

Wyoming Department of Education

Agency Information:

Director:

Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Contact Person:

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Website:

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Other Locations:

Riverton, Casper, Sheridan, Rawlins and Powell

Statutory References:

Wyoming Constitution and W.S. 21-2-201 and 21-2-202

Basic Information:

Number of Employees:

129

Clients Served:

Wyoming citizens including students, their parents, educators and legislators

Budget Information/Expenditures for FY 16:

The Wyoming Department of Education, within its two agency numbers, has a 2017-2018 Biennial Budget of \$2,112,706,654 of which \$16,836,472 are General Funds.

The expenditures for fiscal year 2017 are \$1,038,401,348.

Primary Functions:

The Wyoming Department of Education has three Groups, each headed by a Chief Officer. Under each group are two divisions. Those are:

POLICY GROUP

Accountability Division
Standards and Assessment Division

Accountability Division

The Accountability Division is comprised of four (4) teams: College/Career Readiness, Standards, Accreditation, and Assessment. In addition to the programs associated with the team names, each team has multiple areas of focus such as private school licensing, Bridges summer school, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC), Native American education, district assessment systems, school safety & security, GEAR UP Wyoming, Teacher of the Year, alternative schools, state & federal accountability, and various scholarship programs, including the Hathaway Scholarship Program.

The College/Career Readiness team is made up of six (6) people, and their primary functions include administration of the Hathaway Scholarship and the 21CCLC grant, professional development for GEAR UP coordinators and Instructional Facilitators, oversight of licensing for private schools (K-12 and college level), and all things related to the federal and state accountability systems.

The Accreditation Team has five (5) members, and they assist with the accreditation of public schools in Wyoming. This team also provides direction for the following programs: Gifted & Talented, rural dropout prevention, and the statewide system of support.

Standards and Assessment Division

The Standards & Assessment Division is comprised of two (2) teams: Standards and Assessment.

The Standards team includes five (5) people, and they are in charge of the state standards for nine (9) content areas, as well as Native American Education. This team also assists with projects related to Career/Technical Education & STEM, oversees the PAEMST Program (Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching), and provides guidance related to item development for our state assessment.

The Assessment Team consists of four (4) members, and they are responsible for all things connected to the statewide assessment system, as well as English Language Learners. This team provides professional development and technical assistance to districts related to the statewide assessment system.

Communications Team

The Communications group includes two teams: Communications and State Board of Education.

The Communications Team oversees internal and external communications for the Wyoming Department of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The team offers support by serving as an in-house public relations and marketing firm. Services include web design, graphic design, video production, print materials, event a/v assistance, weekly communications to school districts, media relations, social media, staff briefing, branding, and strategic planning.

The State Board of Education Team is the primary support and contact for the Wyoming State Board of Education. They are responsible for receiving all inquiries regarding the State Board of Education and providing responses, organizing meetings, maintaining all records for archiving, providing assistance in completion of legislative tasks, and general assistance to board members.

ACADEMIC GROUP

School Support Division
Individual Learning Division

School Support Division

The School Support Division includes five separate teams – the Consolidated Grants/Grant Management System Team (CG/GMS), the Student & Teacher Resources Team (STRT), the Career Technical Education (CTE) Team, the Nutrition Team, and the Pupil Transportation Team. A huge focus of the School Support Division is how best we can serve At-Risk student populations as well as how best the teams truly can provide great customer service and support to all our stakeholders.

Two of the teams – the CG/GMS and the Student & Teacher Resources Teams make up the Federal Programs Team, which is responsible for the program management and oversight of the State's Title IA, Title II, Title III, Title IVA, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education federal grants. STRT is also responsible supporting students and educators through the Court Ordered Placed Students along with state-level oversight of virtual education and the use digital learning in the classroom. This work includes overseeing the Wyoming Education Trust Fund Grant and the Distance Education Grant.

The CTE team is responsible for the program management and oversight of the Carl D. Perkins Federal grant, provides funding and guidance for the State's Career Technical Student Organizations, approves district CTE program offerings and course sequencing for additional vocational education funding, and is responsible for the program management and oversight of the CTE Demonstration Project Grant Program. The CTE team provides technical assistance and professional development to school districts and community colleges to improve the delivery of CTE instruction in the state.

