(b)(4));
- Be supported by evidence from the test publisher or other relevant sources that the assessment system is of adequate technical quality for each required purpose (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(iv); § 200.2(b)(5));
- Involve multiple up-to-date measures of student academic achievement, including measures that assess higher-order thinking skills and understanding, which may include single or multiple question formats that range in cognitive complexity within a single assessment and multiple assessments within a subject area (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(vi); § 200.2(b)(7));
- Provide for the participation of all students in the tested grades, including students with disabilities, who must be provided reasonable accommodations, and English learners, who must be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided reasonable accommodations including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what those students know and can do in academic content areas until they have achieved proficiency in English (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(ix); §§ 200.2(b)(9), 200.6);
- Assess English learners who have been in schools in the United States for three or more consecutive years in English on the reading/language arts assessments, except that, on a case-by-case basis, an LEA may assess those students in their native language for not more than two additional years (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(x));
- Produce individual student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports that allow parents, teachers, and principals to understand and address the specific academic needs of students (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(xii); § 200.2(b)(11));
- Enable results to be disaggregated within each State, LEA, and school by gender, by each major racial and ethnic group, by English proficiency status, by migrant status, by students with disabilities as compared to nondisabled students, and by economically disadvantaged students compared to students who are not economically disadvantaged (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(xiii); § 200.2(b)(10));
- Be consistent with widely accepted professional testing standards, objectively measure academic achievement, knowledge, and skills, but do not measure personal or family beliefs or attitudes (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(xiv); § 200.2(b)(8)); and
- Enable the production of itemized score analyses (§ 1111(b)(3)(C)(xv); § 200.2(b)(12)).

For each grade and subject assessed, a State’s academic assessment system must —

- Address the depth and breadth of the State’s academic content standards;
- Be valid, reliable, and of high technical quality; Express student results in terms of the State’s academic achievement standards; and
- Be designed to provide a coherent system across grades and subjects. 34 C.F.R. § 200.3(a).

In applying for funds under Title I, Part A of the ESEA, the SEA assured that it would administer the Title I, Part A program in accordance with all applicable statutes and regulations (see ESEA section 9304(a)(1)). Similarly, each LEA that receives Title I, Part A funds assured that it would administer its Title I, Part A program in accordance with all applicable statutes and regulations (see ESEA section

9306(a)(1)). If an SEA does not ensure that all students are assessed, ED has a range of enforcement actions it can take (described below). The SEA has similar enforcement actions available to it with respect to an LEA that does not ensure that all students participate in the State assessments, including withholding the LEA's Title I, Part A funds (20 U.S.C. § 1232c(b)).

If an SEA fails to comply with the assessment requirements in the ESEA, ED may do any of the following: 1) send a written request to the SEA that it come into compliance, increasing monitoring, placing a condition on the SEA's Title I, Part A grant award, placing the SEA on high-risk status (34 C.F.R. § 80.12); 2) issue a cease and desist order (GEPA section 456 (20 U.S.C. § 1234e)); 3) enter into a compliance agreement with the SEA to secure compliance (GEPA 457 (20 U.S.C. § 1234f)); 4) withholding all or a portion of the SEA's Title I, Part A administrative funds (ESEA section 1111(g)(2) (20 U.S.C. § 6311(g)(2))); or 5) suspend and then withhold, all or a portion of the State's Title I, Part A programmatic funds (GEPA section 455 (20 U.S.C. § 1234d)). An SEA has similar enforcement actions available to it with respect to noncompliance by an LEA, including withholding an LEA's Title I, Part A funds. *See, e.g.*, GEPA section 440 (20 U.S.C. § 1232c(b)).

The specific enforcement action(s) ED would take depends on the severity of non-compliance. For example, if an SEA has developed a Statewide assessment system but that system is not approvable because it fails to meet all statutory and regulatory requirements, ED might condition the SEA's Title I, Part A grant award, place the SEA on high-risk status, enter into a compliance agreement, or withhold State administrative funds. ED has, in fact, withheld Title I, Part A administrative funds under ESEA section 1111(g) (20 U.S.C. § 6311(g)) from a number of States for failure to comply with the assessment requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(3). If an SEA or LEA refuses to implement an assessment system that meets the statutory and regulatory requirements, ED might seek to withhold programmatic funds from the State and expect the SEA to withhold from the LEA. Clearly, if an SEA or LEA fails to comply with the assessment requirements in the ESEA, it could place its Title I, Part A funds in jeopardy. In addition, the SEA or LEA could find itself out of compliance with a wide range of additional Federal programs that rely on statewide assessment results, putting additional funds at risk. These additional programs include those targeting students most at risk including, but not limited to: the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program; ESEA Title III; Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); programs for rural schools under ESEA Title VI; migrant education under ESEA Title I, Part C; and programs focused on professional development and other supports for teachers, such as ESEA Title II.

Please note that an LEA may not avoid administering the State assessments required under ESEA section 1111(b)(3) by declining to accept Title I, Part A funds. As noted above, the assessment requirements are State-level requirements that apply to any SEA that accepts Title I, Part A funds. That SEA must then administer its assessments statewide—including to students in LEAs that do not participate in Title I.

As noted above, an SEA or its LEAs may find themselves out of compliance with other Federal programs that use student achievement results as well, including programs targeting students most at risk including, but not limited to: SIG; ESEA Title III; Part B of the IDEA; programs for rural schools under ESEA Title VI; migratory students under ESEA Title I, Part C; and programs focused on professional development and other supports for teachers, such as ESEA Title II.

Page 4 – Mr. Brent Young

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need additional information or clarification. If you have any additional questions, please contact Monika Kincheloe or Chuenee Boston at: OSS.Wyoming@ed.gov. Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing education for all of Wyoming's students.

Sincerely,



Monique M. Chism, Ph.D.
Director
Office of State Support



WYOMING

State Board of Education

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KATHRYN SESSIONS
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WALT WILCOX
Casper

BELENDIA WILLSON
Thermopolis

CHELSIE OAKS
Executive Assistant

MEMORANDUM

July 13, 2015

To: Senator Hank Coe and Representative David Northrup, Joint
Education Committee Co-Chairs

From: Pete Gosar, Chair

RE: US Department of Education Exemption Request

You all received a copy of the letter sent from the United States Department of Education (USDOE) to Brent Young, Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) Chief Policy Officer, in response to the request to administer the statewide assessment in alternative grades or grade bands. That request was made by the WDE on behalf of the State Board of Education as per the language in SF8 which was passed last legislative session.

The USDOE noted that every other year testing would be in direct violation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended and outlined the possible consequences of pursuing such a path. At this time, the board feels it has met the statutory obligation of submitting the exemption request as soon as was feasible, exploring and discussing the issues with the USDOE through the WDE contacts, and updating your committees. Please let us know, however, if further follow-up is desired and requested. However, the work on statewide assessment did not end when the WDE received the response on the assessment exemption request. The statewide assessment task force is exploring options related to the statewide assessment system and a recommendation from the task force regarding assessment options will be forthcoming by the October 15, 2015 deadline.

We look forward to updating you in person regarding these assessment issues and others. Please contact Paige Fenton Hughes at 307.349.4506 or paige.fentonhughes@gmail.com if you have any questions.



TAB D

Results and Process of the Professional Judgment Panel, Wyoming Accountability Model and Updates

W.S. 21-2-204. Wyoming Accountability in Education Act; statewide education accountability system created.

(e) The state board, through the department of education, shall compile, evaluate and determine the target levels for an overall school performance rating and for content level performance. The board shall execute this determination through a prescribed deliberative process informed by a panel comprised of broad based representation from both public education and the community at-large. The target levels for school performance on all performance indicators measured under subsection (c) of this section shall conform to the January 2012 education accountability report as defined by subsection (k) of this section...



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NATE BREEN
Cheyenne

HUGH HAGEMAN
Fort Laramie

RON MICHELI
Fort Bridger

SCOTTY RATLIFF
Riverton

JIM ROSE
Ex-Officio, CCC

KATHRYN SESSIONS
Cheyenne

WALT WILCOX
Casper

BELENDIA WILLSON
Thermopolis

CHELSIE Oaks
Executive Assistant

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Hank Coe and Representative David Northrup, Joint Education Committee and Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability Co-chairs

FROM: Paige Fenton Hughes, Coordinator

DATE: October 15, 2015

SUBJECT: Results of the Professional Judgment Panel

The State Board of Education convened the Professional Judgment Panel (PJP) in August of 2015 to set the standards for the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act accountability model. As in past years, Dr. Michael Beck facilitated panel discussions, and you will find his final report of the work of the panel in this tab of our report.

Dr. Michael Fliczek will attend your meeting to provide an update about the changes to the model and can answer questions the committees may have about either the model or the PJP process.

The state board extends many thanks to the members of the PJP who have, for multiple years now, taken days away from their homes and jobs to conduct the standards setting which provides targets for our schools. Furthermore, Dr. Fliczek, John Paul, and members of the WDE staff have been so helpful in collaborating and supporting the work both leading up to the PJP and during the PJP itself.

If you have any questions prior to your meeting, please contact me at 307.349.4506 or paige.fentonhughes@gmail.com.

Summary

Results of the 2015 Wyoming Professional Judgment Panel's Meetings & Recommendations for the State's School Accountability Program

Michael D. Beck
BETA, Inc.

Abstract

The Wyoming Professional Judgment Panel (PJP) met on 10-12 August in Casper to make recommendations concerning the state's school accountability program. The meeting had three primary objectives:

1. To recommend school-based standards for the several **Performance Indicators** identified in most-recent version of the School Performance Rating Model (Flicek, 2015a);
2. To use these established Performance Indicator standards in a "body of work" approach to set recommended **School Performance Levels** for all Wyoming schools, both schools housing students in Grades 3-8 and High Schools;
3. To discuss and agree to wording of the School Performance Rating **performance-level descriptors** defining each of the four possible school accountability ratings, separately for schools serving Grades 3-8 students and those serving High School students.

At the completion of the meetings, the PJP had accomplished each of above objectives. They carried out the process of establishing school performance standards for each of the Performance Indicators for both Grades 3-8 and High School, used these results to recommend School Performance Levels (SPLs), and reviewed and confirmed new Performance Level Descriptors for the school accountability program to be operational for the 2015-16 school year.

Recommendations of the PJP are summarized in the accompanying attachments. Resulting individual school accountability ratings for each Wyoming school building were generated by Mike Flicek and data-analysis colleagues from the Department of Education using the final PJP recommendations. The PJP recommendations and the impact of same were presented on 13 August to the State Board of Education, which approved the PJP recommendations. A summary of those school ratings is also attached.

Summary of PJP Meetings

The PJP met in Casper for three days in mid-August for the purpose of establishing the cutscores for the Wyoming School Performance Ratings. **Appendix A** lists all PJP committee members who attended the sessions. Because most PJP members had participated in sessions in previous years in which substantively identical activities were conducted, it was decided by the consultant for the activities in cooperation with the Coordinator for the State Board of Education to revise the training activities accordingly. The four new members of the PJP were asked to attend a one-half day training and orientation session on 10 August; attendance at this pre-session was optional all “returning” PJP members, as the content of this activity was limited to training in the PJP responsibilities, the general process of setting performance standards, and an overview of the school performance rating model. Two PJP members who had participated in previous years’ activities chose to attend portions of the pre-session. All PJP members then attended sessions on 11 and 12 August, during which only a brief overview of the general standard-setting procedures took place. The remaining portions of the two days was then devoted to PJP efforts to set standards for the various elements of the accountability model. It was the opinion of the session observers and consultants that this revision in the PJP training and judgment activities was both well-received and efficient.

The PJP’s work was facilitated by Michael Beck, a consultant contracted by the State Board of Education under a Scope of Work for the Standard Setting and Professional Judgment Panel. The same consultant had planned and conducted comparable sessions for earlier years of the accountability system implementation and the PJP work. This consultant was primarily guided in directing this process by the June 8 draft of the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act School Performance Rating Model, (Flicek, 2015a) and an earlier related set to suggested changes to the 2014 model (Flicek, 2015b) which established the Performance Indicators and accountability determination procedures for the current year of the accountability program. In preparation for the sessions, Michael Beck, Dr. Flicek, Dr. Fenton Hughes, and representatives of the Wyoming Department of Education held an extended conference call to discuss elements of the process. Beck and Flicek also exchanged multiple e-mails concerning various aspects of the system and the 2014-15 Wyoming assessment results pertinent to the accountability process.

Dr. Flicek and two staff members from the Wyoming Department of Education were present throughout the August PJP sessions to assist in describing elements of the model and to generate various “impact data” for PJP consideration. Their contributions to the success of the meetings were invaluable. Dr. Fenton Hughes was present to monitor all PJP and consultant efforts. Deb Lindsey, Wyoming’s Director of Assessment, also observed the PJP sessions.

Recommended Standards for the Performance Indicators

An agenda for the PJP sessions is provided in **Appendix B**. The pre-session afternoon activities began with an welcome from Dr. Fenton Hughes. Mike Flicek then briefed the new PJP members on major elements of the school accountability model, including changes in the model from the 2014-15 pilot year. Michael Beck then provided the new panelists with an introduction to the general process of setting performance standards, with special focus on the application of these activities to setting standards for schools

rather than students. The next phase of the session was devoted to a discussion of the PJP's activities and the several Performance Indicators that are integral to the Wyoming accountability system. Finally, panelists were introduced to the several sets of terminology used during the accountability process – performance descriptors for the PAWS, for the accountability Performance Indicators, and for the School Performance Levels. The small-group format of this pre-session provided ample opportunity for panelist questions and discussion.

The following day, for the full-panel PJP sessions, Dr. Fenton Hughes provided a welcome and introduction, and Dr. Flicek again presented the key elements of the 2015-16 model, highlighting changes from the previous year. The remaining portion of the two-day session was devoted to panel work in recommending standards for the multiple Performance Indicators whose definitions had changed from the previous year and then transforming these Performance Indicator standards into the School Performance Levels. As with previous years of these activities, multiple rounds of independent judgments were made by panelists for each of the Indicators, with extensive feedback and interaction among panel members between rounds for each Indicator. The first sets of such judgments were made independently by each judge. For each Performance Indicator, summaries of interim panel recommendation were generated and panelists were given anonymous feedback on their initial judgments, with extensive opportunity for panelists to discuss their initial judgments and reconsider their recommendations; then a second round of recommendations was conducted, again anonymously. PowerPoint™ slides used to conduct the sessions are available on request from Dr. Fenton Hughes.

Because the 2014 PJP had made recommendation for several of the Performance Indicators whose definitions and derivations remain unchanged from the previous year, it was not necessary for the panel to reconsider these judgments. The maintenance of previously determined standards adds stability and reliability to the accountability system; over time, of course, the goal of the process is that *none* of the constituent elements of the accountability system change from year to year, making it unnecessary to reset standards. At that stage, the state's accountability system and the standards for the system can be maintained without revision from year to year.

