

DRAFT Prospectus

Options for Wyoming Education K-12 Governance Reform

Center on Reinventing Public Education
University of Washington Bothell
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Background

Wyoming, like many other states, is finding its state-level governance structure a barrier to progress. The many different state-level actors often find themselves in conflict. As a result, local districts and schools get mixed signals, can be regulated in counter-productive ways, and often can't get the kinds of assistance they need.

Many state-level institutions play roles in education governance: the legislature (House and Senate Education and Appropriations Committees); the Governor's Office; the State Board of Education; the State Superintendent of Public Instruction; and the State Department of Education. In practice, Wyoming's governance system is unusually prone to conflict because:

- The State Superintendent is an elected official, not a part of the Governor's cabinet;
- The State Board is appointed by the Governor, though the State Superintendent is a voting member; and
- The State Department of Education answers only to the Superintendent, and has no direct relationship with the Board.

Arrangements of these kinds are seldom workable. Improvement of K-12 education requires concerted and effective policy leadership, which seldom arises when the governor, state superintendent, state board, and state department are at odds and answer to different constituencies.

Recently, the Legislature has tried to create a more integrated governance structure by establishing a governor-appointed Education Director to oversee the Department of Education and limiting the elected superintendent's duties. This arrangement did not survive a challenge in the State Supreme Court, so the State Superintendent has assumed her former duties. The problem of disunited and often counterproductive state governance for K-12 education remains unsolved.

Developing Governance Options for Wyoming

The Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) will develop governance options drawing on two sources: First, CRPE research on how other states with aggressive and sustained efforts to improve K-12 performance have been organized

and led; and Second, analysis of the ways Wyoming state level governance has created barriers or overlooked opportunities to local district and school improvement. CRPE will ultimately ask, what needs to be done in Cheyenne both to make local district and school leaders accountable for student performance and to allow and encourage them to innovate and try out more effective ways of operating schools and teaching students? This question will lead us to suggest how the state can organize for performance and innovation, not just for compliance and faithful implementation of federal mandates. Thus, our recommendations will go beyond efforts to smooth out political conflicts, to suggesting how the state government can become a much more effective funder and overseer of public education.

To accomplish this we will:

Consult with key actors in Cheyenne (including elected officials, key executive and legislative staff, and relevant association heads), about policy conflicts and rivalries at the state level and how these have adverse effects on the performance of the state department and local districts;

Via Skype and conference calls, conduct interviews and focus groups with key local superintendents, principals, and community college heads, about mixed signals received from the state and areas where the state could support greater freedom of action and provide more relevant assistance;

Identify possible governance reforms, including new roles and missions for the Superintendent, Board, Governor's Office and State Department, and new approaches to funding and regulation of schools, based on suggestions gathered from our Wyoming-based interviews and focus groups, and on the experience of other states.

Formulate and deliver to diverse audiences an "Options Briefing," suggesting criteria for judging state governance and providing alternative visions of a more constructive set of roles and missions, checks, and balances for the Governor's Office, State Superintendent, Board, and Department.

Refine these options in light of comments and provide a written report on options for the Governor and Legislature. Though we are not qualified to offer legal advice, we should be able to say which of these options will require executive orders, legislative actions, or Constitutional amendments.

Timing, Staffing, and Cost

The work will begin June 26, 2014. The written final report will be completed by December 31, 2014, though the project will continue through March 31, 2015 so project staff can be available to answer questions and consider options. Dr. Paul Hill will lead the effort, in collaboration with political scientist Dr. Ashley Jochim and

management specialist Dr. Larry Miller, and expert consultants from other states, e.g. Louisiana.

Our estimates of workload and cost assume that the Legislative Service Office and other state government entities will assist us in obtaining the cooperation of key informants at the state and local levels. Total cost for the project, including travel and production of the final report will be \$230,000. Payment to CRPE should come in 5 monthly increments of \$40,000 for the months of August-December 2014, and monthly increments of 10,000 for the months of January-March 2015.

CRPE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The University of Washington's Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) seeks ways to make public education more effective, especially for disadvantaged children in big cities. By assuming that it is not possible to improve student outcomes without changing schools, districts, and states, the Center's work addresses every element of public education, demonstrates how possible changes might work, and assesses likely benefits and costs.

CRPE's work is based on two premises: that public schools should be measured against the goal of educating all children well, and that current institutions too often fail to achieve this goal. Through a national program of research and analysis, CRPE examines a range of alternatives that rethink and challenge the current system. CRPE's research uses evidence from the field and lessons learned from other sectors to understand complicated problems and to design innovative and practical solutions for policymakers, elected officials, parents, educators, and community leaders.