The Nutrition Team has complete oversight and responsibility for the USDA's National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, Summer Food Service Program, USDA Food Distribution Program as well as the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Programs. The team is also responsible for Team Nutrition and Farm to School efforts.

The Pupil Transportation Team provides a point of contact for information requests, technical assistance, support services, training and documentation relating to traffic safety and pupil transportation. This team is also responsible for setting specifications and bid packages for Wyoming school buses and approving the disposition and purchase of school buses in the State.

Individual Learning Division

The Individual Learning Division includes three teams; Continuous Improvement Team/Dispute Resolution, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Team, and the Vision Outreach Team. The entire division works together to provide general supervision responsibilities for all districts and public agencies who receive federal IDEA Part B Section 611 and 619 flow-through funds. The Division serves educational agencies in Wyoming through the provision of quality technical assistance, meaningful professional development, as well as program oversight and monitoring of all local education agencies and the Behavioral Health Division/Early Intervention Program in an effort to ensure compliant and positive outcomes for students with disabilities ages 3-21. The Individual Learning Division also provides technical assistance and guidance to other entities serving children and youth with disabilities, including residential institutions and correctional facilities.

The Individual Learning Division also includes the Outreach Program for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and supports local education agencies, developmental preschools, post-secondary institutions, and other agencies by providing technical assistance to service providers of Wyoming persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. A staffed library is maintained at the Wyoming School for the Deaf to ensure that up-to-date deaf resources are available to stakeholders.

Vision Outreach Services provides services to people of all ages who are blind or have a visual impairment. Consultation, training and direct services assist 48 school districts and over 2500 Wyoming citizens. VOS Consultants provide one-on one adaptive computer instruction, daily living skills, and travel training. VOS Team also facilitates the Montgomery Trust Fund for the Blind, Deaf-Blind Project, Next Step Diagnostic Clinic, and the American Printing House for the Blind Federal Quota Fund/Equipment Program.

OPERATIONS GROUP

Finance & Administration Division

Information Management Division

Finance & Administration Division

The Finance Division, which includes HR, Administration and payroll, has responsibility over all General, Federal, and School Foundation Funds as well as augmenting revenue for the agency. Finance manages the school foundation program, state and federal grants, educational costs for Court Ordered Placements (COPS) and all audit projects, both state and federal. In addition, Finance monitors agency spending, provides school district technical accounting assistance, reviews school district audits and follows up on findings, and provides pre and post auditing for payment vouchers and payroll. Staff of the Finance Division oversee and process the annual distribution of over one billion dollars in state and federal funds annually while maintaining the internal controls essential to safeguard the state's assets and ensuring compliance with state and federal rules and regulations.

The HR section of Finance oversees the recruitment, hiring, job classification descriptions, and performance management for a staff of 129. Establishes and maintains agency HR policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state rules established by HRD, laws related to EEO, affirmative action and labor laws. Staff also provide consultation and advice to agency managers, supervisors and employees on human resource issues and manages the agency Performance Management Initiative (PMI) system.

Information Management Division

In order to meet mandatory federal and state legislative requirements, the Information Management Division (IMD) strives to provide high quality information for educational stakeholders while promoting the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data.

The IMD team is made up of software developers, data security personnel, statisticians, data analysts, a data governance coordinator and a technology purchaser. The IMD team is responsible for the collection of data from school districts, accredited institutions, the University of Wyoming and all seven community colleges. Data is used in aggregated federal reporting, graduation rate calculations, state and federal accountability calculations, administration of the school foundation funding model and in support of various school programs and other state legislative mandates. The IMD team also provides confidential reports to school district administrators and school principals designed to shine a light on areas that need improvement.