Changes to the accountability system from 2014-15 to 2015-16 are discussed in detail in Flicek 2015a and 2015b. Readers wishing to review the key elements of the system are referred to these documents for such information. For the 2015-16 version of the system, the Performance Indicators (PI) for the program are:

GRADES 3-8 SCHOOLS:

Achievement
Growth
Equity

HIGH SCHOOLS:

Achievement
Growth
Equity
College & Career Readiness

For Grades 3-8, the Growth PI has been unchanged since 2013, so no review or revision of the standards was necessary. For Achievement, because the Writing portion of the PAWS assessments was omitted from the 2014-15 statewide assessment program, it was necessary for the PJP to review and reconsider the standards for the PI. The definition and computation of the Equity PI was changed for the current year of the system, so the PJP had to establish new standards.

For High Schools, standards set the previous year for the Achievement PI were not reviewed, as no changes to this element of the system were made. As with Grades 3-8, the Equity PI was redefined for 2015-16, so new standards had to be established. The Growth PI for high schools was newly introduced for 2015-16, so discussion of the derivation of this PI took place, followed by establishing standards. Since the definition of Growth for high schools was conceptually identical to the Growth PI for elementary schools, previous PJP recommendations of standards for the Grades 3-8 schools provided a grounding of this process. Finally, two sub-indicator elements of the Readiness PI (Graduation Rate, and Hathaway Eligibility) were reconsidered by the PJP due to minor changes in the calculation of these sub-indicators. In addition, the process of combining the sub-indicators of Readiness was revised this year, making PJP review and standard setting activities for this Indicator necessary.

This report contains PJP recommendations only for the PIs for which standards were either initially established or reconsidered by the PJP in 2015. Standards for the several PIs that were unchanged in definition from 2014 are only summarized here. For additional details concerning all of the PIs, their definitions, and the process of combining the PIs into the School Performance Levels, see Flicek 2015a and 2015b.

The round-by-round PJP recommended cutscores for the PIs are presented in table form in **Appendix C** and graphically in **Appendix D**. Note that the central tendency of PJP-recommended cutscores is typically presented as the median, although Appendix C summarizes the panel's recommendations in terms of medians, means and standard deviations. Because the median is a more-stable indicator of the central tendency of a panel's recommendations than is the mean, and the median is less affected than would be the mean by extreme or outlying values, the median PJP recommended cutscore is taken as the best indicator of the panel's judgment. The final cutscores of the panel as presented to and adopted by the State Board of Education are medians.

As Appendix C shows, the 2014 PJP did not make cutscore recommendations for the Grades 3-8 Growth PI. This was because such recommendations had been made in 2013, and no changes were subsequently made to this indicator. PJP 2013 recommendations were carried forward to the 2014 and 2015 models. Similarly, no PJP reconsideration was required for the High School Achievement PI, definition of which was unchanged from 2014. As the standard deviations shown in the second table for Appendix C demonstrate, members of the PJP showed high levels of agreement among themselves for all of the PIs. Further, the reduction in standard deviations from Round 1 to Round 2 in almost all cases demonstrate increased agreement among panelists following presentation and discussion of their initial, Round 1 recommendations.

In the Appendix D graphs, the vertical axes indicate the number of PJP members who recommended the various graphed cutscores (horizontal axes) for either Meet (blue bars) or Exceed Target (red bars).

Recall that the Growth PI for High Schools is a new PI for 2015. This indicator was not previously available as there had been no way to calculate growth across the several ACT assessments – Explore, Plan, and the Grade 11 ACT Assessment. However, the Department of Education worked with ACT during the past year to generate a psychometrically sound scaled score that spanned the several assessments, and this scale was used to generate Growth data in an analogous way to the Growth PI for Grades 3-8 schools. PJP recommendations for this new PI are shown in Appendix C and D.

A slight change was made to the high school Readiness PI this year that made it advisable for the PJP to reconsider the previously established cutscores. For the first time, the “success curriculum” element of the Hathaway eligibility sub-indicator was included for each student’s Hathaway index. Since the addition of this additional element of the Hathaway score reduced somewhat many students’ Hathaway index, some school-level PI values were similarly reduced, leading to a lowered Additional Readiness score for some schools, as the Hathaway eligibility index is a significant component of this PI. Accordingly, the PJP reviewed the 2014 standards for the Additional Readiness sub-indicator. The 2014 standards for this had been index scores of 70 for Meets Target and 80 for Exceeds Target. As shown in Appendices C and D, the median PJP recommended standards for 2015 were 69 for Meets and 79 for Exceeds Target (for both Rounds 1 and 2).

Because model changes to both the high-school graduation rate indicator and the Hathaway sub-indicator were made, the PJP reconsidered cutscores for the Overall Readiness PI, a combination of graduation rate and the “additional readiness” sub-indicators (Hathaway, Grade 9 credits, and tested ACT readiness). These data are collapsed into a 3 X 3 matrix of Graduation Rate X Additional Readiness. Results of the panel’s recommendations by round for the Target values for the Overall Readiness indicator are shown in **Appendix E**.

A change was made to the accountability model for 2015 with regard to the procedure for combining the several high school Performance Indicators (see Flicek, 2015a). Specifically, the Achievement, Growth, and Equity PIs were collapsed into an Academic Level indicator; then these Academic Level targets were combined with the Overall Readiness levels discussed above. This combination was used to generate the School Performance Levels for high schools. **Appendix F** presents the PJP recommendations for the collapsing of the three Academic Level indicators – Achievement, Growth, and Equity. Note that since some schools will not have Equity PIs (mostly due to very low student enrollment), the PJP also set Target Levels for schools with only the Achievement and Growth PIs.

Recommended Standards for the School Performance Levels

Several significant changes were made in the accountability model between 2014 and 2015 (c.f., Flicek, 2015a; Flicek, 2015b). The two most significant changes applied to the high school accountability system. A Performance Indicator for Growth was added for the first time, expanding the number of high school PIs from 3 to 4. This resulted in a change in the method used to determine the School Performance Levels for high school. Rather than judging all 27 combinations of the earlier PIs for high schools – Achievement, Equity, and Readiness, each with three possible Target levels - as in 2014

and earlier, the PJP set Target values for “Academic Performance” (a combination of Achievement, Equity, and the new PI – Growth), then judged the School Performance Levels for all combinations of Target values for Academic Performance and Overall Readiness. This resulted in the PJP making School Performance Level decisions for only nine combinations of school outcomes – the three possible Target values for Academic Performance and the corresponding three possible Target values for Overall Readiness. These changes to the model and their effect on school levels is discussed in detail in Flicek, 2015a.

Appendix G summarizes the initial (Round 1) and final School Performance Level recommendations of the judges. The initial PJP recommendations were discussed at length by the panel, and the PJP was provided with “impact data” (a summary of the percent of Wyoming schools whose results fell into each possible preliminary School Performance Level). They then discussed these data as a group and independently made revised recommendations. The two rounds of PJP recommendations for the School Performance Levels were made separately for both Grades 3-8 schools and High Schools. The 2015 changes to the model for high schools are reflected in the tables in this appendix.

As Appendix G shows, there was a very high level of agreement among the PJP members as to the most-appropriate School Performance Level for all combinations of PI Target outcomes. For example, even for Round 1 of the Grades 3-8 decisions, at least 16 of the 19 PJP members agreed on 22 of the 27 cells of possible outcomes. For 20 of the 27 cells, there was unanimous agreement or only one exception to the most-appropriate Performance Level for a school. Round 2 results, as anticipated, show even greater agreement among the panelists. Agreement among panelists was even greater for the high school decisions. Note that for only one of the 36 possible judgments (27 for Grades 3-8 and 9 for high schools) did the median panel School Performance Level recommendation change between Rounds 1 and 2 of panel judgments. These data confirm the high level of agreement among panelists, both before extensive discussion and following such discussions between rounds of recommendations.

Appendix H summarizes the information presented in Appendix G, providing the median panel-recommended School Performance Levels for every combination of PI outcomes. The PJP’s final recommendations, approved by the State Board of Education at the completion of the panel’s deliberations, were used by Mike Flicek and his data-analyst team to generate School Performance Levels for each Wyoming school (excepting alternative high schools and a number of schools that have insufficient numbers of students to provide stable ratings). A summary of these data according to the grade coverage of the school is presented in **Appendix I**. Further information concerning the impact of the final PJP recommendations, approved by the State Board of Education, is available from the Department of Education.

Recommended Wording of the Performance Level Descriptors

Performance level descriptors are a critical component of any standard-setting activity. These verbal descriptors essentially define and give meaning to the labels that are attached to each school’s overall performance on the elements of the state’s accountability system. The PJP was provided with 2014 versions of the performance level descriptors for review and suggested editing. Panelists were encouraged to suggest revision or editorial –

minor or significant – changes to the draft Performance Level Descriptors provided for each of the school Performance Levels – Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, and Not Meeting Expectations. These draft PLDs were discussed during the PJP sessions; all PJP members were encouraged to take the 2104 version of the PLDs with them following the sessions and to indicate any additional changes they would make to the PLDs before they became final and public. The several comments received were distilled and checked for consistency with the PJP’s final School Performance Level recommendations. The group’s consensus wording of the PLDs is presented in **Appendix J**.

Session Summary

It is the opinion of the consultant who facilitated the PJP sessions that the panel – individually and as a committee – applied themselves seriously, attentively, and professionally to the multiple tasks they were assigned. After multiple iterations of judgments, discussions, and deliberations, they recommended reasoned and reasonable standards for the PIs, then applied these PI standards in a thoughtful and deliberative manner to the determination of School Performance Ratings. The PJP’s recommendations yielded statewide school “impact” – accountability results for schools – that appear both to be reasonable and to reflect the overall judgment of the majority of the PJP membership. The panel’s recommended cutscores for both Performance Indicators and the School Performance Ratings, in the consultant’s opinion, should be accepted for statewide use in the 2015-16 school year.

MDB
9/15

APPENDIX A:

Professional Judgment Panel Members In Attendance at August 10 - 12 Sessions

State Board of Education

Walt Wilcox
Kathy Coon

Public School Teachers

Alana Engel – Elementary – Rawlins Elementary School
Brent Daly – High School – Campbell County HS
Mary Hoard – high School – Natrona HS

Principal

Dr. Joseph Ingalls – Elementary – North Evanston Elem.
Darrin Peppard – High School – Rock Springs HS
Eric Pingrey – Middle School – Douglas

School District Superintendent

Dr. Summer Stephens – small district – Weston #7 Upton

Business & Community at-Large

Lloyd Larsen – Lander
Jill Bramlet – Wheatland

Parent

Greg Legerski – Pinedale

School District Central Office

R. J. Kost – Powell - Park #1
Jody Rakness – Worland – Washakie #1
Marc LaHiff – Cheyenne – Laramie #1

Wyoming School District Board of Trustees

Richard Bridger – Sheridan #2
Linda S. Jennings – Campbell 31

Wyoming Post-Secondary Institutions

Jed Jensen – Dean of CTE
Lona Tracy – Adjunct Professor at EWC
Kristine Walker – Asst. Professor at NWC

Support Services

Doug Rose

APPENDIX B:

AGENDA

Wyoming Professional Judgment Panel Meetings Casper, WY - 10-12 August 2015

MONDAY (12:30 – approx. 4:30) – for new PJP Members

- Welcome, Introductions / Orientation / Goals / Responsibilities –
Paige F. Hughes
- Wyoming’s 2015-16 School Performance Rating Model – Changes, Update,
Business Rules, Model Overview – *Mike Flicek*
- What is “standard setting”? How this relates to PJP
- Overview of Wyoming’s 4 Performance Indicators (PIs):
Achievement, Equity, Growth, & Readiness
 - How each PI is operationally defined this year
 - How these lead to a School Accountability System
 - for *Grades 3 – 8 schools*: Achievement, Equity, Growth
 - for *Grades 9 – 12 schools*: Achievement, Equity, Growth, & Readiness
- Initial Review of the WY’s Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) for schools:
- *Exceeding, Meeting, Partially Meeting, Not Meeting Expectations*
- Giving meaning to three sets of Terminology:
 - Terms for *PAWS*, for the *PIs*, for the *Accountability System*

TUESDAY (8:30 – approx. 4:30) – for all PJP Members A.M.

- Welcome, Introductions / Orientation / Goals / Responsibilities –
Paige F. Hughes
- Wyoming’s 2015-16 School Performance Rating Model – Changes, Update,
Business Rules, Model Overview – *Mike Flicek*

- Brief review of background issues
- Initial Review of the WY's school Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs):
 - *Exceeding, Meeting, Partially Meeting, Not Meeting Expectations*
- Methodology used to set school performance standards for each PI
 - Differences from last year
 - Selected statewide summary data for each PI
- Grades 3 – 8 PIs:
 - Achievement:* '14 standards to be reviewed and, probably, adjusted
 - Growth:* Set in '13, unchanged in '14 and '15
 - Equity:* Now redefined, so standards must be established

JUDGES: Initial standards recommendations for Achievement and Equity

- High School PIs:

Academic Performance:

Achievement: Standards set in '14; no review needed
Growth: New PI this year; standards must be established
Equity: Now redefined, so standards must be established

Readiness:

Graduation Rate: '14 standards to be reviewed and, probably, adjusted
Additional Readiness (Hathaway, Gr. 9 credits, & Tested readiness):
 Standards and weights were set in '14; no changes needed

JUDGES: Initial standards recommendations for Growth, Equity, and Graduation Rate

P.M.

- Summary of Initial Recommendations for standards on each PI; state impact data

JUDGES: Discussion of Initial PI recommendations among PJP

JUDGES: *Revised (final)* recommendations by PI for Gr. 3-8 & HS

- High School Academic Performance PI level matrix discussion

JUDGES: Initial recommendations for HS PI matrix

- Making the Accountability Descriptors more concrete –

JUDGES: review 2014-15 PLDs for the School Performance Rating system

- Transforming PI standards into a School Accountability system – how the system is defined for each grade grouping

WEDNESDAY (8:30 – approx. 3:30)

A.M.

- Review the panel’s final judgments for each PI; statewide implications for schools.
- Making School Performance Level judgments – methodology & mechanics
- Melding the several PI standards into Accountability – “matrix”

JUDGES: Initial School Performance Level recommendations for Schools – separately for Gr 3-8 and High Schools

P.M.

