



Opportunity Through Education

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Memo

TO: Joint Education Committee

FROM: Laurel Ballard, Innovations Officer, WDE
Robin Grandpre, Project and Performance Manager, WDE
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DATE: August 8, 2023

SUBJECT: REVISED - Update on the Teacher Retention and Recruitment Task Force

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) is partnering with the Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) to lead a Teacher Retention and Recruitment Task Force composed of teachers, school districts, and postsecondary institutions to address teacher recruitment and retention. The Wyoming Retention and Recruitment Task Force has created the following recommendations to improve the education workforce:

Professional Development:

- Create a School Leadership Academy.
- Increase the number of opportunities for WY teachers to earn micro-credentials (personalized, competency-based professional learning) as professional development that count for continuing education for recertification from the University of Wyoming and other recognized micro-credential programs.
- Provide access for all teachers and school leaders to earn a micro-credential in behavioral intervention and prevention, and the coursework be aligned with current behavior issues that interfere with learning, that are research-based and job-embedded.

Mental Health:

- Develop a system for screening/identifying children with mental and emotional well-being needs before kindergarten.
- Provide skills for pre-K programs specifically designed to address behavioral and mental and emotional well-being.
- Create a robust and sustainable scholarship program for graduate degree mental health professional candidates to help address the mental health crisis which is impacting all students and staff. Scholarships are to be used for psychologists, counselors, and social workers willing to work in Wyoming public schools for at least five years.

- Provide at least one mental health professional and at least one behavior specialist position (neither providing IEP services) for each elementary school over 250 students and at least one school psychologist and one behavior specialist position (not providing IEP services) for every 250 students in middle and high schools. Ensure a minimum of one full time equivalent school psychologist and behavior specialist position for each district.

Re-envisioning Education:

- Restructure the approach to the Wyoming Accountability Education Act by adding classroom/school level data to the list of accountability indicators in order to get a more accurate representation of the quality of education programs and reduce the emphasis on the end-of-year summative assessments.
- Re-conceptualize education to be more relevant and responsive to the challenges of the 21st Century and driven by the needs of students born in this century.

Recruitment, Retention, and Preservice:

- Compensate certified staff at 85% of comparable professions.
- Provide an ongoing cost of living increase for the salaries of certified staff.
- Expand the University of Wyoming Teacher Education programs to reach rural Wyoming in conjunction with community colleges to provide in-person and virtual instruction and support for place-based individuals interested in becoming teachers.
- Develop and increase collaboration, communication of behavioral standards, and quality field placements for preservice teachers as early as second-semester undergraduate work between the University of Wyoming, community colleges, and school districts with expanded educational degree programs to include behavioral management strategies.