Performance Highlights/Major Accomplishments of FY2017:

Accountability Division

- The College/Career Readiness Team has undertaken a pilot program designed to inform a grade-weighting policy for college-level courses taken in high school. In addition, this team successfully implemented a standardized application form for private institutions requesting to be licensed in Wyoming; completed match reports and UW data requirements for GEAR UP Wyoming; and, processed and approved nearly 350 private school applications, allowing Wyoming students more educational choices.
- The Accreditation Team reviewed improvement plans for every public school in Wyoming. This team has also led multiple districts in data review sessions, in which districts examine their performance data and evaluate areas in need of improvement to increase student achievement. This team is currently undertaking initiatives to improve the state's school and district accreditation process.
- The Accountability Division also led work related to state and federal accountability. Specifically, this division facilitated work for the federal ESSA state plan, WAEA, and alternative school accountability

Standards and Assessment Division

- The Standards Team made significant progress toward the adoption of the science content standards. Additionally, they created an online professional learning community portal for all nine (9) content areas to provide a platform for collaboration among educators across the state. This initiative has been so successful, that other teams within the agency have added their programs to the platform.
- The Assessment Team established higher expectations on the PAWS and ACT assessments based on recommendations from Wyoming teachers. These new expectations were aligned to the state's content standards and reviewed by technical experts. Preliminary performance reports from the newly-aligned assessment show improvements across the state in all grade levels and subject areas. The team also released RFPs for a new assessment system that moves us to computer adaptive testing (CAT). The new assessment system will be in place for the 2017-18 school year.

Communications Team

- The Communications team created promotional videos for the Wyoming Teacher of the Year, the three STEM Teachers of the Year, and the SpEd Director of the Year. Each project required travel and interviews. The Department made a big deal of our prize educators and education leaders with these promotional videos, endearing the Department with many individuals in education throughout the state.
 - Teacher of the Year: Ryan Fuhrman of Sheridan, whose video was played at SSS and at Cheyenne Frontier Days
 - STEM Elementary TotY: Adrienne Unertl of Evanston
 - STEM Secondary TotY: Michael Power of Meeteetse
 - STEM Post-Secondary TotY: Jared Bowden of Casper - all three STEM educator videos were played at the STEM conference in Gillette
 - SpEd Director of the Year: Dawn Scarince of Ethete, whose video was played at the WAVE conference
- The team created videos to assist in the public input for standards review for both science and the implementation of the Indian Education for All Act. These videos were shown at all community meetings to quickly align public understanding about the type of input we were searching for.

- The team created several Greetings videos for the Superintendent. These videos were shown at events that the Superintendent wasn't able to personally travel to. This saved significant travel costs, and still effectively gave the Superintendent's message to additional conferences and gatherings, further increasing the Department's reputation around the state.
- The team assisted in branding for the STEM conference, WAVE, S5S, and the Innovations in Learning Conference. This branding helped make clear that these resources are provided by the Department, again reinforcing our reputation statewide. Branding was also developed for the Open Range Wyoming open education resources site, which will be launched in the summer of 2018.
- The team developed a new staff intranet for the Department of Education, which includes the ability to digitize forms to cut down on physical file storage at the department as well as allows teams to have project management tools, messaging, department calendars, and new employee guides in one easily accessible location.

School Support Division

Consolidated Grants/Grant Management Team highlights:

- School and District Data Retreats. The team worked in partnership with the Assessment Team on developing and implementing data analysis retreats to support classroom educators, schools, and districts with strategies to understand their assessment data and how to use that data to drive improvement in student achievement.
- RFP e-Grants System. The federal programs teams previously awarded the contract for the RFP the updated e-Grants System. The updated system has streamlined access to the system, the current applications, fiscal drawdowns, and has given all access to a data query system for historical data regarding federal funds.
- Blue Ribbon Schools. Title I-A staff worked with selected school districts on Blue Ribbon Schools and Distinguished Title I Schools to celebrate their success.
- Title III ELL/Dual Immersion guidance manual. Title III ELL/Dual Immersion section worked together to complete a much improved guidance manual for districts to use.
- Homeless Education Workshop. In Fiscal Year 2016-17 staff planned, coordinated and held the 2016 Homeless Education Workshop. State and district staff along with other stakeholders engaged in significant, difficult, and meaningful conversations about how to support these students.
- Summer Technical Assistance Retreat (STAR) Conference. The School Support Division hosted this annual conference to provide guidance and technical assistance to district staff around the Grants Management System (offering one-on-one tutorials and troubleshooting), guidance around Title Programs under ESSA, motivational sessions to reignite passion for working in the field every day, and tips and tricks for smoother navigation of the application and funding processes around federal grants.
- All Consolidated Grant Title Program Managers participated in the development of the State ESSA Plan. Many were facilitators of the work performed addressing questions around their programs, and many participated in sections outside of their Title Programs to contribute to other topics within the plan. To gather input from across the state, Title Program Managers also participated in online stakeholder groups, in-person community meetings, and virtual town halls.