- Summary of *initial* School Performance Level recommendations for Gr. 3-8 and High Schools
 - Statewide impact data (number of schools in each level)

JUDGES: Discussion of initial School Performance Level recommendations

JUDGES: *Final* School Performance Level recommendations

- Final examination of PLDs – assessing their fit with the standards being recommended
- Statewide implications of the PJP’s revised School Performance Level recommendations – number of schools receiving each level.

JUDGES: Discussion of revised results and impact data.

- Extra review – as PJP decides is needed – for the School Performance Level recommendations

Adjournment (panelists leave as final recommendations are complete)

APPENDIX C:

Summary of Median PJP Recommended Cutscores for each Wyoming Performance Indicator by Round of Recommendation

Performance Indicator or Sub-Indicator*	Median Panel Recommendation by Round			
	<u>Meets Target</u>		<u>Exceeds Target</u>	
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 1	Round 2
<u>Grades 3 – 8 Schools:</u>				
<i>Achievement</i>	52	52	69	69
<i>Equity</i>	47	47	60	60
<i>Growth**</i>	45		60	
<u>High Schools:</u>				
<i>Achievement **</i>	32		45	
<i>Growth</i>	46	47	60	60
<i>Equity</i>	47	47	60	60
<i>Graduation Rate***</i>	82	80	93	90
<i>Additional Readiness †</i>	68	68	79	79

* See Flicek (2015a) for a description of each PI.

** Since no changes were made in this Indicator in 2015, the PJP's earlier recommended standards were used. These are shown in boldface above.

*** During deliberations, the PJP voted to omit one element of the definition of this PI, the "improvement" pathway for a school to increase its target level. Based on this decision, which was made after the first round of PJP recommendations was completed, the PJP slightly reduced the target values for this indicator. This slight reduction in target values is shown in the table.

† Additional Readiness is a combined index made up of Tested (ACT) Readiness, Hathaway Scholarship Eligibility Index, and Grade 9 Credits Completed. See the report text, the following graphs and tables, and Flicek (2015a,b) for additional information concerning these sub-indicators and how they are combined.

APPENDIX C (cont.):

**Summary of PJP Recommended Cutscores
for each Wyoming Performance Indicator
by Round of Recommendation**

Performance Indicator or Sub-Indicator*	Panel Recommendation by Round			
	<u>Meets Target</u>		<u>Exceeds Target</u>	
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 1	Round 2
<u>Grades 3 – 8 Schools:</u>				
<i>Achievement</i> - Mean	51.8	51.9	69.0	69.3
S. D.	0.8	0.7	1.1	0.6
<i>Equity</i> – Mean	46.3	46.9	61.2	61.2
S. D.	3.3	3.0	2.4	1.7
<u>High Schools:</u>				
<i>Growth</i> – Mean	46.0	46.8	58.9	60.1
S. D.	2.1	1.7	2.4	1.1
<i>Equity</i> - Mean	46.4	46.7	59.7	60.1
S. D.	2.3	1.8	2.5	1.4
<i>Graduation Rate</i> – Mean	82.4	81.0	92.8	91.1
S. D.	2.1	1.6	2.0	1.9
<i>Additional Readiness</i> - Mean	68.1	68.3	78.9	79.1
S. D.	1.4	1.4	1.3	0.9

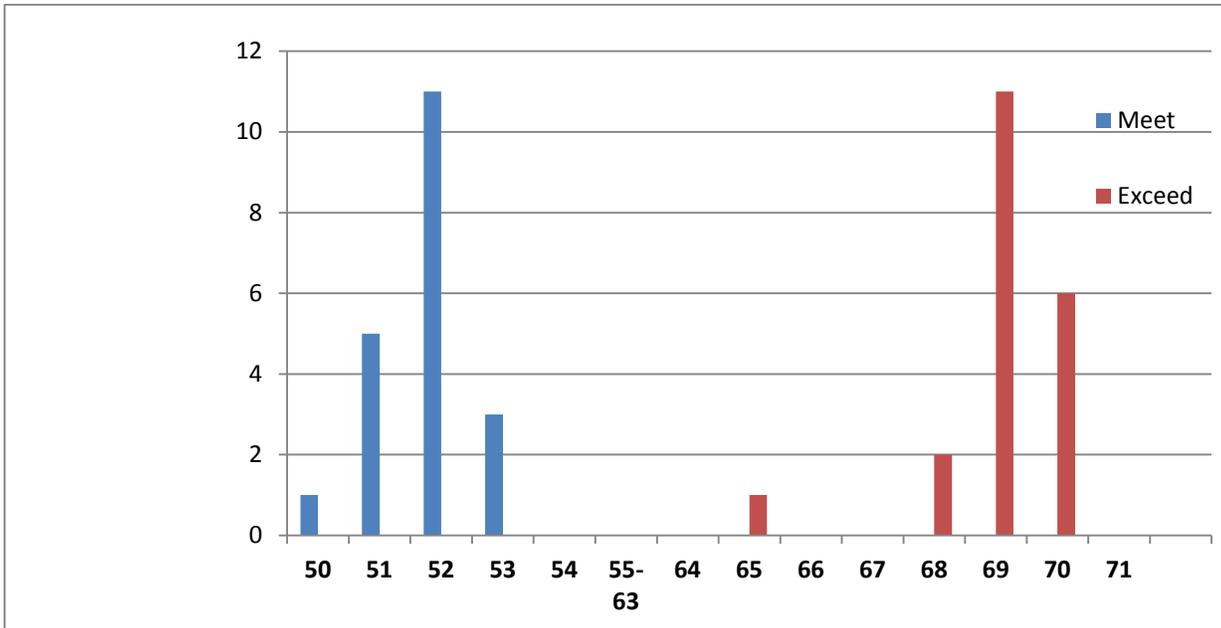
* See Flicek (2015a) for a description of each Indicator and Sub-Indicator.

APPENDIX D:

**PJP Recommendations for Each Performance Indicator –
by Round of Judgments, for *Meets Target & Exceeds Target*
Minimum Cutscores**

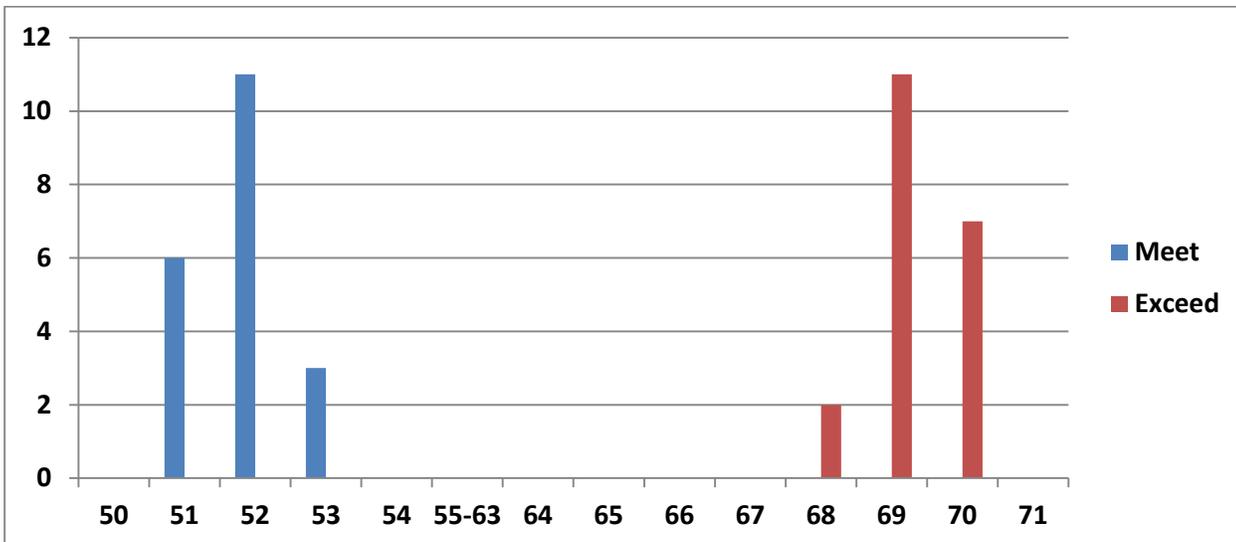
Gr. 3-8 Schools - ACHIEVEMENT – Rounds 1 & 2 (FINAL)

Round 1*



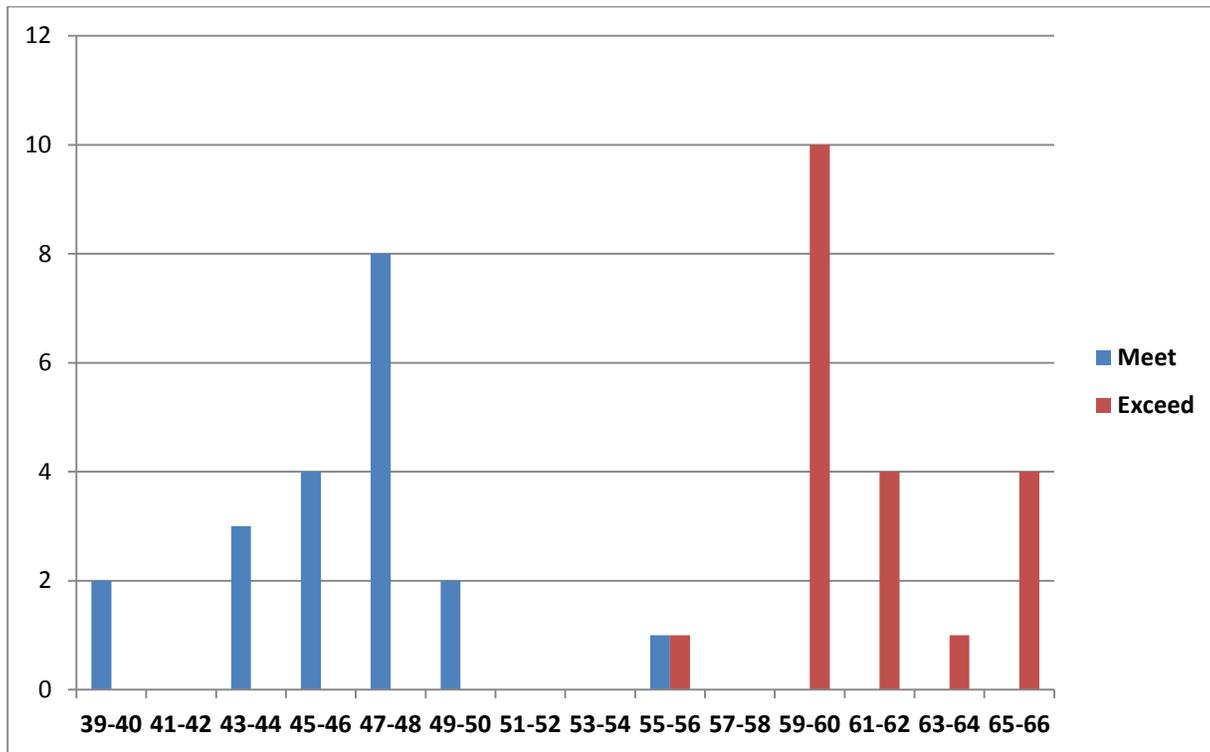
* In these graphs, the vertical axis is the number of PJP judges and the horizontal axis is the recommended cutscore for Meet (blue) or Exceed (red).

Round 2 (Final)

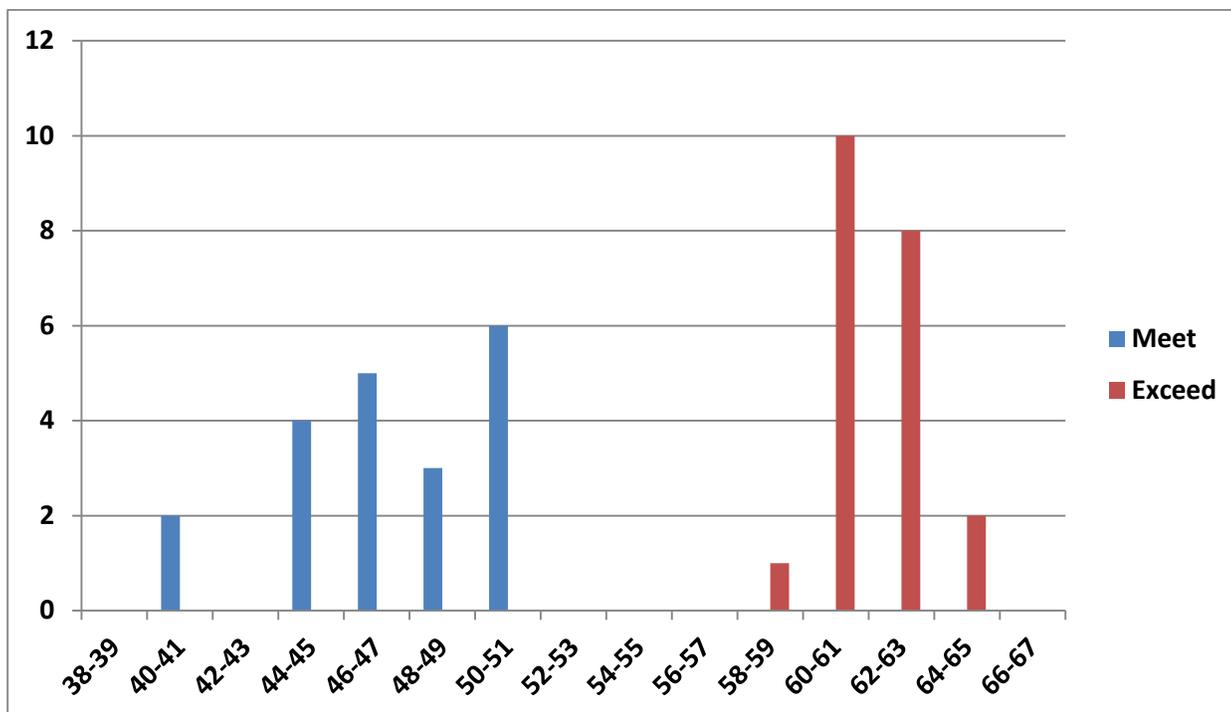


Gr. 3-8 Schools - EQUITY – Rounds 1 & 2 (FINAL)