Since 1993, CRPE has studied efforts to transform urban school districts so that they support, rather than interfere with, effective schools. Results have included new models for more flexible and performance-oriented school districts that are now being used in cities including New York, Philadelphia, D.C., Oakland, New Orleans, and Chicago. All of these cities are currently active participants in the portfolio network because they have found value over time in CRPE's work.

A collaborative approach to studying these issues is at the core of CRPE's organizational capacity for completing this work successfully.

CRPE's staff includes national experts and researchers with diverse backgrounds and skill sets—economics, statistics, law, and political science, as well as curriculum and school administration. The Center's staff has extensive experience working with districts and performing quantitative and qualitative research on a variety of education topics.

Communications: CRPE has a comprehensive and successful communications strategy, led by Communications Director Debra Britt, that ensures CRPE's research and ideas are translated into practical formats and distributed to the right audiences (from grassroots organizations to policymakers). CRPE's dissemination and outreach efforts include press releases that make our findings accessible to an informed lay audience, targeted mailings, a website and electronic newsletter that reach a wide audience of education leaders and scholars, presentations at national conferences, and publication in academic and non-technical journals. CRPE also works closely with the University of Washington's News and

Information Office to coordinate press releases and coverage of its research findings in the mainstream media. All CRPE research projects include communications support and strategies for outreach and dissemination, including writing, editorial, and design expertise for our in-house publications, targeted media outreach, and presentations at conferences or other events. The University of Washington Creative Communications office also serves as a vast resource for outside editorial and design work as needed.

CRPE's website (www.crpe.org) provides easy navigation and access to our research. The site highlights new CRPE initiatives, reviews of our work, and links to journal articles and opinion pieces written by our researchers. Our publications section features our reports as pdfs, available for free download. Our working papers make emerging research available to a wider audience, to inform and encourage public debate and comment. Nearly 6,000 people are currently on our list serve, and subscriptions continue to grow. Our work also continues to find new audiences via social media channels, including Twitter and Facebook.

Organization and fiscal agent: CRPE is a policy research center affiliated with the University of Washington and headquartered in Seattle, WA.

The University of Washington, founded in 1861, is one of the oldest state-supported institutions of higher education on the West Coast and is one of the preeminent research universities in the world. The education and research missions of the University are supported by the UW Libraries system, one of the largest research libraries in North America, and by its extensive computing and networking resources.

- The University of Washington Board of Regents can be found at <http://www.washington.edu/regents/officers/>
- The annual report and current financial statement (pdf) for the University of Washington is available at <http://f2.washington.edu/treasury/uw-annual-report>
- The University of Washington IRS Tax Determination Letter (pdf) is available at <http://f2.washington.edu/fm/tax/sites/default/files/taxexemptionletter.pdf>.
- The University of Washington Foundation is the 501(c)(3) entity for the University; Information for UWF, including a list of current board members, is available at <https://www.washington.edu/giving/about-the-foundation/>.
- The annual report to contributors for the University of Washington Foundation is available at <https://www.washington.edu/giving/rtc/>.

CRPE's work is funded entirely through private philanthropic dollars, federal grants, contracts, and fee for service. CRPE administers and manages its funds internally, under the oversight and direction of the University of Washington's Grant and Contract Accounting Office and the University of Washington Bothell's Office of Budget & Planning.

CRPE'S Work on Redesigning State Governance

Despite the fact that states are constitutionally responsible for education, most reform initiatives do not address state policies.

Our work explores the current functions of state government in K-12 education and asks:

- What role could states play in a public school system built for innovation, accountability, and high performance?
- Around what roles and missions could state governments be rebuilt, and what organizational capacities should state governments develop?
- How should these efforts be funded and governed?

Our Key Partnership: Building State Capacity and Productivity Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, this national center helps state education agencies across the country adapt to growing demands for greater productivity while in the midst of tight fiscal realities.

The Center will provide information, tools, and implementation support to departments of education in all 50 states plus 21 other regional and content centers.

CRPE and its BSCP Center partners will support states in their emerging efforts to become more active school performance managers.

CRPE partners with Edvance Research, Inc., the Academic Development Institute (ADI), and the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University on the Building State Capacity and Productivity Center (BSCP Center). This team of partners brings nationally recognized experience in research and technical assistance.

Recent CRPE Publications:

These and more available via <http://www.crpe.org/publications/29>

The SEA of the Future: Building the Productivity Infrastructure, 2014
(Gross, Jochim, Hill, Miller, Roza)

Governing Schools for Productivity, 2014 (Hill)

The Capacity Challenge: What it Takes for States to Support School Improvement, 2014 (Murphy, Jochim)

The SEA of the Future: Leveraging Performance Management to Promote School Improvement, 2013. Gross, Jochim, Hill, Murphy, Redding

Modernizing the State Education Agency 2012 (Murphy and Rainey)