- The Title IV-A Program Manager worked with national colleagues and organizations to stand up a brand new title program to be included for the 17-18 grant award year. The new grant is to provide Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants to districts. The first awards were made in June.
- The Title I-A Program Manager developed and refined a required Risk-based Monitoring Tool for the Consolidated Grants/Perkins teams. The tool allows the department to determine which districts get monitored from year-to-year based on past compliance and annual progress in a variety of other indicators. This allows the agency to focus monitoring and technical assistance resources on the districts most in need.

Student & Teacher Resource Team highlights:

- Medical Necessity Placed Students. As required by changes in statute, new rules and regulations are being created to ensure students that are placed in institutions through medical necessity have their education costs covered by the WDE.
- 2017 Digital Learning Plan. Immediately after the inception of the Digital Learning Plan the members of WDE began implementing the projects identified as year one priorities. These priorities included: improvement to school connectivity to support digital learning and online assessment, leveraging economies of scale to reduce district expenditures, increase professional development for technology staff and staff focused on developing virtual education courses, creating a system for leveraging free and open resources for use in the classroom, increased collaboration between postsecondary and national partners and agencies, and becoming a Future Ready® state.
- 2017 Senate File 35. Senate File 35 was signed into law on March 9, includes changes to multiple statutes and rules regarding the delivery of virtual education courses in Wyoming. Each of the statutory changes included in the legislation were based on recommendations made by the 2015 Distance Education Task Force (DETF), which was formed to resolve ongoing virtual education program issues. The DETF work was focused on removing some of the barriers in regard to students participating in part-time online classes as well as barriers facing students enrolled full-time in virtual education programs. The implementation of the new code and rules revisions is being accomplished with the formation of the Virtual Education Advisory Committee and collaboration with other agencies, committees and WDE internal partners such as School Finance, Data and the Standards Teams.

Career Technical Education highlights:

- In its annual report released in 2017, the State of Wyoming met all of but two of its negotiated secondary and all but one of its postsecondary state career technical education (CTE) student performance indicators for the 2015-2016 Perkins program year.
- The CTE team continues to collaborate with United States Senator Enzi's staff and United States Representative Cheney's staff on the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Act.
- The CTE team partnered with the University of Wyoming to create an ECHO project specifically focused on Career Development. This project created an online collaborative community of K-16 teachers, counselors, administrators, afterschool providers and others who engage in weekly professional development, case studies and statewide networking via the ZOOM platform.
- Roadmap to STEM Conference. The CTE section, in collaboration with Western Wyoming Community College, offered a conference in August, 2016 in Rock Springs, Wyoming titled "Roadmap to Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM), Inspiring Wonder." Wyoming educators, counselors, education administrators, and curriculum coordinators from both secondary and postsecondary schools were invited to the conference to gain practical information about STEM program implementation

(including activities, hands-on application, resources, funding opportunities, etc.). Presenters, which included STEM educators from Wyoming as well as STEM experts from around the country, were encouraged to provide educators and administrators tools needed to sustain STEM programs long-term. The agency also recognizes Wyoming STEM Educators of the Year at this conference.