Round 1

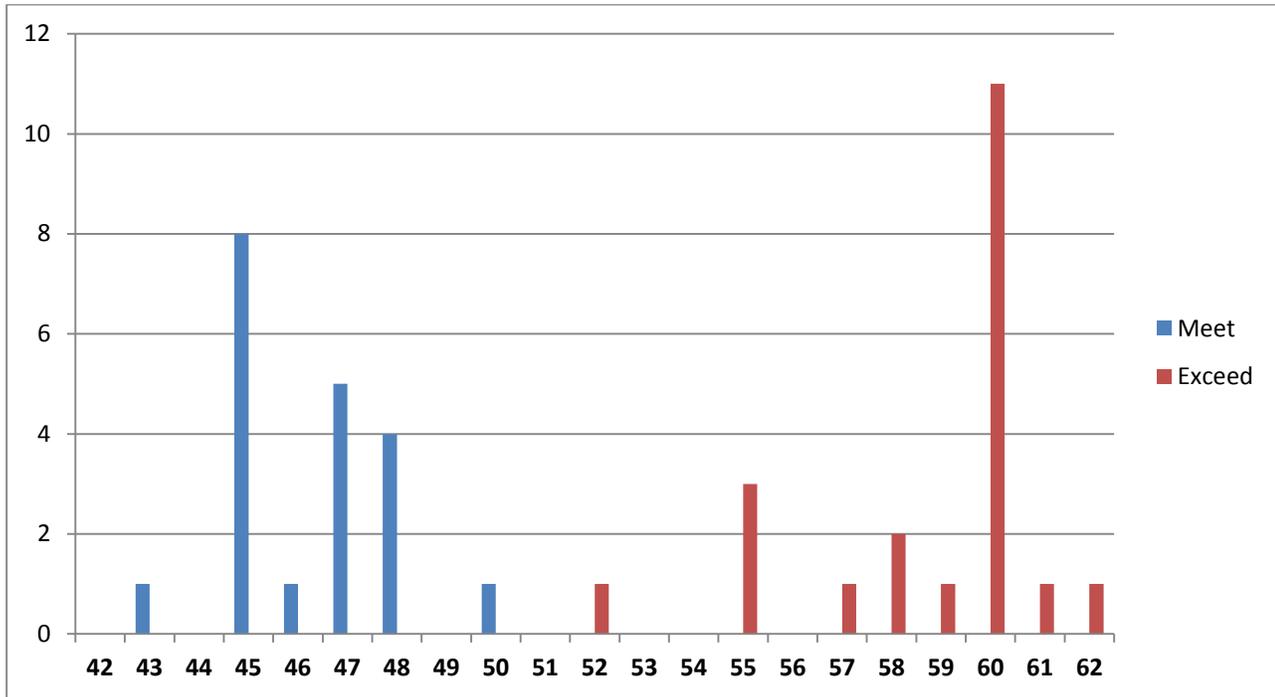


Round 2 (Final)

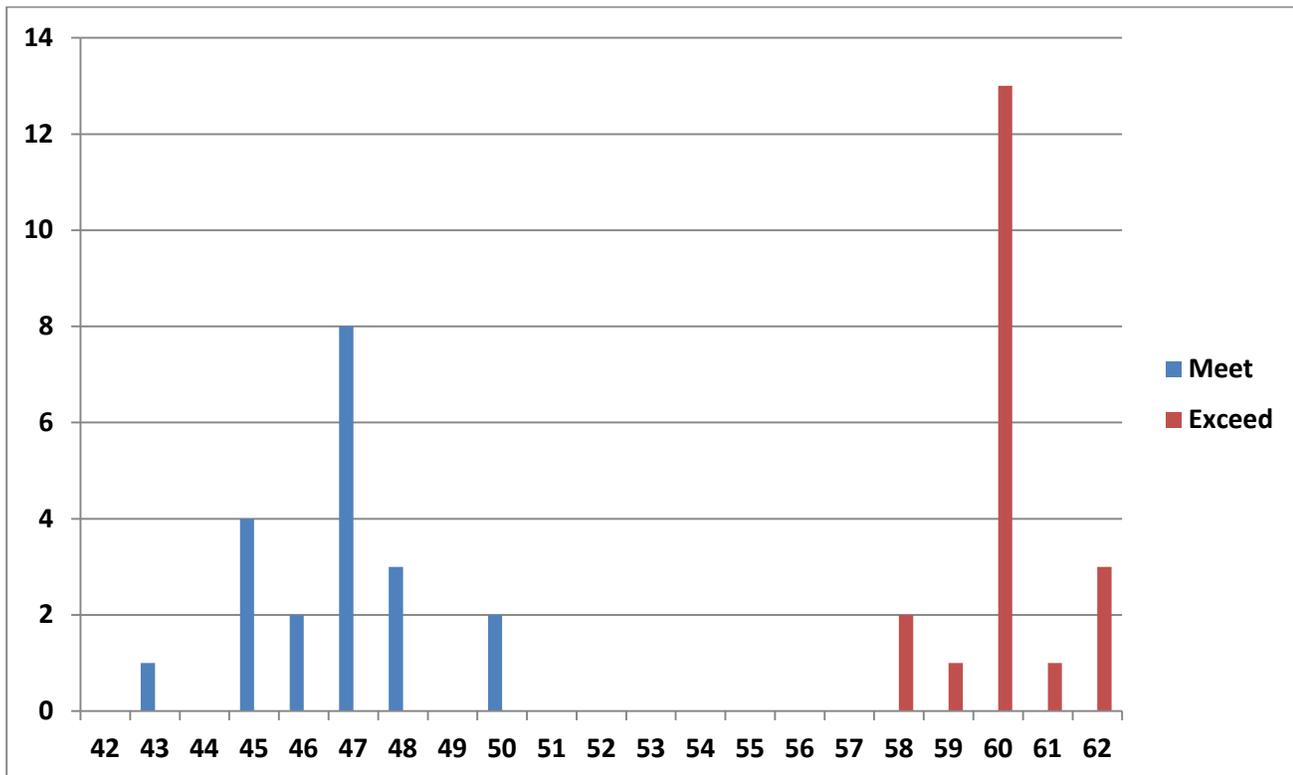


High Schools – GROWTH – Rounds 1 & 2 (Final)

Round 1

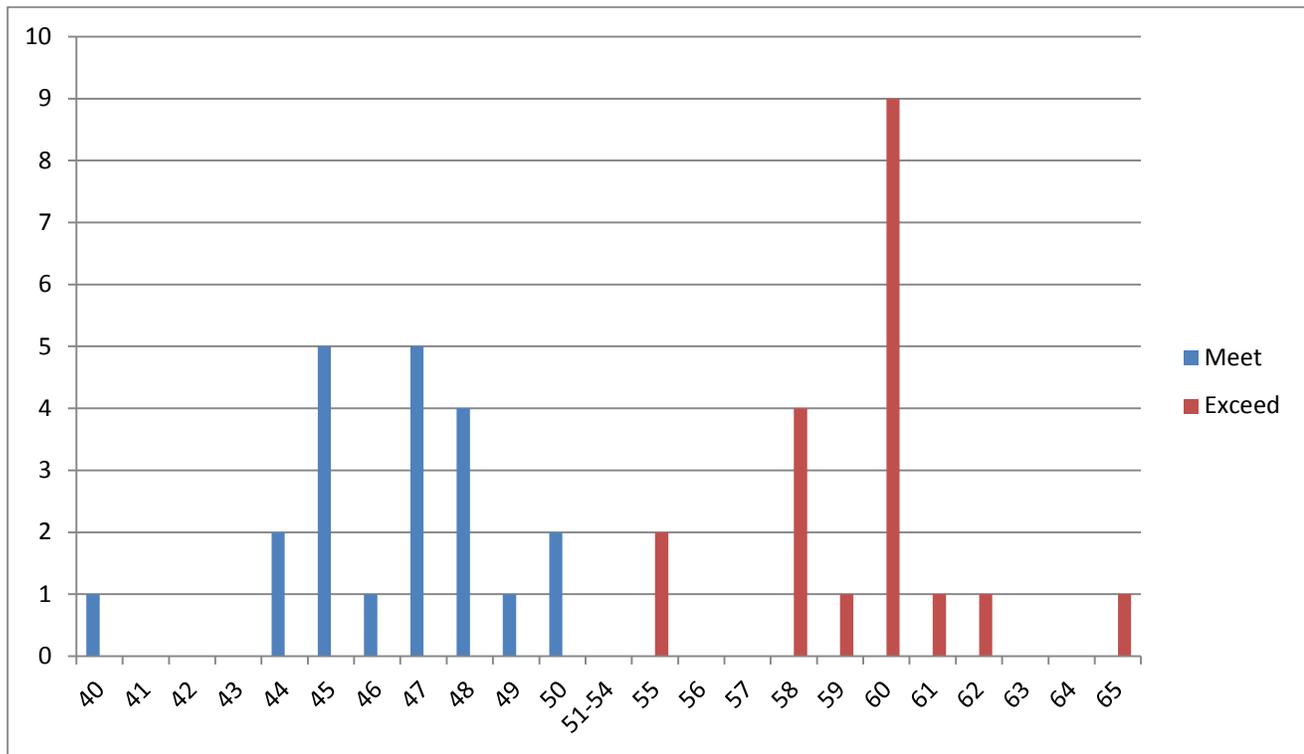


Round 2 (Final)

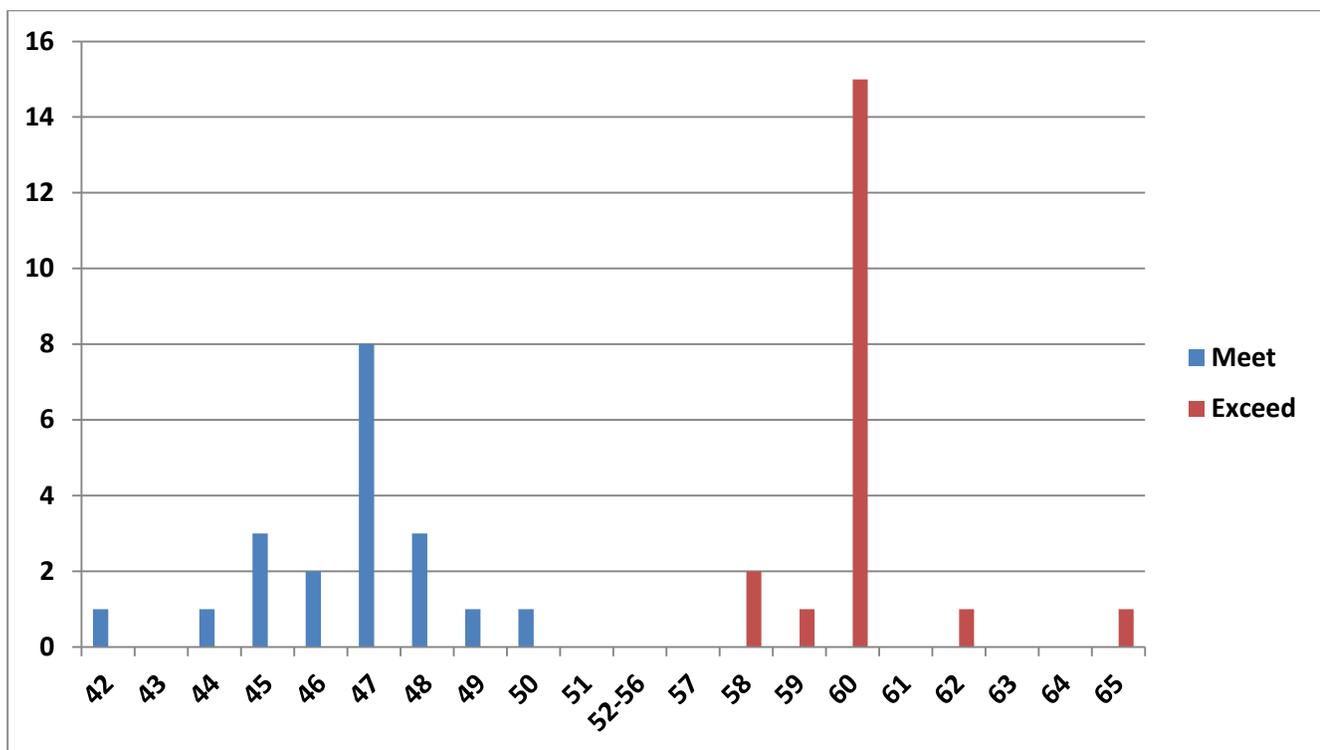


High Schools - EQUITY – Rounds 1 & 2 (Final)

Round 1

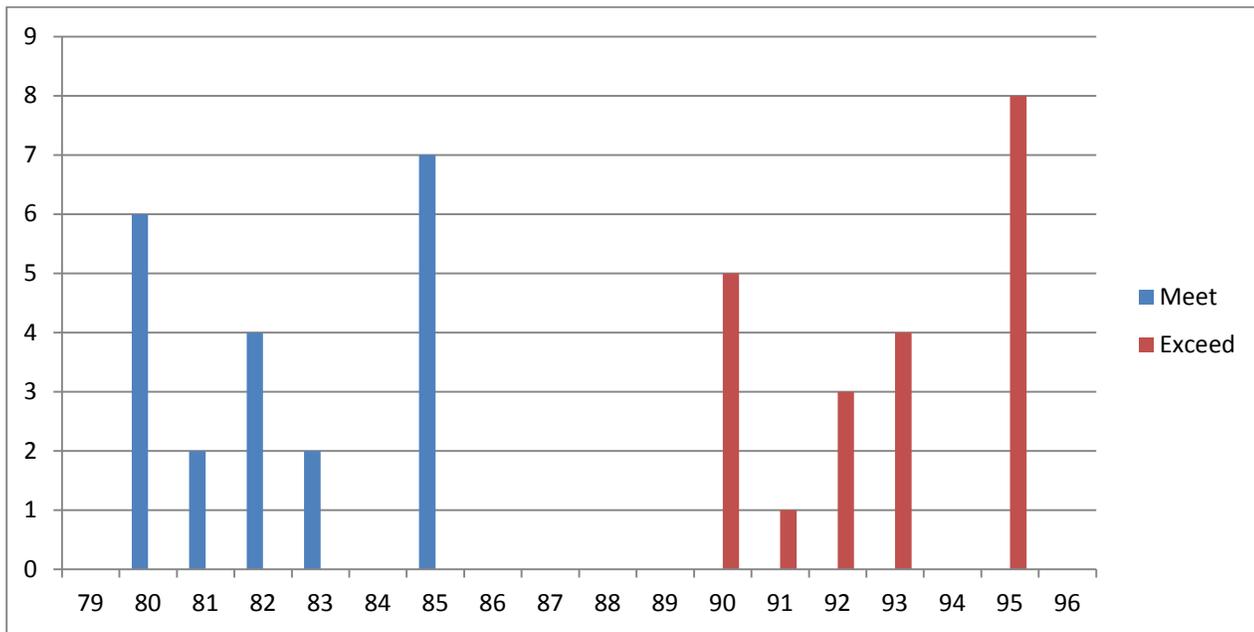


Round 2 (Final)

