



## **Proposal**

### **Wyoming Legislative Services Office**

#### **Background**

The State of Wyoming's work on K-12 education governance dates back nearly a century, to 1917 legislation that established the State Department of Education and an appointed State Board of Education, without reference to the constitutionally established, elected position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. At this same time, the State Board of Education was given the authority to appoint a Commissioner of Education. Two years later, the state legislature removed the State Board's authority over the Department of Education but maintained its authority to appoint a Commissioner, with the Commissioner now to operate under the supervision of the State Superintendent while executing the policies of the State Board. The position was subsequently eliminated in 1959 and its powers transferred to the State Board.

Ten years later, in 1969, Wyoming once again amended its education statutes to create a Department of Education, inclusive of the State Superintendent and the State Board. Unclear was whether the Superintendent was to seek the Board's approval for policy decisions and how Department of Education staff were to support the State Board's execution of its duties.

Since then, Wyoming's system of K-12 education has been overseen by a bifurcated state policymaking process, with at times unclear responsibilities and chains of command. Most recently, the state has experienced a legal dispute between the State Superintendent and the State Legislature.

It is within this context that the Wyoming Legislative Services Office is seeking an independent analysis of Wyoming's K-12 governance structure and a set of options for how this governance structure might be clarified and improved.

#### **Project Description**

Bellwether Education Partners ("Bellwether") will provide an independent review of Wyoming's governance structure, including a description of the current status, an overview of potential governance changes, and a recommended course of action.

This review will seek to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the governance structures in other states?
- 2) What trends can we see or lessons can we learn from these states?
- 3) How can Wyoming alter its structure to take advantage of this knowledge?

Answering these questions will require analyses of the pros and cons of elected vs. appointed policymaking bodies, how governance is distributed vertically and laterally within state government, the necessary considerations when distinguishing between policymaking bodies and those responsible for implementation, and the changes possible within the current constitutional framework, including novel approaches for executing state K-12 governance.

The ultimate goal of this project is to provide a fact base, analytical framework, and policy options to the Wyoming legislature.

### **Approach and Timeline**

Bellwether will approach this project primarily through a combination of policy analysis and interviews. Knowing that the Wyoming legislature has already received some background information about the governance structures used in other states, the policy analysis will provide a high-level review the existing governance structures in other states and focus instead on the key characteristics and trends of those structures. Bellwether will then conduct an in-depth policy analysis of Wyoming’s policies, relying on a careful reading of the state constitution, state statute, regulations, past audit reports, and both past and recent court decisions.

Bellwether recognizes that a part of the uncertainty related to K-12 authority and responsibility is the result of different interpretations of existing policies and practices. As such, Bellwether will supplement desk research with an extensive set of interviews with key stakeholders across the state, including some combination of the following: the legislature, State Board, governor’s office, department of education, state superintendent, local superintendents, postsecondary community, state-wide advocacy groups, and professional associations, etc. These interviews will be used to surface various perspectives on the key issues and ensure a fully informed set of options.

Bellwether will also interview experts in state K-12 governance from across the country, including some combination of the following: past and current state superintendents, state legislators, and/or state board members; and the leadership of national organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, and the National Association of State Boards of Education.

Combining thorough desk research and extensive interviews, Bellwether will seek to deliver a balanced analysis of the state’s current status, available options, and recommendations.

Project Kick-Off	Week of Jun 23
Desk Research – National Context	Week of Jun 23 – Week of Jul 7
Desk Research – Wyoming Context	Week of Jun 30 – Week of Jul 14
Identify Interviewees – National & Wyoming	Week of Jul 7
Conduct Interviews – National	Week of Jul 14
Conference Call with LSO	Week of Jul 21
Conduct Interviews – Wyoming	Week of Jul 21, Week of Aug 11
Draft Report Outline	Week of Aug 18 – Week of Aug 25
Conference Call with LSO	Week of Aug 18
Draft Report	Week of Sept 1 – Week of Sept 22
Conference Call with LSO	Week of Sept 15
Revise and finalize report	Week of Sept 15 – Week of Oct 13

**Budget**

Salaries	52,350
Travel	5,000
Copy-editing	500
Administrative Contribution	\$5,785
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,635</b>

**Organizational Qualifications**

Bellwether Education Partners is a nonprofit dedicated to helping education organizations—in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors—become more effective in their work and achieve dramatic results, especially for high-need students. To do so, we provide a unique combination of exceptional thinking, talent, and hands-on strategic support. More specifically:

- Our Policy & Thought Leadership practice works to shape the broader education policy landscape by conducting policy analysis, research and writing, and idea generation on education issues and advising education entities on policy and public affairs.
- Our Talent practice identifies, places, and supports reform-minded leaders. We do so through traditional, comprehensive executive searches, customized “search advisory” services, and individual coaching services.
- Our Strategic Advising practice works with leading-edge education organizations on their most pressing strategic and operational issues. Our work ranges from supporting entrepreneurs through business plan development, to partnering with established organizations on growth and performance improvement, to assessing new opportunities for impact as the field evolves.

Why bring all this together? We believe the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and many of the challenges organizations face are so complex that they require all three areas of expertise. Having each leg of the stool makes the entirety stronger, tying in innovative thinking with perspective into the on-the-ground realities.