- The CTE section worked with its assessment contractor to conduct CTE assessment reviews using CTE stakeholders from around the state in the areas of family and consumer science, business and finance, agriculture, carpentry and woodworking, and manufacturing using Carl D. Perkins leadership funds.
- The Wyoming Department of Education, CTE team had an on-site review in November on its administration of the federal Carl D. Perkins career technical education program by the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) at the United States Department of Education. OCTAE issued one finding in the area of local applications as a result of the monitoring visit which has since been resolved.
- Facilitating Career Development Course. Two of the CTE team consultants were developed and facilitated the National Career Development Association - Facilitating Career Development course, significantly lowering the cost associated with earning the certification for school districts and establishing a statewide network of trained career guidance professionals. There are now over 40 schools with trained professionals across the state, and the strategic plan and focus is to train one staff member in every school.
- Career Technical Education Demonstration Project Grants. The state, through the Wyoming Department of Education, continues to support its career technical education demonstration project grant program with \$500,000 in available grant funding per biennium. The competitive demonstration project grant helps to prepare high school students for postsecondary options, which connect academic and technical curriculum grounded in academic and industry standards and provide innovative strategies for ensuring students access to career choices. 2016-2018 project examples include: 1) Designing, building, decorating and marketing of a Tiny House, 2) Implementation of an on campus Child Care and Development Center, enhanced with post-secondary option for an Early Childhood Education degree, and 3) Implementation of Project Lead the Way to support STEM programming. The biennial CTE demonstration project grants awarded in 2016 will continue until the end of the biennium in June, 2018 when a new round of projects will be awarded.
- The CTE team contracted with Nebraska Educational Service Unit # 7 to create Wyo SIMPL (Service Implementation Matrix Process and Log), a data-driven system to assist in the determination of the professional development and other service needs of Wyoming school districts.
- The CTE team is partnering with the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board to create a streamlined process for certification and endorsement of new CTE teachers in critical-need instructional areas.
- The CTE team is examining its CTE course requirement waiver process to expand eligibility for additional CTE funding of work-based learning courses in state-approved course sequences.
- The CTE team supported the Wyoming Career Readiness Council in its Career Readiness Initiative.
- The Wyoming Department of Education, Methods of Administration (MOA) coordinator provided Technical Assistance (TA) on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance to one college and two school districts that had recently opened new facilities. There were three presentations on "Methods of Administration" done at the 2017 STAR conference. MOA reviews consisted of two onsite visits to two school districts.
- The CTE team, along with WDE software developers, created a streamlined application for the CTE Course approval process. The course approval is required by statute for determination of funding for the 29% additional funding for CTE programming in Wyoming secondary schools. The application allows for transparency and more accountability.

- The CTE team supported Wyoming school counselors, especially in the area of career development programming, through streamlined and regular communication via the WDE School Counselor Liaison. Presentations and resources were provided at the annual WY School Counseling and WY Counseling Association Conferences.
- The CTE team supported professional development for CTE professionals by offering professional development mini-grants (up to \$5,000.00 each) to help offset the costs of conference registration, travel, lodging, and other associated fees. Twelve grants were awarded, and teachers attended conferences ranging from a National Policy Seminar in Washington D.C. to the SXSW programming technology conference in Phoenix, AZ.
- The CTE team awarded over \$30,000 in grants to Wyoming state institutions, including the Wyoming Boys School, Department of Corrections, Cathedral Home for Children and C/V Ranch. These grants are intended to support CTE programming in those institutions. The Boys School, for example, used the funds to create a comprehensive coding and robotics program and is reporting tremendous success and significant academic impact since the program's implementation.

Nutrition Team highlights:

- Nutrition Program Impact. Over seventeen (17) million meals served to children were reimbursed last year in Wyoming resulting in over twenty (20) million dollars going to schools and sponsors through our child nutrition programs at schools, childcare facilities and summer food service sites. These programs help children throughout Wyoming, especially those children that are at risk for receiving needed nutrition to grow and learn.
- The Wyoming Department of Education has the smallest child nutrition staff in the nation that manages all of the Child Nutrition Programs. We conducted over one hundred and fifty (150) in person child nutrition reviews and technical assistance visits during the 2016-2017 year.
- With the help of the communications team at the department we created ten (10) video training modules relating to the USDA requirements of the school nutrition programs. These also provide options for school nutrition personnel for obtaining their required professional development hours.
- We partnered with the Wyoming Department of Health on their CDC grant as it relates to school wellness. Through this partnership we have been able to contract with a retired Food Service Director to provide technical assistance to schools that are on the National School Lunch Program.
- We received a grant for Summer Food Service Marketing through an invitation to apply from the Arby's No Hungry Kid Foundation. We were able to purchase banners and flags to identify Summer Food Service Sites.
- The Nutrition Section increased our outreach efforts to increase the number of summer feeding sites. We partnered with VISTA this summer to have volunteers at many sites around the state to help with serving food and also doing physical activity with the kids that came to eat. Wyoming is ranked 13th nationally for the percentage of children that we are reaching that rely on meals during the school year.
- Within the USDA Food Distribution Program, Wyoming is looked about nationally as a leader in managing the school's entitlement that they receive based on their claims for reimbursement. We continue to mentor other states and have provided training for the national USDA staff.
- Wyoming Farm to School programs continues to grow with many fantastic success stories. Wyoming is home to six (6) of the twelve (12) "Charlie Carts" in the nation. These mobile kitchens allow classrooms to teach the core subjects through cooking. The USDA Farm to School grant has allowed us to conduct workshops around the state to connect schools to local producers. This continues to help students learn where their food comes from while getting to try new things.