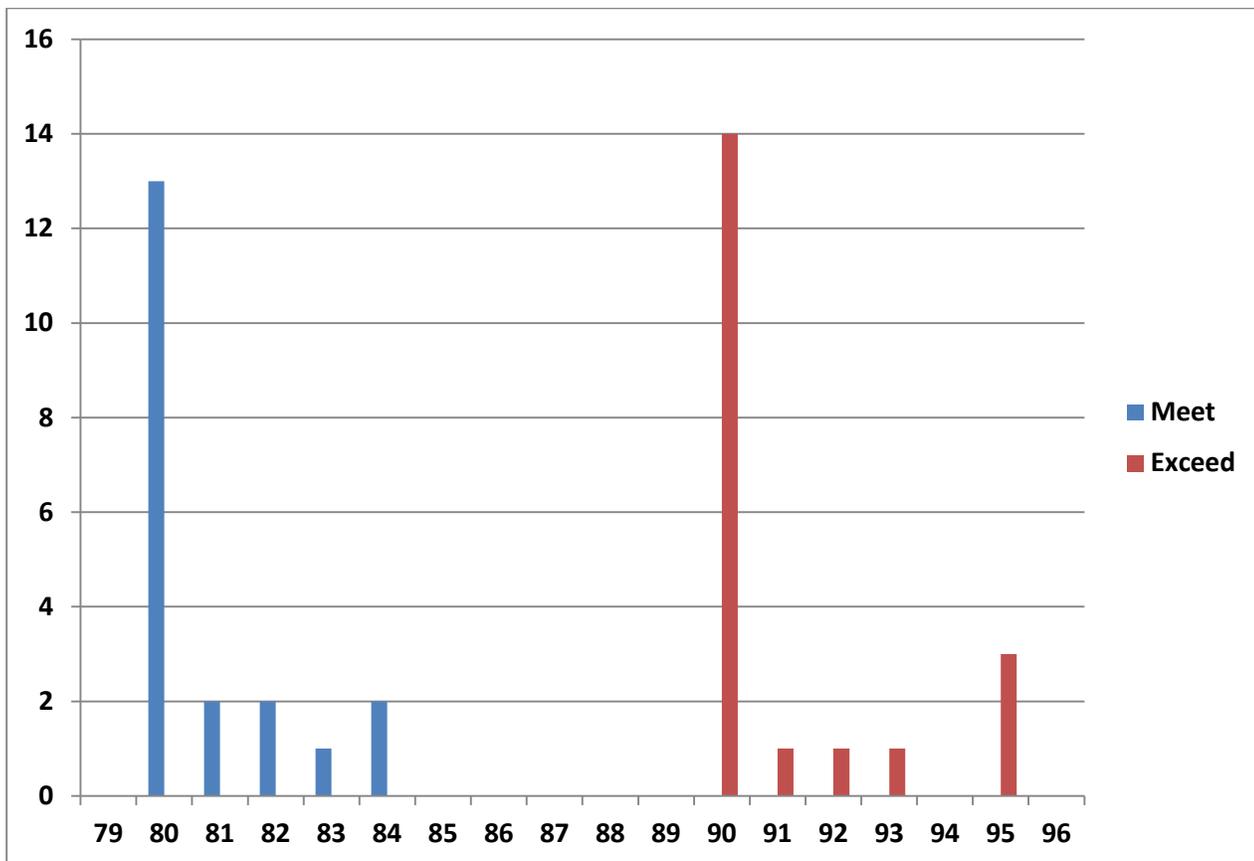


High Schools – GRADUATION RATE – Rounds 1 & 2 (Final)

Round 1

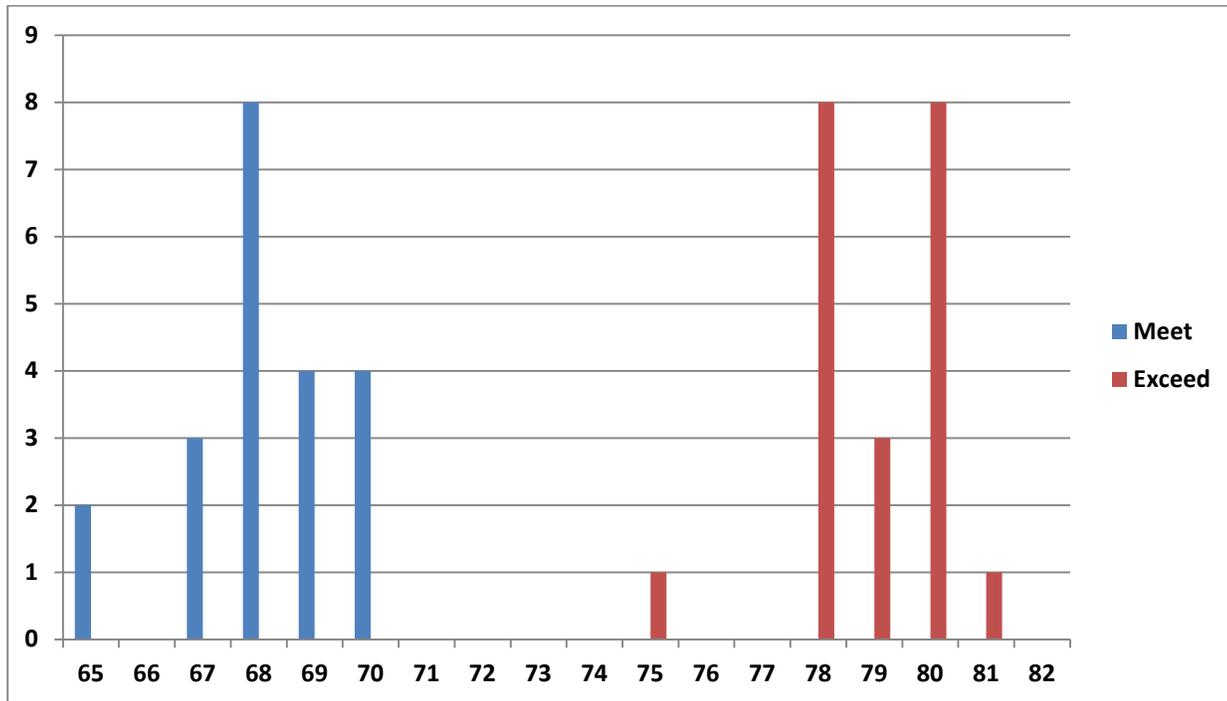


Round 2 (Final)

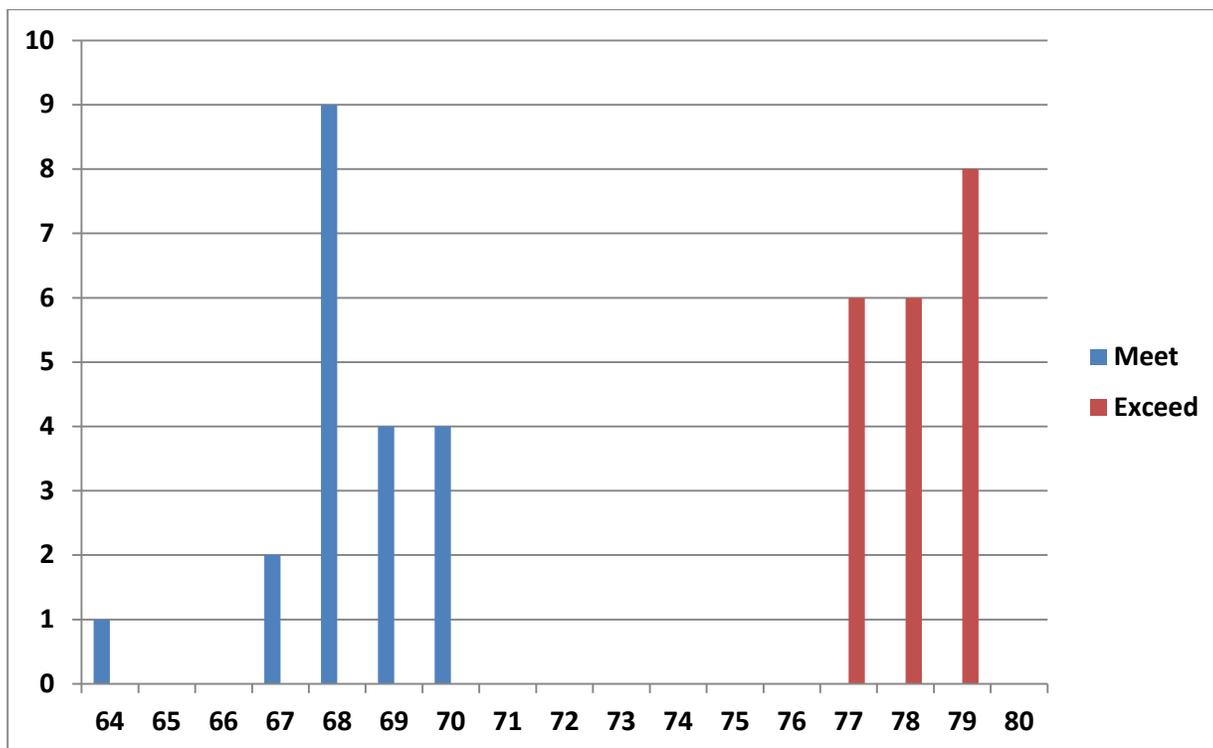


High Schools - ADDITIONAL READINESS – Rounds 1 & 2 (Final)

Round 1



Round 2 (Final)



APPENDIX E:

Target Standards for the High School *Overall Readiness* Performance Indicator – HS Graduation Rate & “Additional Readiness” Sub-Indicators (Tested ACT Readiness, Grade 9 Credits Completed & Hathaway Eligibility Levels)

Round 1 - Graduation Rate X “Additional Readiness”*

High School Graduation Rate

Additional Readiness	Below Target			Meets Target			Exceeds Target		
	<i>Below</i>	<i>Meets</i>	<i>Exceeds</i>	<i>Below</i>	<i>Meets</i>	<i>Exceeds</i>	<i>Below</i>	<i>Meets</i>	<i>Exceeds</i>
Below Target	21			9	12		20	1	
Meets Target	13	8			21		7	14	
Exceeds Target	1	20			12	9			21

* The tables show the number of judges recommending each possible Target level for each possible pairing of Target values for “Additional Readiness” and HS Graduation Rate. For example, 9 judges said that a school that Meets Target in HS Graduation Rate and Below Target in “Additional Readiness” should receive an Overall Readiness Target value of Below Target; the other 12 judges recommended that this pair of outcomes would yield an Overall Readiness Target value of Meeting Target.

Round 2 (Final) – Overall Readiness

High School Graduation Rate

Additional Readiness	Below Target			Meets Target			Exceeds Target		
	<i>Below</i>	<i>Meets</i>	<i>Exceeds</i>	<i>Below</i>	<i>Meets</i>	<i>Exceeds</i>	<i>Below</i>	<i>Meets</i>	<i>Exceeds</i>
Below Target	20			2	18		20		
Meets Target	14	6			20		5	15	
Exceeds Target		20			14	6			20

Final PJP median PI Target values are indicate in boldface above (only 20 judges for Round 2).

APPENDIX F:

High School Academic Level Performance Decision Matrix

Round 1:

Equity	Growth	Achievement								
		Below			Meet			Exceed		
		Below	Meet	Exceed	Below	Meet	Exceed	Below	Meet	Exceed
Below	Below	21			13	8		7	12	2
	Meet	21			2	19			18	3
	Exceed	12	9		1	20			12	9
Meet	Below	21			3	18		1	18	2
	Meet	7	14			21			14	7
	Exceed	3	18			18	3		2	19
Exceed	Below	20	1		3	18			15	6
	Meet	4	17			19	2		3	18
	Exceed	3	18			4	17			21

For high schools with no Target level for the Equity PI:*

Growth	Achievement								
	Below			Meet			Exceed		
	Below	Meet	Exceed	Below	Meet	Exceed	Below	Meet	Exceed
Below	19			5	14		2	16	1
Meet	13	6			19			6	13
Exceed		3	16		12	7			19

*only 19 judges

Round 2 (Final): *

Equity	Growth	Achievement								
		Below			Meet			Exceed		
		Below	Meet	Exceed	Below	Meet	Exceed	Below	Meet	Exceed
Below	Below	19			13	6		2	17	
	Meet	17	2			19			18	1
	Exceed	13	6			19			10	9
Meet	Below	18	1			19			18	1
	Meet	3	16			19			14	5
	Exceed	1	18			18	1		1	18
Exceed	Below	16	3			19			17	2
	Meet	1	18			19			1	18
	Exceed	1	18			3	16			19

For high schools with no Target level for the Equity PI:* (FINAL)

Achievement

Growth	<i>Below</i>			<i>Meet</i>			<i>Exceed</i>		
	Below	Meet	Exceed	Below	Meet	Exceed	Below	Meet	Exceed
<i>Below</i>	19			2	17			19	
<i>Meet</i>	12	7			19			4	15
<i>Exceed</i>	1	18			14	5			19

*PJP's median final recommended Target Levels are shown in boldface.

