State of Wyoming
Department of Education and
Task Force on Assessment and Accountability

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES

Introduction and Purpose

- On October 26-27, 2004, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) and the Wyoming Task Force on Assessment and Accountability (Task Force) met to discuss and develop recommendations for rewards and consequences as part of Wyoming's single statewide accountability system, which is designed to improve student achievement in Wyoming's public schools.

- Pursuant to Wyoming state law (HB126), the purpose of this document is to summarize the recommendations of the WDE and the Task Force related to rewards and consequences, based on discussions of the Task Force and WDE (including the October 2003 Task Force report), input from school district representatives, and consideration of the likely costs of such rewards and consequences.

Background

- The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires that all states establish a single statewide accountability system (including adequate yearly progress (AYP) determinations for every public school and district in the state), based primarily on state assessments (in reading and math), with rewards and sanctions (including specific, escalating consequences for Title I schools and districts that do not meet AYP for two or more consecutive years).

- Wyoming state law (HB126) requires that the State Board, through the State Superintendent and in consultation with school districts, establish a single statewide accountability system. To date, Wyoming has defined AYP, had its AYP Workbook approved by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), and made AYP decisions for all public schools and districts, as required by federal law. Furthermore, Wyoming has a transitional plan in place for rewards and consequences, which was established by WDE and the Task Force as required under state law (HB 126).

General Points

- The purpose of Wyoming's single statewide accountability system is to help improve student achievement in Wyoming's public schools. To achieve this goal, each element of Wyoming's accountability system must be valid and reliable, in the sense that (1) meaningful indicators of student performance (state assessments), are used to make (2) accurate and meaningful accountability determinations (AYP decisions), which result in

(3) appropriate educational interventions (rewards and consequences), which in turn lead to (4) improved student achievement.

- As currently designed and defined in federal law, it is important to note that AYP has some strengths (such as indicating whether each school and subgroup within the school is meeting the statewide target regarding the percentage of students proficient in reading and math) and some limitations (such as not directly measuring whether each student in a school is showing growth from one grade to the next in terms of improved achievement in reading and math). Therefore, AYP is perhaps best used as a primary indicator of school performance, whereby failure to meet AYP indicates an issue of concern that requires further analysis and attention.

- As such, rewards and consequences that are based on AYP determinations should also be designed to require certain escalating levels of attention and action, but should provide local flexibility and require further analysis in determining the precise intervention that is necessary and appropriate in each case.

- Over time, it is important that each element of Wyoming's single statewide accountability system be evaluated and evolve to ensure the most valid and reliable accountability system that can best improve student achievement in Wyoming (consistent with federal law).

Recommendations

- Consistent with federal and state law, Wyoming should have a single statewide accountability system with rewards and consequences that apply to all public schools and districts (with some appropriate distinctions between Title I and non-Title I schools), with the primary goal of reward and consequences being to provide appropriate educational interventions that can help improve student achievement.

- Rewards should include recognition, monetary awards, and increased local flexibility (with rewards based on meeting AYP as well as further review to determine appropriate monetary awards).

- Consequences should include a menu approach, providing options to local school districts but requiring escalating interventions over time (based on not meeting AYP for two or more consecutive years as well as further review to determine the most appropriate, specific interventions).

- The following chart outlines the recommended system of rewards and consequences, with **bold** text indicating those consequences that are required under federal law (NCLB) for Title I schools and districts (and it is important to note that in Wyoming all school districts are Title I districts).

- In considering these rewards and consequences, it is important to note that many, if not all, of these actions can be taken by districts at any point (consistent with state law), and

they are consistent with the kinds of interventions that districts would be expected to take as appropriate to improve student achievement. Further, Wyoming maintains its state accreditation process through NCA, which regularly reviews school performance with potential consequences and which is linked to the system of rewards and consequences below in several ways. Finally, it is important to note that Wyoming currently has no schools or districts beyond the first year of Improvement in the chart below, including only 15 schools and one district in Improvement year one (which means has not met AYP Year 2). All other consequences are potentially relevant only in future years.

Summary Recommendations re Rewards and Consequences

AYP RESULTS	SCHOOLS	DISTRICTS
Meet AYP (Rewards)	▪ *Notify schools and provide option for further recognition from WDE* ▪ *Identify and highlight promising practices, including at NCA annual school improvement conferences* ▪ *Encourage schools to seek awards from WDE (through districts) under Wyoming's Innovative Trust Fund (to support innovative education initiatives that can improve student achievement)* ▪ *Use federal funds for rewards (reserved by WDE for Title I schools per NCLB) and supplemental state funds to have WDE administer Continuous Improvement grants to schools that seek awards (through districts) to support or expand promising practices to improve student achievement* ▪ *Consider providing additional flexibility (consistent with state and federal law) through WDE and/or the State Board, such as flexibility in expenditure of funds*	▪ *Notify districts and provide option of further recognition from WDE*
Do Not Meet AYP Year 1	▪ Expect schools (and districts) to examine why they did not meet AYP and address those issues as part of NCA review and school improvement plan ▪ Provide targeted technical assistance from the state at the option of the district	▪ Expect districts to examine why they did not meet AYP ▪ Provide targeted technical assistance from the state at the option of the district
Do Not Meet AYP Year 2 (Improvement)	▪ Revise **school improvement plan** as part of NCA review, with broad-based involvement of	▪ Develop **district improvement plan**, with broad-based involvement of parents and state