- Wyoming was one of five (5) states to receive an Exceptional Practices in Technology award which was based on our web-based Compliance Review Modules that we use for all of our nutrition programs. These modules help us manage our required reviews and is very efficient for both the sponsors and the state agency.
- The Wyoming State Legislature passed a local meat bill to assist districts with processing fees.
- The Nutrition Team hosted our first Wellness Summit in April. One day focused on Schools and the other on Childcare's. It was a great opportunity to connect all aspects of child wellness. We were able to bring in some expert presenters and also provide attendees with a variety of quality resources.
- Members of our team serve in the following capacities on a national level. Planning committee for the USDA State Agency Meeting in November, serve on the board of the American Commodity Distribution Association and serve on the National Child and Adult Care Food Program Advisory Board.

Pupil Transportation Team highlights:

- Pupil Transportation manages the smallest budget in the Department yet still has some of the greatest impacts. Education begins with transportation! Our staff of one has been in every district in the State. He makes this a point of emphasis for each new biennium budget. Knowing the differences in location, site size, fleet size and being on the ground where the work is done is vitally important to the overall success of pupil transportation in Wyoming.
- Tracked all district mileages, through the 620 data collection: 20,051,337 total miles statewide for the 15-16 school year, in an approved fleet of 1834 buses. This twenty-year snapshot is provided annually to Districts and Legislators in a Transportation Facts Overview presentation.
- We collaborated with the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security on a USDoE Emergency Operations Management Grant (\$250,000). This grant provides training and technical assistance in preparing and executing emergency operations plans and exercises at each district in the State. This grant ended Feb 1, 2017.
- Named the Steering Committee Chairman of the 2020 National Congress on School Transportation (NCST). This event occurs every 5 years and sets the national standards for school buses throughout the United States. This is a high-level, nationally recognized position. Meetings occur three times per year, at various locations.
- Instrumental in building specifications for alternative fuel buses in Wyoming. We now operate both propane (Sheridan CSD #2) and compressed natural gas (Sublette CSD #1) buses in the State.
- Collaborated with our Communications Division in running another successful PSA campaign, Stop Means Stop. We combined funding from WYDOT's Highway Safety Office, Wyoming Operation Life Saver and the WDE. The efforts reached over 1.7 million potential viewers and listeners across the State. Our transportation director was also named Chairman of the Board for Wyoming Operation Life Saver.
- Monitored and approved renewals, or new requests, for 56 Driver's Education programs throughout the State. These include public high schools, community education programs, BOCES, private driving schools, home-based and parent-based programs, giving attendees vital driving skills they will use for the rest of their lives.
- The subject-matter expert on all things yellow school bus in the State of Wyoming. Represents the Department on 10 boards, committees and associations throughout the State and Nationally.

Individual Learning Division

- Wyoming continues to be one of 25 States that are in “Meets Requirements”. This determination supports all of the hard work and dedication of the local education agencies working toward improving and supporting students with disabilities.
- Individual Learning continues to implement the framework for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support across the state. This important work continues to support students across the intervention continuum.
- Week of Academic Vision and Excellence (WAVE) continues to grow as a leading conference for special educators and administrators. WAVE 2017 will host over 300 participants.
- Project ECHO is a collaboration between the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming Department of Education. Individual Learning offers five networks which encompasses communities of practice led by experienced teams using videoconferencing virtual sessions with stakeholders across the state. These virtual learning communities provide educators, service providers, case managers, administrators, families, and other access to expert advice from professional throughout the state and country, building capacity in home communities to implement best practices and improve outcomes.