APPENDIX G: Judges' Recommended School Performance Levels

Round 1 Recommendations (19 Judges, Gray is the median judgment)

For Grades 3-8 Schools:

Number of Judges recommending each School Performance Level, given all combinations of Target scores for Achievement, Equity & Growth *

Equity	Growth	Achievement Below				Achievement Meeting				Achievement Exceeding			
		N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E
Below	Below	19				2	17				17	2	
	Meeting	4	15				1	18				19	
	Exceeding	1	18					19				18	1
Meeting	Below	5	14				12	7			1	18	
	Meeting		19					19				9	10
	Exceeding		19					18	1			1	18
Exceeding	Below	3	16					19			1	18	
	Meeting		19					18	1				19
	Exceeding		14	5				3	16				19

* **N** = Not meeting expectations
P = Partially meeting expectations

M = Meeting expectations
E = Exceeding expectations

SPLs for Gr. 3-8 Schools Not having an Equity PI	Achievement Below				Achievement Meeting				Achievement Exceeding			
	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E
Growth Below	19				2	16	1			3	16	
Growth Meeting	2	17					19				2	17
Growth Exceeding		18	1				14	5				19

For **High Schools**: Number of Judges choosing each School Performance Level, given all combinations of Target scores for Academic Performance & Overall Readiness *

School Performance Levels for High Schools Overall Readiness	Academic Performance Below Target				Academic Performance Meets Target				Academic Performance Exceeds Target			
	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E
Below Target	19					18	1			2	17	
Meets Target		19					19				15	4
Exceeds Target		17	2				17	2				19

Round 2 (Final) Recommendations (19 Judges, Gray is the median judgment)

For Grades 3-8 Schools:

Number of Judges recommending each School Performance Level, given all combinations of Target scores for Achievement, Equity & Growth *

Equity	Growth	Achievement Below				Achievement Meeting				Achievement Exceeding			
		N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E
Below	Below	19				2	17				17	2	
	Meeting	4	15					19				19	
	Exceeding		19					19				18	1
Meeting	Below	5	14				13	6			1	18	
	Meeting		19					19				11	8
	Exceeding		19					18	1			1	18
Exceeding	Below	3	16					19			1	18	
	Meeting		19					18	1				19
	Exceeding		14	5				3	16				19

* **N** = Not meeting expectations

P = Partially meeting expectations

M = Meeting expectations

E = Exceeding expectations

SPLs for Gr. 3-8 Schools Not having an Equity PI	Achievement Below				Achievement Meeting				Achievement Exceeding			
	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E
Growth Below	19				2	16	1			3	16	
Growth Meeting	1	18					19				1	18
Growth Exceeding		18	1				14	5				19

For **High Schools**: Number of Judges choosing each School Performance Level, given all combinations of Target scores for Academic Performance & Overall Readiness *

School Performance Levels for High Schools Overall Readiness	Academic Performance Below Target				Academic Performance Meets Target				Academic Performance Exceeds Target			
	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E	N	P	M	E
Below Target	19					19				1	18	
Meets Target		19					19				18	1
Exceeds Target		18	1				18	1				19

APPENDIX H :

Final, PJP-Approved *School Performance Levels* for All Combinations of Performance Indicator Results – Grades 3-8 Schools & High Schools*

Grades 3-8 Schools:

2015 SPLs		Achievement Below Target	Achievement Meeting Target	Achievement Exceeding Target
Equity Below Target	Growth Below	NOT	PARTIALLY	PARTIALLY
	Growth Meeting	PARTIALLY	MEETING	MEETING
	Growth Exceeding	PARTIALLY	MEETING	MEETING
Equity Meeting Target	Growth Below	PARTIALLY	PARTIALLY	MEETING
	Growth Meeting	PARTIALLY	MEETING	MEETING
	Growth Exceeding	PARTIALLY	MEETING	EXCEEDING
Equity Exceeding Target	Growth Below	PARTIALLY	MEETING	MEETING
	Growth Meeting	PARTIALLY	MEETING	EXCEEDING
	Growth Exceeding	PARTIALLY	EXCEEDING	EXCEEDING

For Gr. 3-8 schools that do not have an Equity PI:

SPLs for Schools Not having an Equity PI	Achievement Below Target	Achievement Meeting Target	Achievement Exceeding Target
Growth Below Target	NOT	PARTIALLY	MEETING
Growth Meeting Target	PARTIALLY	MEETING	EXCEEDING
Growth Exceeding Target	PARTIALLY	MEETING	EXCEEDING

High Schools:

2015 School Performance Levels for High Schools	Academic Performance Below Target	Academic Performance Meets Target	Academic Performance Exceeds Target
Overall Readiness Below Target	NOT	PARTIALLY	MEETING
Overall Readiness Meets Target	PARTIALLY	MEETING	MEETING
Overall Readiness Exceeds Target	PARTIALLY	MEETING	EXCEEDING

* In these tables, the School Performance Levels are:

NOT = Not Meeting Expectations
MEETING = Meeting Expectations

PARTIALLY = Partially Meeting Expectations
EXCEEDING = Exceeding Expectations

APPENDIX I:

Summary of the Percent of Wyoming Schools Receiving Each Possible School Performance Level Using the Cutscores Recommended by the Professional Judgment Panel *

School Performance Level	Grades 3 – 8 Schools	High Schools	All Schools
Exceeding Expectations	16%	9%	15%
Meeting Expectations	35%	54%	37%
Partially Meeting Expectations	34%	28%	33%
Not Meeting Expectations	15%	9%	15%

* Some schools receive interim School Performance Levels for both Gr. 3-8 and High School, with their final overall SPL being the lower of the two levels, per the accountability model. The tabled percents are based on schools that actually receive School Performance Levels; 17 alternative high schools and 22 very small schools are not included in the above summary information.

APPENDIX J:

2014-15 Performance Level Descriptors for the Wyoming School Accountability Program

2015 Performance Level Descriptors for Schools with Grades 3-8

Exceeding Expectations

Schools in this category are considered models of performance. These schools typically exceeded target in achievement and at least one other performance indicator - equity or growth – while meeting target on the other indicator.

Meeting Expectations

Schools in this category demonstrated performance that met or exceeded target on multiple performance indicators. All of these schools met or exceeded state targets in achievement. They typically met or exceeded targets on student growth and promotion of equity *or* fell below target on growth or equity while exceeding target on achievement.

Partially Meeting Expectations

Schools in this category typically performed below target on the growth and equity performance indicators *or* were below target in achievement. Many schools in this category met or exceeded state target levels in student growth *and/or* promoting equity for low-achieving students.

Not Meeting Expectations

Schools in this category had unacceptable performance on all indicators. Improvement is an urgent priority for these schools. These schools had below-target levels of achievement and student growth and showed insufficient academic improvement for low-achieving students.

2015 Performance Level Descriptors for High Schools

Exceeding Expectations

Schools in this category are considered models of performance. These schools exceeded state target levels in overall readiness for college and careers *and* in the academic performance indicator combining the school's achievement, student growth and equity.

Meeting Expectations

Schools in this category demonstrated performance that met or exceeded target on multiple indicators. All of these schools met or exceeded target in academic performance, combining achievement, student growth and equity. Their performance also met or exceeded target in overall readiness *or* exceeded target in the achievement/growth/equity indicator while being below target in overall readiness.

Partially Meeting Expectations

Schools in this category typically were below target on the academic performance indicator combining achievement, student growth and equity. Some schools met state target for achievement/growth/equity but performed below target in overall readiness for college and careers.

Not Meeting Expectations

Schools in this category performed at unacceptable levels on all indicators. Improvement is an urgent priority for these schools. These schools had below-target levels of academic performance, combining achievement, student growth and equity *and* fell below state targets in overall readiness for college and careers.

References

Flicek, M. *Wyoming School Accountability, 2015 Wyoming School Performance Rating Model Implementation Handbook*. 8 June 2015. (a)

Flicek, M. *Suggested Changes to Wyoming School Performance Rating Model*. 9 April 2015. (b)

Mdb 9/15

2014-15 PJP



**WYOMING SELECT COMMITTEE ON
SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY
(10/29/2015)**

**MICHAEL FLICEK, ED.D.
EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY CONSULTANT**

Unchanged Indicators



- **Grade 3-8 Growth**
 - Established in 2013
- **High School Achievement**
 - Established in 2014

Grade 3-8 Achievement



- **Writing Test Eliminated in 2015**
 - Cut-points established in 2014 to reflect new student performance levels **with writing included**
 - Minor adjustment to cut-points to reflect absence of writing
 - ✦ Percent of school in 2014 in each category was reviewed
 - With writing included
 - With writing excluded
 - ✦ The adjustment kept the 2014 percent of schools in each category about the same after writing was excluded

Grade 3-8 Equity



- **MGP of consolidated subgroup was the school equity score for the first time**
- **Cut-points set for this school score**

Grade 3-8



- **Assumption: Same test will be used in 2016 and 2017**
- **No changes will be needed to cut-points**

High School Growth



- **New indicator**
- **Cut-points established by PJP in 2015**
- **Cut-points should work in 2016 and 2017**

High School Equity



- **MGP of consolidated subgroup was the school score**
- **Cut-points set by PJP in 2015**
- **Cut-points should work in 2016 and 2017**

Academic Performance



- **Academic Performance Decision Table cell values were established by PJP in 2015**
- **This decision table should work in 2016 and 2017**

Graduation Indicator



- **PJP recommended removing the improvement feature**
 - Both 4 year, on-time graduation rate and extended graduation rate are reported
 - Extended graduation rate will always equal or exceed the 4 year, on-time graduation rate
- **PJP recommended keeping the target level cut-points at 80% for meets target and 90% for exceeds target**

Additional Readiness



- **Success Curriculum level was available for the first time in 2015**
 - This had an impact on the Hathaway Index
 - Hathaway index is one of three parts of additional readiness
 - Therefore, PJP set new additional readiness target level cut-points for additional readiness

High School Changes in 2016



- **Aspire instead of PLAN and EXPLORE for grade 9 and grade 10 tested readiness tests**
 - Academic Performance
 - ✦ We should be able to compute growth
 - ✦ Cut-points for all three academic performance indicators may work in 2016 and 2017
 - The tested readiness index will need to be revised to reflect Aspire instead of PLAN and EXPLORE
 - Cut-points for additional readiness may still work in 2016 and 2017

PJP in 2016???



- The PJP may not be needed in 2016
- If a PJP is needed the scope of work would be limited
- We will not know until after we receive the test results from the 2016 ACT suite of tests in late July or early August

2015 Results – Participation Rate Applied



	3-8 schools	high schools	all schools
Exceeding	16%	9%	15%
Meeting	35%	51%	37%
Partially Meeting	33%	22%	33%
Not Meeting	15%	18%	15%

- 39 schools were unclassified.
 - 17 unclassified schools were alternative schools
 - 22 unclassified schools were small schools
 - 19 small schools were grade 3-8
 - 3 small schools were high schools



TAB E

Review of Content and Performance Standards

W.S. 21-2-304. Duties of the state board of education.

(c) The state board shall perform an ongoing review of state board duties prescribed by law and may make recommendations to the legislature on board duties. In addition and not less than once every nine (9) years, the board shall evaluate and review the uniformity and quality of the educational program standards imposed under W.S. 21-9-101 and 21-9-102 and the student content and performance standards promulgated under paragraph (a)(iii) of this section. The state board, in consultation with the state superintendent, shall establish a process to receive input or concerns related to the student content and performance standards from stakeholders, including but not limited to parents, teachers, school and district administrators and members of the public at large, at any time prior to the formal review by the state board. The state board shall report findings and recommendations to the joint education interim committee of the legislature on or before December 1 of the year in which the formal review and evaluation of the student content and performance standards was undertaken. The joint education interim committee shall report its recommendations, based upon findings and recommendations of the state board, to the legislature during the immediately following legislative session.



WYOMING

State Board of Education

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KATHRYN SESSIONS
Cheyenne

WALT WILCOX
Casper

BELEND A WILLSON
Thermopolis

CHELSIE OAKS
Executive Assistant

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Hank Coe and Representative David Northrup, Joint Education Committee and Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability Co-chairs

FROM: Paige Fenton Hughes, Coordinator

DATE: October 15, 2015

SUBJECT: Review of the content and performance standards

As soon as the legislative session concluded last spring, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) began the work of reviewing the science content and performance standards. After discussions with the state board about the process to be used and the makeup of the review committee, the WDE immediately moved forward with implementing the process and assembling the committee.

The process is not concluded at this point, but Laurie Hernandez at the WDE was gracious enough to provide a preview of the report that will be submitted to the Legislative Service Office by December 1, 2015. We felt that your committees would appreciate an update on how the science standards work is progressing.

You will also find in this tab a flexible timeline for the science standards review. Please understand there may be changes in some of the dates in light of the work of the standards committee, but this outline will give you an idea of the targeted timeline.

Also after the conclusion of the legislative session, the WDE began working with the board to develop a timeline for the review and revision of the content and performance standards for each of the nine content areas in light of the new legislation that calls for a review of standards every nine (9) years instead of every five (5) years. After discussion among the board and WDE personnel, a standards review timeline was adopted by the state board on July 27, 2015.

You will find the abovementioned documents in this standards tab. If you 155

have any questions prior to your meeting, please contact me at 307.349.4506
or paige.fentonhughes@gmail.com.

State Board of Education
2015 REVISED WYOMING CONTENT & PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Joint Education Interim Committee Report
December 1, 2015

Presented by: Brent Young, Chief Policy Officer
Written by: Laurie Hernandez, Standards Supervisor

Authority

W.S. 21-9-101, 21-9-102, and 21-2-304(c)

History

Pursuant to Wyo. Stat. § 21-2-304(a)(iii), the Wyoming State Board of Education must “prescribe uniform student content and performance standards for the common core of knowledge and the common core of skills specified by W.S. 21-9-101(b), and promulgate uniform standards for programs addressing the special needs of student populations specified under W.S. 21-9-101(c)...” The common core of knowledge includes reading/language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, fine and performing arts, physical education, health and safety, humanities, career/vocational education, foreign cultures and languages, applied technology, and government and civics including state and federal constitutions pursuant to W.S. 21-9-102.

Over the past five years, all nine content areas have been reviewed by a Standards Content Review Committee for their respective content area. A brief summary of each content area will follow. Therefore, the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) have met W.S. 21-2-304(c) which states, “... not less than once every nine (9) years, the board shall evaluate and review the uniformity and quality of the educational program standards imposed under W.S. 21-9-101 and 21-9-102 and the student content and performance standards promulgated under paragraph (a)(iii) of this section.” Previous to the 2015 Legislative Session, this review was not less than once every five (5) years. Also during this session, law was added stating, “The state board, in consultation with the state superintendent, shall establish a process to receive input or concerns related to the student content and performance standards from stakeholders ... and members of the public at large, at any time prior to the formal review by the state board.”

In 2010-11, the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards were reviewed and revised for the following content areas: Mathematics, Language Arts, and Health. These revisions were approved by the State Board of Education and signed into law by Governor Mead on July 11, 2012.

In 2011-13, the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards were reviewed and revised for the following content areas: Foreign Language and Fine & Performing Arts. These revisions were

approved by the State Board of Education and signed into law by Governor Mead on November 6, 2013.

In 2012-13, the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards were reviewed and revised for the following content areas: Career & Vocational Education (C&VE), Social Studies (S.S.), Physical Education (P.E.), and Science. During the 62nd Legislature 2014 Budget Session, Footnote 3 of Section 206 prohibited the SBE and the WDE from expending funds for the review or the adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) which were the standards the review committee had brought forth to the SBE. On July 1, 2014, the SBE passed a motion to postpone further review of the science standards and to continue operating under the 2008 state standards for science. Chapter 10 Rules was promulgated for the revised content areas of C&VE, S.S., and P.E. as well as for the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) and the Standards Extensions, both for mathematics and English/Language Arts (ELA). On October 9, 2014, following a 53-day Public Comment Period and Public Hearings at 14 sites across Wyoming, the SBE adopted the revised standards for C&VE, S.S., and P.E., as well as the PLDs and the Standards Extensions for mathematics and ELA. These revisions were signed into law by Governor Mead on December 31, 2014.

