

HOUSE BILL NO. HB0077

School district reorganization.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Zwonitzer, Brown, Gray,
MacGuire, Stith and Wilson and Senator(s)
Furphy and Hutchings

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to school district reorganization;
2 providing for the reorganization of school districts as
3 specified; establishing a planning committee; imposing a
4 consolidation planning process; providing for consolidation
5 in the absence of a plan by the planning committee;
6 imposing duties on the state board of education; providing
7 reporting requirements; and providing for an effective
8 date.

9

10 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

11

12 **Section 1.** W.S. 21-6-301 through 21-6-303 are created
13 to read:

14

15

ARTICLE 3

1 SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

2

3 **21-6-301. Definitions.**

4

5 (a) As used in this article:

6

7 (i) "Plan of consolidation" means a plan which
8 would place all the territory of the state into one (1) of
9 not more than twenty-four (24) unified school districts
10 within the state;

11

12 (ii) "Planning committee" means the committee of
13 school district representatives as provided in W.S.
14 21-6-302;

15

16 (iii) "State board" or "board" means the state
17 board of education;

18

19 (iv) "State committee" means the joint
20 corporations, elections and political subdivisions interim
21 committee or another standing committee that is designated
22 by the legislature to conduct redistricting efforts during

1 the 2021 interim if that is not the joint corporations,
2 elections and political subdivisions interim committee;

3

4 (v) "Unified school district" means a district
5 supporting at least kindergarten or grade one (1) through
6 grade twelve (12) under the control of one (1) board of
7 trustees and administered by one (1) superintendent of
8 schools, that offers an adequate and integrated educational
9 program.

10

11 **21-6-302. Planning committee; membership; duties.**

12

13 (a) Not later than July 1, 2021, the board of
14 trustees of each school district within the state shall
15 elect one (1) registered voter from the school district to
16 be a member of the planning committee to recommend the
17 consolidation of the school districts within the state into
18 not more than twenty-four (24) unified school districts
19 under this article. No member appointed under this
20 subsection shall be a current or former employee of the
21 school district.

22

1 (b) The chairman of the state board or his designee
2 shall be an ex officio member of the planning committee
3 without voting privileges and shall act as chairman of the
4 committee for purposes of organizing the planning committee
5 until the planning committee selects a chairman and vice
6 chairman at its first meeting.

7

8 (c) The planning committee shall:

9

10 (i) Prepare and submit to the state committee
11 and the state board before September 1, 2022, a report on
12 consolidation and a plan of reorganization conforming to
13 the criteria and procedures specified in this article for
14 the reorganization of school districts within the state, to
15 be effective July 1, 2023. The plan shall place all
16 territory of the state into one (1) of not more than
17 twenty-four (24) school districts across the state. The
18 plan may provide that school district boundaries may cross
19 county boundaries and may provide for less than one (1)
20 district per county to the extent deemed beneficial by the
21 planning committee;

22

1 (ii) Hold at least one (1) public hearing in
2 each county where citizens of the county may provide public
3 comment on the proposal for the reorganization plan. Notice
4 of the public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of
5 general circulation in the county at least once each week
6 for the two (2) week period immediately preceding the time
7 set for the hearing. Notwithstanding any law to the
8 contrary, the hearing shall be conducted by means allowing
9 members of the planning committee and members of the public
10 to participate through electronic means. The notice shall
11 contain a statement of how to participate in the hearing
12 and a brief summary of its purpose. At least ten (10) days
13 and not more than fourteen (14) days before the hearing, a
14 copy of the notice shall be sent to each school district
15 trustee in the state;

16

17 (iii) Include in the report to the state
18 committee its determination of the feasibility of
19 consolidation, necessary incentives to encourage voluntary
20 consolidation and obstacles to consolidation;

21

22 (iv) The report shall include the proposed
23 consolidation plan and the following:

1

2 (A) Recommendations on the location of
3 schools, the utilization of existing buildings, allocation
4 of existing indebtedness, the employment of existing
5 personnel including consideration of continuing contract
6 teachers under the Wyoming Teacher Employment Law and
7 consideration of impacts to student transportation under
8 the proposed plan for the organization of the reorganized
9 districts, together with the time period under which
10 recommendations are to be accomplished;

11

12 (B) A summary of the reasons for the plan;

13

14 (C) A record of all hearings;

15

16 (D) A summary of any anticipated
17 modifications to educational programs;

18

19 (E) The number of trustees and the manner
20 of trustee selection for unified school districts under
21 this article;

22

1 (F) The proposed time schedule for school
2 district reorganization under the plan;

3

4 (G) The extent to which consolidation may
5 result in a reduction in total federal revenues available
6 to the reorganized district as compared with that available
7 to all existing districts within the state. The report
8 shall include recommendations to minimize the impact of
9 reorganization on the availability of federal revenue;

10

11 (H) Any modifications to state statute
12 necessary to implement the plan;

13

14 (J) Other reports, records and materials as
15 the planning committee, the state board or the state
16 committee deems necessary.

17

18 **21-6-303. Powers and duties of the state board of**
19 **education.**

20

21 (a) The state board shall aid the planning committee
22 in carrying out this article by furnishing department of
23 education staff assistance as authorized by the state

1 superintendent. The board shall provide plans of procedure,
2 standards, data, maps and other information and services to
3 the planning committee as necessary to carry out the
4 purposes of this article.

5

6 (b) The state board may appoint a representative to
7 the planning committee from among the registered voters
8 within the district for any school district which has not
9 appointed a member as required under W.S. 21-6-302(a) by
10 September 1, 2021.

11

12 (c) If the planning committee has not submitted a
13 plan of consolidation under W.S. 21-6-302 by October 1,
14 2022, the board shall submit a plan to the state committee
15 for the reorganization of the school districts into one (1)
16 district per county plus one (1) district for the Wind
17 River Indian Reservation. The plan shall conform to the
18 criteria and procedures specified under W.S. 21-6-302 and
19 shall provide for implementation on July 1, 2023.

20

21 (d) Within sixty (60) days of the date of receipt of
22 a plan under W.S. 21-6-302, the state board shall review
23 the submitted plan for reorganization and approve or reject

1 the submitted plan with reasons for rejection and
2 recommendations for making the plan acceptable. The plan
3 shall be rejected only if it fails to comply with the
4 provisions of this article. If a plan is rejected, the
5 planning committee may resubmit a modified plan as often as
6 necessary. Upon plan approval under this subsection or upon
7 its own plan developed under subsection (c) of this
8 section, the state board shall:

9

10 (i) Not later than November 1, 2022, provide a
11 copy of the plan to the state committee highlighting any
12 modifications to state statute necessary to implement the
13 plan. The plan under this section may be contingent on the
14 legislature making the necessary modifications;

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16 (ii) Make an order establishing the reorganized
17 school districts according to the approved plan of
18 organization, effective July 1, 2023, provided that the
19 effective date may be contingent on statutory modifications
20 as provided in paragraph (i) of this subsection. The order
21 under this paragraph shall be the final administrative
22 determination and shall be filed with the county clerk of
23 each county prior to July 1, 2023. The final administrative

1 action of the state board shall be appealable from the date
2 of filing with the county clerk.

3

4 **Section 2.** This act is effective immediately upon
5 completion of all acts necessary for a bill to become law
6 as provided by Article 4, Section 8 of the Wyoming
7 Constitution.

8

9

(END)