Finance and Administration Division

- During fiscal year 2017, the School Foundation team was actively engaged in the ongoing Funding Model Recalibration efforts of the Wyoming legislature. The team attended legislative meetings, provided school finance data and reporting, testified before legislative committees, and consulted with various education stakeholders. The team also conducted a thorough examination of the Continued Review of Education Resources in Wyoming Report (CRERW) and refined the comparative analysis between model generated resources and district usage patterns. This work included the development of a district summary report containing data from each of the major components of the CRERW report. The school foundation team also completed cross training of various functions and responsibilities to ensure uninterrupted customer service to all education stakeholders.
- Also in fiscal year 2017, the WDE Finance team assisted the Finance Director and agency management with preparation of the 17/18 supplemental budget request. In accordance with the Governor’s 8% general fund reduction plan, the supplemental budget included a thorough analysis of all agency operations to identify areas where efficiencies would be realized through consolidation of job duties or funding reductions in WDE programs. In addition, the Finance team continued a comprehensive review of internal activities and functions to identify opportunities for increasing efficiencies, capacity, and skills of the section staff. Cross training, professional development, and mentoring were completed over the course of the year.
- During this period, the WDE Contracts and Accounting team focused on improving internal processes, procedures, and compliance. This work included an ongoing review and revision of the WDE Internal Controls document and multiple programs and functions of within their section. This team completed cross training activities, mentoring, and development of a contract and payment tracking database. The team participated in the work of a WDE committee assigned with reviewing and revising Wyoming Chapter 14 Rules and Regulations governing the WDE Court Ordered Placement Program (COPS). The Contracts and Accounting team also reviewed and updated the billing forms and procedures of the COPS program to facilitate a streamlined billing process for Wyoming residential treatment facilities, psychiatric residential treatment facilities, and board of cooperative educational services facilities.

Information Management Division

- The Information Management Division (IMD) successfully migrated the Oracle Database to a much more manageable Microsoft SQL Server based platform. This project saved the state money by decreasing maintenance, support, and licensing cost associated with Oracle.
- The IMD continues to identify and eliminate, where possible, the collection of personally identifiable information. The student discipline collection or WDE636 was successfully adapted from a student level collection to an aggregate. Members of the data team worked with district personnel and student information system vendors to ensure a smooth transition.
- In compliance with new legislation, W.S. 21-2-202 (a)(xxxvii) (A-E), the Wyoming Department of Education in consultation with the Department of Enterprise Technology Services, the Department of Audit and school districts established guidelines for school districts for the collection, access, privacy, security and use of student data by school districts.
- The IMD released an RFP for a new directory manager and unique identification system. The previous products introduced ten years ago have reached the end of their software lifecycle. Implementing a new product will allow the department to manage the increase in user accounts necessitated by the new State Learning Management System. A migration to Sharepoint 2010 performed by IMD Developers extended the end of life for Fusion and the current directory manager by another year until the IMD is able to replace them.
- The Information Management Division implemented several security controls to protect confidential student data and all WDE Systems. These controls include Carbon Black Protection that acts as a whitelisting application, Splunk that collects all security logs from all WDE systems into a central location, Nessus that scans all WDE systems for security vulnerabilities, Carbon Black Response that gives the department an insight in to all known security vulnerabilities, Imperva which monitors all WDE databases for security breaches, and Secunia that patches all third party applications.
- IMD software developers enhanced the WyCTE application, which facilitates goal setting and accountability for district Career and Technical Education programs receiving Perkins funding, to include data collected in prior years thereby further reducing the data burden placed on the reporting districts. They also automated a process by which WDE staff can oversee a course approval process for districts receiving state funds for their Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. The developers continue to enhance their collection portal called Data Collection Suite (DCS). DCS has allowed the department to safely collect data from school districts while performing validations that require district data to be entered in proper format prior to submission. Enhancements entail a better user experience, including accessibility by mobile devices.