Actions

Wyoming Standards: Science

- March 2015 - the Legislature revoked Footnote 3 from the previous session, lifting the restrictions on the science standards review.
- March 17, 2015 - The state board directed the WDE to establish a process that would reengage a science standards committee, comprised of members from the original committee and adding eight (8) parents, four (4) higher education members, and eight (8) business and community members to ensure quality science standards. The motion also carried to use the work of the previous committee and add additional resources. Per added legislation, public input would be collected before a recommendation is sent to the SBE. A motion also carried to direct the WDE to establish a narrative communication committee to support the Science Standards Review Committee (SSRC) in developing the narrative surrounding the support of implementing the standards.
- April 3-20, 2015 – A call for Participants to serve on the Science Standards Review Committee (SSRC) was open and announce through the press, the WDE website, and a Superintendent’s Memo to districts.
- May 20, 2015 - The SSRC met virtually to learn the standards review process and receive information on the individual work to be done prior to the first committee meeting.
- May – June 2015 – Regional Public Input Meetings were held in five (5) locations around the state to gather public input on what citizens wanted the SSRC to know as they reviewed and revised science standards.
- June 15-16, 2015 – SSRC had their first 2-day meeting.
- August 11-12, 2015 – SSRC had their second 2-day meeting.
- November 13-15, 2015 – The SSRC is scheduled to meet for a third time.

Financial

No funds were appropriated by the state legislature for the revision of the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards.

Results

The Science Standards Review Committee (SSRC) is continuing their work on revising the science standards. This work is expected to be completed in late 2015 or early 2016. The WDE anticipates opening a public comment period in the spring of 2016.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations at this time.

DRAFT

9-Yr Plan for Standards Review per SBE on 05-19-15

Core Content Area (in yellow)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
SCIENCE (2008)	Proposed Review Cycle											
MATH (2012)			Proposed Review Cycle									
FINE & PERFORMING ARTS (2013)					Proposed Review Cycle							
HEALTH (2012)					Proposed Review Cycle							
PHYSICAL EDUCATION (2014)					Proposed Review Cycle							
LANGUAGE ARTS (2012)							Proposed Review Cycle					
FOREIGN LANGUAGE (2013)							Proposed Review Cycle					
SOCIAL STUDIES (2014)									Proposed Review Cycle			
CAREER & VOCATIONAL ED. (2014)									Proposed Review Cycle			
SCIENCE (2016?)											Proposed Review Cycle	

Proposed Timeline for the 2016 Science Standards Review

Date (2015-16)	Action	Additional Information / Notes	Req. from Whom	Req. of Whom
June 15-16 ✓	WDE Facilitate Science Standards Review Committee (SSRC) Meetings.	Whole- & Sub- Committee will discuss possible revisions from their notes, revise standards and benchmarks, and meet group consensus.	Laurie Hernandez	Mike Cosenza & SSRC
Aug. 11-12 ✓		Whole- & Sub- Committee will continue their work on reviewing the NGSS as a framework and making edits to /additions for the WY Science CPS.	Laurie Hernandez	Mike Cosenza & SSRC
Nov. 13-15, 2015		Whole- & Sub- Committee will review input from stakeholder groups, finalize their review, and finalize the draft document for the SBE's consideration, including historical text, informational text, and glossary.	Laurie Hernandez	Laurie & SSRC
Feb. 5-6, 2016 If needed		Same as above, if additional time is needed.	Laurie Hernandez	Laurie & SSRC
Upon Completion	The SSRC will make a recommendation to the SBE on a set of rigorous, internationally benchmarked, college & career-ready science standards.			

Projected Date if completed in Nov. 2015	Projected Date if completed in Feb. 2016	Action	Additional Information / Notes	Requested from Whom	Requested of Whom
Dec. 2015 /Jan. 2016	Mar. 2016	Following final SSRC meeting, send recommendation from the SSRC to the SBE	Send docs and agenda request to Chelsie Oaks	WDE Leadership	Laurie Hernandez
Dec./Jan. – March 2016	Mar. – June 2016	Upon direction from the SBE, set up and facilitate public input hearings around the state, as well as online surveys (prior to SBE vote)	Send out Press Release and Supt's Memo (press release for public hearing must be sent out with at least 45 days' notice)	WDE Leadership	Laurie Hernandez & Science Consultant
March 2016	June 2016	Present Science Standards and Public Feedback to SBE	Proposed Science Standards, Crosswalk, Comments from Public Hearings and online survey, and Proposed changes to Ch. 10 Rules	SBE / WDE Leadership	Laurie Hernandez & Science Consultant
March – May 2016	June – Aug. 2016	Upon direction from the SBE, set up Public Comment Period	45-day minimum	SBE	Laurie Hernandez
May/June 2016	Aug/Sept. 2016	Present to SBE	Proposed Science Standards, Comments from Public Comment Period, and proposed Ch. 10 Rules	SBE / WDE Leadership	Laurie Hernandez
*SBE will determine dates for implementation of new standards in schools per W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv) "...the board shall establish a process to ensure district assessment systems are aligned with the refined and revised standards within three (3) full school years following adoption of revised standards."					



TAB F

Update on Comprehensive, Multi-Tiered System of Support

W.S. 21-2-204. Wyoming Accountability in Education Act; statewide education accountability system created.

(f) A progressive multi-tiered system of support, intervention and consequences to assist schools shall be established by the state board, and shall conform to the January 2012 education accountability report as defined by subsection (k) of this section. The system shall clearly identify and prescribe the actions for each level of support, intervention and consequence.



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WALT WILCOX
Casper

BELENDIA WILLSON
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CHELSIE OAKS
Executive Assistant

MEMORANDUM

October 15, 2015

To: Senator Hank Coe and Representative David Northrup, Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability Co-Chairs

From: Pete Gosar, Chairman

RE: Statewide System of Support

The statewide system of support related to the requirements of the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) has been a priority item for the State Board of Education for the past few years. It was envisioned that the system of support would be developed simultaneously with the accountability model and be operational when the first school accountability ratings were determined. Unfortunately, the development and deployment of this system of support has lagged and languished.

The board wishes to convey to this committee its extreme sense of frustration that the statutory mandates to have a system of support in place by this reporting deadline are not met. Although the board has “oversight” responsibilities for system of support, it lacks any means, mechanism, or money to make it happen. One of the board members perhaps said it best when he stated, “A year ago at our retreat, we spent hours talking about how to get a system of support in place. A year later at our retreat, we are talking about how to get a system of support in place. A year from now, a topic at our retreat ought not to be how we can get a system of support in place.” Yet, the board lacks the means to directly affect the planning and deployment of a system of support other than to consistently ask for planning updates, convey the urgency of completing the task, and provide parameters and guidance through the language of motions. The board has expressed, in communications to this committee in the past, its deep concern that schools are being held accountable for their performance using the accountability model, yet we are failing at the state level to provide support to improve their performance on WAEA indicators. It’s alarming and unacceptable.

Over the past year, the state board has consistently placed the system of support on its agenda, and it is one of two strategic priorities identified by the board. The board has been focused on the¹⁶³

requirements of WAEA and the deadlines for getting a comprehensive, multi-tiered system of support, interventions and consequences in place.

As I believe you are aware, over the past few years the state board has seen several iterations of outlines and frameworks for a system of support. None of those has been sufficiently developed for the board to endorse and bring forward for your consideration. That remains largely true at this time. But, the board is bringing forward three initial components recommended by the WDE which are aimed at beginning to plan for and deploy some support to our districts.

First, the board approved a request for proposals (RFP) to develop a strategic plan for a comprehensive system of support. The contract for this work was eventually awarded to Dr. Joel Dvorak. In addition to the parameters provided in the RFP, the board imposed additional requirements for the final planning project. In addition to the components of the RFP, the board asked that the strategic plan include some mechanism for a needs assessment component tied to WAEA targets, that an evaluation be included related to "moving the needle" on the indicators, and that the plan be aligned to the 2012 Advisory Committee Report.

Second, the board approved a proposal from the University of Wyoming College of Education's Wyoming Center for Educational Leadership (WyCEL), under the direction of Dr. Mark Stock. This work is called the Project ECHO for superintendents and will consist of a case-study-based format delivered by distance means to superintendents who choose to be part of the group. Again, the board approved this work with some additional parameters including that this project be a pilot for possible inclusion in the overall strategic plan for a comprehensive system of support. The board also asked Dr. Stock to collect and report data related to how many participants are from districts with schools not meeting expectations and evaluation data to determine if there are any positive effects with regard to the indicators in WAEA. The board further asked Dr. Stock to stay in close contact with Dr. Dvorak and Paige Fenton Hughes as the work progresses.

Finally, the board approved a proposal brought forward by the Wyoming Association of School Administrators (WASA) as a result of a meeting superintendents had with Governor Mead. The WASA proposal is an abbreviated form of an earlier proposal presented to the board regarding implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) in schools across the state. The plan includes bringing Dr. Anthony Mohammad to Wyoming to offer workshops that will lay the groundwork for possibly deploying PLCs in participating districts. Again, the board approved this work as a pilot project and asked that WASA work with Dr. Dvorak with regard to whether or not the larger PLC project will be part of a comprehensive system of support in the future.

The state board hopes that beginning with the focus on leadership will provide some foundational elements for a comprehensive system based on clear and differentiated needs of schools across the state. The 2012 advisory report, which is to provide a framework for the system of support, mentions that "there is a pressing need to improve the capacity of school leaders in Wyoming." The AdvancED data from the last two accreditation cycles show that in the domain of leadership capacity, the state of Wyoming is approximately 20 points below the network average of all systems that are accredited by AdvancED. Dr. Gerry Chase and Dr. Dave Barker completed a recent study in which they surveyed administrators in the state about professional development needs, and those needs will be addressed in the WyCEL leadership support plans. The board also understands the Advisory Committee is working on leader evaluation to come online first, and it feels there should be some support in place for leaders before that happens. We don't want to end up in another situation where we are measuring and rating without providing support.

The board received from WDE a visual outline accompanied by a brief narrative that outlines some initial components of a theory of action behind the technical support components of a system of support. The board heard an initial briefing on the outline during its teleconference on October 8, 2015 and will explore it in more detail at the end of the month. It's included here to provide your committees with a possible overview of the thinking behind the anticipated strategic plan for a comprehensive system of support.

At this time, the board is pleased that the strategic planning component is moving forward, and the board has expressed the urgency with which it believes this task must be undertaken. There can be no more time wasted in getting a plan in place for a comprehensive, multi-tiered system of supports, interventions, and consequences. As mentioned above, the board felt the need to provide support to administrators as a way to pilot some possible permanent components of a system of support; however, concern about targeted technical support for schools not meeting expectations remains a high priority for the state board.

The board looks forward to working with Dr. Dvorak, Dr. Stock, WASA, and the WDE to see these disparate components melded into a comprehensive system of support that meets the statutory requirements and truly supports our schools in the work of improving student outcomes.



System of Support Components Approved by the State Board of Education

Development of a Statewide System of Support Strategic Plan:

The purpose of the RFP was to solicit vendors to 1) facilitate the development of a Statewide System of Support Strategic Plan and Implementation Document, and 2) facilitate and guide the implementation of the plan. The plan must include collaboration with appropriate governance and advisory structures.

Description of the Scope of Work: In collaboration with Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) staff and State Board of Education (SBE) members, the contractor will lead a strategic planning and implementation process to include, but not be limited to, the following key areas of work:

1. Review the statutory requirements related to the multi-tiered system of support, intervention, and consequences (W.S. 21-2-204 (f) and (k)) including the January 2012 education accountability report to determine governance and advisory structures necessary to support plan development and specific plan objectives.
2. Create a summary of the strategic review of all relevant documents for discussion by WDE staff and SBE members.
3. Design and conduct facilitated planning meetings and/or strategic interviews for the board, staff, and key external stakeholders to discuss the key questions, develop ideas for strategic directions, and foster stakeholder investment in the Statewide System of Support Strategic Plan and Implementation process.
4. Synthesize the discussions into a three to five year Statewide System of Support Strategic Plan and Implementation Document. This draft document will be considered by the Wyoming Department of Education and the Wyoming State Board of Education during or before the March 2016 SBE meeting. At a minimum, this plan shall include:

- Vision statement

- Mission statement
- Support/intervention for low performing students
- Support/mentoring for teachers needing to improve
- Induction for new teachers and leaders
- Support/mentoring for school leaders
- Capacity building for schools and districts with lower than acceptable levels of achievement or growth
- Capacity building for the state as a whole to support continuous improvement
- The role of institutions of higher education in building capacity and preparation especially in terms of P-16 coordination (*Marion, S., Domaleski, D. [2012, January 31]. WY Comprehensive Accountability Framework, p. 65)
- Implementation outline that describes the role of WDE administration, the state superintendents' association, and the development of partnerships with other appropriate professional organizations and key stakeholder groups

5. Key questions and specific objectives of the Statewide System of Support Strategic Plan and Implementation Document include, but are not limited to the following:

- How do we insure that programs and technical assistance align with and advance the mission/vision in measureable and meaningful ways?
- What revenue and resource development strategies are needed to sustain the mission and vision over the next three to five years and beyond?
- What will be the infrastructure and organizational development needs for the WDE over the next three years?

6. Describe the Plan implementation process and timeline (following the approval of the document by the WDE and the SBE). This should include but not be limited to the following:

- Development of a comprehensive communication plan to support stakeholder feedback and transparency of implementation
- Identification and alignment of resources and support structures already in place, e.g.
- Wyoming Association of School Administrators
- WDE division directors
- District professional organizations
- Identification of highest priority district need and resources available to provide support

ECHO Project for Superintendents:

Wyoming school administrators have indicated that their preferred delivery method for training and professional development is networking and technology (Barker, Chase,

2015) The ECHO project utilizes a weekly 90-minute training session with a specific training purpose that utilizes the networking strategy using online technology. Participants can log on using ZOOM software from anywhere in the world using their iPads, phones, or computers. Facilitation of the ECHO sessions is done by educational leaders broadcasting from the WIND conference center on the UW Campus. The protocols for ECHO require an annual calendar of specific training topics which are delivered by state, regional, or national experts. The specific training topics will be determined by a cohort group of Wyoming Superintendents using the current research provided by Dr. David Barker and Dr. Gerry Chase. This cohort group is meeting weekly to plan the content for the ECHO project as well as create the framework for the case study portion of the training.

The weekly sessions will include a 30- minute didactic training session from an expert followed by question and answer periods. During each session two case studies are presented by participants followed by suggestions and comments from the multi-disciplinary team of participants. Because sessions are recorded and made available on the web, participants can keep current even if they miss a weekly session. For accountability purposes there is a third-party evaluation at the end of the year that examines the training outcomes from the project. Because UW has been named one of four international training hubs for ECHO, WyCEL has access to trained personnel and support right on the UW campus. The 2015 - 2016 ECHO project pilot year will allow Wyoming superintendents to get accustomed to participating in regular online networking opportunities providing more consistent training across the state.