	parents and district approval of the plan ▪ Provide targeted **technical assistance** from the state and district (including assistance from WDE and potential identification and use by WDE of a teacher corps that can be used to recognize accomplished teachers and provide short-term, targeted technical assistance to high-need schools) ▪ **For Title I schools, target 10% of Title I funds to professional development** (with non-Title I schools encouraged to focus on professional development) ▪ **For Title I schools, offer public school choice within the district** (per NCLB requirements) (with the option for districts to offer public school choice for non-Title I schools, with appropriate limitations determined by the district)	approval of the plan ▪ Provide targeted **technical assistance** from the state
Do Not Meet AYP Year 3 (Improvement)	The above consequences, plus target additional educational assistance to students most at-risk of not achieving proficiency goals, as follows: ▪ **For Title I schools, offer supplemental educational services** (per NCLB requirement) ▪ For Title I and/or non-Title I schools, provide additional tutoring and support services for students (by developing and leveraging current state funds for summer school and related remediation efforts)	Continue above consequences
Do Not Meet AYP Year 4 (Corrective Action)	The above consequences, plus take one or more **corrective action** (required under NCLB for Title I schools), as follows: ▪ For Title I and non-Title I schools, the district must take appropriate educational action from a menu of options (that vary in nature and degree of intervention), acting consistent with state law. Corrective action includes at least one of the following: place an	The above consequences, plus take one ore more **corrective action with regard to Title I districts** (as required under NCLB), as follows: ▪ For Title I districts, NCLB requires that the state take one or more corrective action, acting consistent with state law. It is important to note that these corrective actions may not afford the full range of flexibility necessary, and further discussions with USDE are

	expert in the school; extend learning time; institute a new curriculum; decrease school management authority; restructure the school's internal organization; replace appropriate staff. (Corrective action can include reviewing, revising, and/or expanding prior interventions, consistent with the above menu.)	appropriate in this regard. Under NCLB, corrective action for districts includes at least one of the following: institute a new curriculum; defer funds; replace appropriate staff; institute receivership; institute state takeover; abolish the district.
Do Not Meet AYP Year 5	The above consequences, plus: ▪ **For Title I schools, plan for restructuring** (as defined below). (Title I and non-Title I schools must review their corrective actions, as appropriate)	Continue above consequences
Do Not Meet AYP Year 6 (Restructuring, for Title I schools only)	The above consequences, plus: ▪ **For Title I schools, institute restructuring plan**. This plan must include a fundamental reform at a systemic, governance level that is taken by the district to improve student achievement. Specific examples established in NCLB include bringing in an outside entity to manage the school or converting to a charter school (acting consistent with state law). Further guidance on restructuring will be developed over time. (Non-Title I schools must review, revise, and/or expand corrective actions as appropriate.)	Continue above consequences

- In developing and implementing this Wyoming system of rewards and consequences, it is important to note that many of these educational interventions should be cost-neutral, because (1) they are consistent with the types of educational interventions that districts would be expected to take in any case (such as development and revision of school improvement plans through NCA review), (2) the amount that must be spent is capped at a percentage of Title I funds received by the district (such with regard to public school choice and supplemental educational services), and (3) some direct federal funds are provided (such as the requirement that the WDE reserve 4% of Title I funds for school improvement for Title I schools and districts).

- However, it is also important to consider a few, specific areas where continuing and/or expanding state funding may be necessary to ensure effective rewards and consequences that can help improve student achievement, including:

- *Funds for rewards for continuous improvement*: NCLB permits WDE to reserve a small amount of federal funds for rewards to Title I schools or districts that make AYP, but Wyoming should consider supplementing those funds with state funds that can be used for competitive grant awards to Title I and non-Title I schools that make AYP and demonstrate worthwhile ventures that can improve student achievement..

- *Funds for provision of state technical assistance*: NCLB requires the provision of technical assistance in various forms, and the WDE's technical assistance efforts are crucial to achieving the goals of the rewards and consequences system described above (particularly for schools in Improvement or Corrective Action). But WDE currently has limited capacity to provide such technical assistance. Wyoming should consider providing additional funds to support WDE technical assistance efforts. This could include the potential development of a teacher corps by WDE that can be used to recognize accomplished teachers and provide short-term, targeted technical assistance to other high-need schools (with some funds provided to both the teachers providing services (to encourage and award participation) and to the sending schools (to cover costs)). This could also include training additional state department personnel to provide expert technical assistance based on school needs as diagnosed through a study of school data.

- *Funds to support extra tutoring and related services for individual student remediation*: NCLB requires supplemental educational services for qualifying students in Title I schools that do not meet AYP for three or more consecutive years. This notion of additional tutoring and support services for the most at-risk students is particularly important for all schools. Wyoming should consider maintaining, revising, and/or expanding current programs, including the state summer school program, to provide a funding source to support such individual student remediation efforts, including supplemental educational services (for Title I schools) and similar tutoring and support services (for Title I and/or non-Title I schools).