Bellwether has carved a special, and desperately needed, niche in the education reform landscape. Bellwether isn't just a think tank or just a consulting firm or just a human capital organization. It is all of the above and more. Through the combination of these lines of work, we can provide comprehensive, coherent, and lasting solutions to our most longstanding and complicated problems.

Bellwether has extensive expertise in charter schools. We have conducted research, analysis, and policy advising to a range of clients working to strengthen public policies related to charter schools and charter school authorizing, including the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, and several major foundations that invest in charter schools. Over the past three years, Bellwether has supported NACSA's federally funded Performance Management, Replication, and Closure initiative to improve the quality of charter authorizing in these areas. As part of this work, Bellwether has documented the practices of a set of exemplary national authorizers in these three areas, produced case studies on initiatives undertaken by mid-level authorizers to improve their practice in these areas, and written primers for policymakers on supporting effective authorizing by SEA and higher education authorizers—the latter of which is particularly relevant in the Michigan context. The team supporting this work has in-depth experience with charter schools as policymakers,

policy analysts, charter school authorizers, board members of public charter schools, and board members and advisory board members for charter school supporting organizations

## **Team**

Though we will make use of the expertise and experience of colleagues across the organization, the following individuals will be responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of this project.

### Andy Smarick – Partner, Policy & Thought Leadership

Andy Smarick is a Partner on the Policy & Thought Leadership team at Bellwether Education Partners. Andy most recently served as Deputy Commissioner of Education of the State of New Jersey where he helped lead initiatives including the state's successful ESEA waiver and Race to the Top 3 applications, the launching of new teacher evaluations, and an overhaul of the department's charter school authorizing. Andy previously served as Deputy Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education and at the White House Domestic Policy Council, and has worked for Congress and the Maryland state legislature. Other roles include Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Adjunct Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and Chief Operating Officer of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

Andy helped launch a college-preparatory charter school for under-served boys and girls in Annapolis, and he was a member of the Maryland Governor's Commission on Quality Education. His book on overhauling the delivery of inner-city public education, *The Urban School System of the Future*, was released in 2012, and his articles have appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Boston Globe*, *Education Next*, *National Affairs*, and other outlets. His areas of research include school turnarounds, teacher quality, charter schools, performance pay, district reform, and Catholic schools. Andy is a former White House Fellow, member of the 2010-11 class of Aspen Institute-NewSchools Fellows, and founding board member of 50CAN. He earned a bachelor's degree, summa cum laude and with honors, and a master's degree in public management from the University of Maryland. Andy lives in Maryland with his wife and three kids.

### Andrew J. Rotherham –Co-Founder and Partner, Policy & Thought Leadership

Andrew J. Rotherham is a Co-Founder and Partner at Bellwether Education Partners, where he has led the Policy and Thought Leadership work since 2010. He also is the executive editor of *Real Clear Education*, part of the *Real Clear Politics* family of news and analysis websites, writes the blog *Eduwonk.com*, and is the co-publisher of "Education Insider," a federal policy analysis tool produced by *Whiteboard Advisors*. Rotherham previously served at the White House as Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy during the Clinton administration and is a former member of the Virginia Board of Education. He was an education columnist for *TIME*, a regular contributor to *U.S. News and World Report*, and in addition to Bellwether, has founded or co-founded two other education reform organizations and served on the boards of several other successful education start-ups.

Rotherham is the author or co-author of more than 250 published articles, book chapters, papers, and op-eds about education policy and politics and is the author or editor of four books on educational policy. He serves on advisory boards and committees for a variety of organizations including *Education Pioneers*, *The Broad Foundation*, and the *National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER)*. Rotherham is on the board of directors for the *Indianapolis Mind Trust*, is Vice Chair of the *Curry School of Education*

Foundation at the University of Virginia, and serves on the Visiting Committee for the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Juliet Squire – Associate Partner, Policy & Thought Leadership

Juliet Squire is an Associate Partner on the Policy & Thought Leadership team at Bellwether Education Partners. She most recently worked at the New Jersey Department of Education, where she directed strategies for advancing technology-driven innovation and oversaw the state's Race to the Top program. Previously, she managed school board relationships and new business development for education management organization National Heritage Academies, providing support to school building leadership and helping to launch new charter schools in Louisiana, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Juliet began her career as a researcher and manager of the education policy studies program at the American Enterprise Institute, where she studied a wide range of issues in K-12 and higher education policy. Her work has appeared in publications such as Education Finance and Policy, Policy Review, American School Board Journal, and the Chronicle of Higher Education. She received her bachelor's degree in political science from Yale University.

Kelly Robson – Analyst, Policy & Thought Leadership

Kelly Robson is an Analyst with Bellwether Education Partners. She works primarily in Policy & Thought Leadership. Before joining Bellwether, Kelly taught middle school English and history in Westerville City Schools in Westerville, Ohio and in the District of Columbia Public Schools. While with DCPS she worked on a number of district curriculum initiatives, including partnering with the Center for Inspired Teaching to create and pilot US History modules aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Kelly recently co-authored and presented a paper at the 2013 Educational Symposium for Research and Innovation, where she won the Dean's Emerging Scholar Award. Kelly holds both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in education from The Ohio State University. She is currently working on her doctorate in education policy at The George Washington University.