The state's curriculum directors have also been invited to participate in the ECHO Project , which brings the potential number of participants to 78 (48 superintendents and 30 curriculum directors). The content planning for the upcoming sessions is about 75% complete at this time and is being designed around the five AdvancED standards. In addition to using the information from the study conducted by Barker and Chase (2015), another survey has gone out to all superintendents and curriculum directors to pinpoint needs based on the specific indicators in each AdvancED standard. The project will be "up and running" the first week of January 2016.

WASA Training – Laying the Groundwork for PLCs:

Changing the culture of a school is possibly one of the most complex and difficult issues when a school chooses to become a Professional Learning Community (PLC). A school culture that commits to educating every child without excuses takes a principal with the vision and skills to assist staff members in realizing their collaborative knowledge and

skills will make it possible for each child to reach his or her potential. Dr. Anthony Muhammad is widely recognized as a leader in school culture. His book, *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* is a must read for anyone preparing to transform school culture. Sheridan County School District #2 recently hosted a PLC conference where Dr. Muhammad was the featured speaker. The conference was very successful. Park County School District #1, Park County School District #6 and Hot Springs School District #1 have scheduled Dr. Muhammad to present his message about school culture to their staffs during the upcoming school year. It is important to provide a vision on how to change the culture of schools state-wide in Wyoming. Dr. Muhammad's message is inspirational and is well received by teachers. He is a favorite speaker at Solution Tree PLC events. Being able to present his message to the education community across the state will create the momentum to proceed with the original PLC plan proposed by WASA. Dr. Muhammad is available to speak in Wyoming fourteen days during the upcoming school year. WASA proposes the WDE hire Dr. Muhammad to present to Wyoming educators for all of the fourteen days. He will be able to speak across the state in host school districts. His message will resonate with our Wyoming educators and jump start a once- in-a-lifetime journey for the state. The journey will have a positive impact on the children of Wyoming. Principal and superintendent leadership is crucial during times of change, especially when changing the culture of a school/district. Dr. Muhammad's work could be incorporated into the WyCEL projects, including the ECHO Project. Both the Principal Academy and the ECHO project would benefit greatly from Dr. Muhammad's experience and expertise.

The dates and sites for the trainings are as follows:

- November 9, 2015 – Riverton, Fremont 25
- November 10, 2015 – Powell, Park 1
- November 11, 2015 – Cody, Park 6
- November 12, 2015 – Worland, Washakie 1
- February 16, 2105 – Douglas, Converse 1
- February 17, 2015 – Gillette, Campbell 1
- February 18, 2015 – Newcastle, Weston1
- February 19, 2015 – Torrington, Goshen 1
- March 28, 2015 – Pinedale, Sublette 1
- March 29, 2015 – Evanston, Uinta 1
- March 30, 2015 – Rawlins, Carbon 1
- March 31, 2015 – Cheyenne, Laramie 1
- April 1, 2015 – Laramie, Albany 1

- April 7, 2015 – Casper, Natrona 1

Dr. Anthony Muhammad will work to create Professional Learning Communities (PLC) support throughout the state of Wyoming during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Training will be tailored to the needs of the districts in the area of the host site. The range of services he will offer will include school audits for districts that have begun the PLC process, coaching for those districts already actively engaged in the PLC process, and he will also offer six different professional development programs depending on where districts and regions are in the journey to implement PLCs with fidelity.

These six programs include:

1. The basic PLC overview;
2. Transforming school culture;
3. Developing authentic collaborative teams;
4. Agreeing on what all students should know and be able to do;
5. Assessing whether students have learned those ideas;
6. Providing additional supports for students who need interventions or enrichments.

Dr. Muhammad will also work with some districts to review evidence that positive change is occurring.

Wyoming Statewide System of Support

Collaborative Council Roster

October, 2015

Partners

1. University of Wyoming College of Education
 - a. Audrey Kleinsausser
 - b. Leslie Rush
2. Wyoming Center for Educational Leadership
 - a. Mark Stock
3. Wyoming Association of School Administrators
 - a. Kevin Mitchell, Park County SD#1
 - b. Gerry Chase, Johnson County SD#1
 - c. Diana Clapp, Fremont County SD#?
4. Wyoming Community College Commission
 - a. Jim Rose, Executive Director
5. Wyoming State Curriculum Directors
 - a. TBD
 - b. TBD
6. Wyoming Association of Secondary Principals
 - a. TBD
7. Wyoming Association of Elementary Principals
 - a. TBD
8. Wyoming Education Association (Teachers)
 - a. TBD
 - b. TBD
9. Wyoming State Board of Education
 - a. TBD
 - b. TBD
10. Wyoming Department of Education
 - a. Brent Young
 - b. Jillian Balow or designee
11. Professional Teacher Standards Board
 - a. TBD
12. Wyoming School Boards Association
 - a. Brian Farmer
 - b. Designated School Board Member

Submitted by Dr. Joel Dvorak

System of Support

A guide for implementation

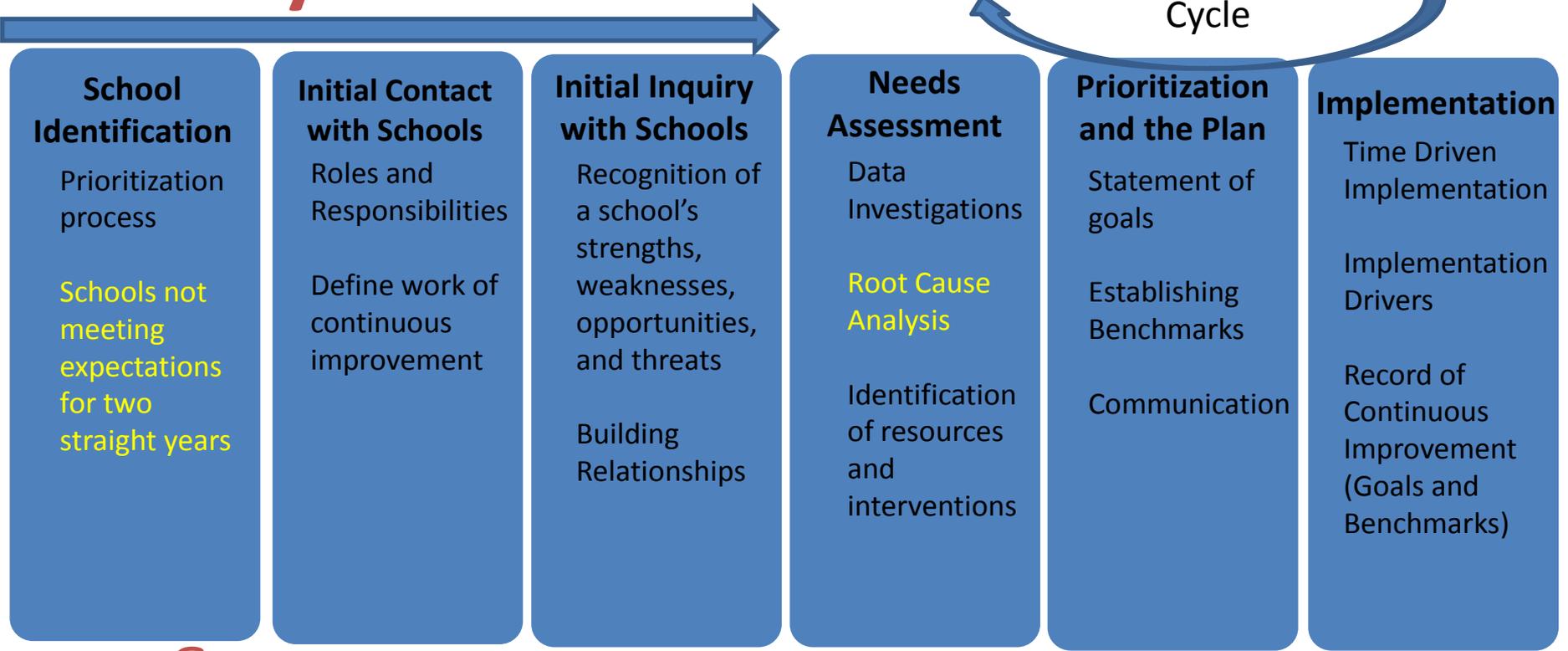
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Overarching Goals of Wyoming's Accountability in Education Act (WAEA)

- See Wyoming become a national education leader among states;
- Ensure all students leave Wyoming schools career or college ready;
- Recognize student growth and increase the rate of that growth for all students;
- Recognize student achievement and minimize achievement gaps;
- Improve teacher, school, and district leader quality.
- Maximize efficiency of Wyoming education;
- Increase credibility and support for Wyoming public schools.

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Theory of Action



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Quarterly identification of system's needs and services
 Reviews schools' records of continuous improvement
 Reviews implementation of instructional strategies

*Template adapted from Minnesota's Department of Education SSoS framework

Statewide System of Support Theory of Action and Implementation

Wyoming's Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) establishes performance ratings for all public schools which identifies schools performing at the highest levels (Exceeding Expectations) to those schools that are persistently underperforming (Not Meeting Expectations). The statewide system of support (SSoS) works with all levels of schools to showcase best practices and to develop and implement supports that support teaching and learning in our lower performing schools. The supports begin within the infrastructure of district and school leadership teams. The implementation of selected interventions are driven by teacher led professional learning community teams.

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Theory of Action for Low Performing Schools

The school identification and prioritization process begins each fall as the State of Wyoming releases performance ratings for all schools. Similar to the current federal accountability model, lowest performing schools will be identified by receiving a "Not Meeting Expectations" performance rating for two consecutive years.

Initial contact with identified schools will be made by the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE). Understanding the roles and responsibilities of local boards, superintendents, and schools will be the goal during this initial contact phase. Requirements for each of these groups will be outlined with specific actions for each group. The scope of the continuous improvement process and its resources will be defined and shared, i.e. Comprehensive School Plan.

As schools begin the inquiry step of the continuous improvement process they will identify those indicators that recognize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for their school's efforts to improve student achievement.

The continuous improvement cycle is characterized by an individual school's needs assessment, priorities, and the implementation of selected interventions and strategies. During the needs assessment phase, schools, along with their representative, will utilize the dynamic data reporting features offered through the WDE in conjunction with their own locally developed data reporting tools to complete a "data dive" in an effort to understand what the data is telling them about their school's student academic performance. Each identified school's improvement team will complete a systematic process called Root Cause Analysis (RCA). A root cause is defined as "the deepest underlying cause, or causes, of positive or negative symptoms within any process that, if dissolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction, of the symptom." (Preus, 2003, Root Cause Analysis: Using Data to Dissolve Problems). An RCA is defined as an effective tool used both reactively, to investigate an adverse event that already has occurred, and proactively, to analyze and improve processes and systems before they break down (Preus, 2003).

Combining information from the data dive and the RCA, schools will then begin the process of identifying resources, intervention, and strategies to support their school improvement goals. Documentation of these resources, intervention, and strategies will be identified in each school's comprehensive plan and will be publically posted on the school's and/or district's web site. The assigned representative's role will assist the school's leadership team in this process which will include the selection of interventions and strategies.

The plan will clearly articulate the school's goals and the identified benchmarks that will provide evidence of implementation and effectiveness. Improvement plans for the selected goals will address activities that support teaching and learning, involve school and district level leadership, and that address the utilization of school and district resources. All plans must be time driven and clearly articulate individuals responsible for implementation.

Collaborative Council for Wyoming's Statewide System of Support

The collaborative council made up of education stakeholders in Wyoming will serve as the system's guiding coalition through the Wyoming State Board of Education and Wyoming Department of Education. The council will, through quarterly meetings, evaluate the support system's current needs and services and provide recommendations for future activities and resources. Bi-annually, the council will monitor each prioritized school's evidence of implementation and their records of continuous improvement toward meeting their improvement plan goals and benchmarks. Feedback from the council's monitoring will be delivered to the school's superintendent and appointed representative. An annual report will be shared with the Wyoming State Board of Education through the Wyoming Department of Education.

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How Wyoming schools, at any performance level, leverages support from the statewide system

- High performing schools, those “Exceeding Expectations” will be sharing their story of how they have achieved at the highest performance level and will demonstrate their continuous improvement cycle through the posting of their comprehensive plan.
 - All Wyoming schools will have access to these stories and plans which is intended to raise levels of collaboration among Wyoming’s school systems.
- All Wyoming schools will have access to statewide professional development opportunities.
 - Examples for the 2015-2016 school year include the following:
 - Creating a culture of high expectations-Regional Events (teacher, principal, superintendent)
 - Leadership Development and Support (teacher, principal, superintendent)
 - [Wyoming Center for Educational Leadership](#)
 - [Individual Level Supports](#)
 - Principal Academy, Principal Mentorship, One on One Principal and School Improvement Support, UW Literacy Center Teacher Training, Instructional Facilitator Training
 - [School Level Supports](#)
 - School Improvement Planning, School Leadership Team Academy, Literacy Center School Wide Training, Steps for Success (WDE), Professional Learning Community Summit (Sheridan School District #2 and WDE)
 - [District Level Supports](#)
 - ECHO Project for Superintendents, School Board Governance (WSBA), Strategic Planning (WSBA), Professional Learning Communities (WASA)
 - Wyoming Department of Education
 - [School Improvement](#), [Standards](#), [Assessment](#), [English Learners](#), [CTE](#), [Digital Learning](#), [Data](#), [Early Learning](#),

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TAB G

Duties Prescribed by Law

W.S. 21-2-304. Duties of the state board of education.

(c) The state board shall perform an ongoing review of state board duties prescribed by law and may make recommendations to the legislature on board duties.



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SCOTTY RATLIFF
Riverton

JIM ROSE
Ex-Officio, CCC

KATHRYN SESSIONS
Cheyenne

WALT WILCOX
Casper

BELENDIA WILLSON
Thermopolis

CHELSIE Oaks
Executive Assistant

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Hank Coe and Representative David Northrup, Joint Education Committee and Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability Co-chairs

FROM: Paige Fenton Hughes, Coordinator

DATE: October 15, 2015

SUBJECT: Duties prescribed by law

The state board applied for and received a stipend (grant) from the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). Part of the work of the grant is to utilize a NASBE toolkit to embark upon a process to review and align board policies, rules and regulations, and to consider statutes that govern the work of the board.

In the past, the board has weighed in on certain statutory duties “assigned to” the board and has also answered the legislative request for thoughts about the statewide education governance structure.

At this point, what the board would like to do is “open the door” to a discussion with the Joint Education Committee during the next interim. By that time, the board will have embarked upon this comprehensive policy review process and will likely have information and thoughts to share at that time.

We look forward to working together on this topic in the future as part of a comprehensive review of the work of the board. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this proposed plan. You can contact me at 307.349.4506 or at paige.fentonhughes@gmail.com.