

# SUMMARY *of* PROCEEDINGS



## JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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### COMMITTEE MEETING INFORMATION

November 14, 2024  
Wyoming State Capitol, W113  
200 West 24th Street  
Cheyenne, Wyoming

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Charles Scott, Co-chairman  
Representative David Northrup, Co-chairman  
Senator Bo Biteman  
Senator Evie Brennan  
Senator Chris Rothfuss  
Representative Lane Allred  
Representative Ocean Andrew  
Representative Ryan Berger  
Representative Landon Brown  
Representative Martha Lawley  
Representative Jerry Obermueller  
Representative Karlee Provenza

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Senator Cheri Steinmetz  
Representative Ken Clouston

### LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Tania Hytrek, Operations Administrator  
Matthew Willmarth, Senior School Finance Analyst  
TaLise Hansen, Staff Attorney  
Ashley Phillips, Legislative Editor

### OTHERS PRESENT AT MEETING

Please refer to **Appendix 1-02** to review the Committee Sign-in Sheet for a list of other individuals who attended the meeting.

*The Committee Meeting Summary of Proceedings (meeting minutes) is prepared by the Legislative Service Office (LSO) and is the official record of the proceedings of a legislative committee meeting. This document does not represent a transcript of the meeting; it is a digest of the meeting and provides a record of official actions taken by the Committee. All meeting materials and handouts provided to the Committee by the Legislative Service Office, public officials, lobbyists, and the public are on file at the Legislative Service Office and are part of the official record of the meeting. An index of these materials is provided at the end of this document and these materials are on file at the Legislative Service Office. For more information or to review meeting materials, please contact the Legislative Service Office at (307) 777-7881 or by e-mail at [lso@wyoleg.gov](mailto:lso@wyoleg.gov). The Summary of Proceedings for each legislative committee meeting can be found on the Wyoming Legislature's website at [www.wyoleg.gov](http://www.wyoleg.gov).*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Education Interim Committee (Committee) met to complete the Committee's interim work. The Committee considered draft legislation relating to Medicaid billing for school-based services, career and technical education (CTE) grants, and the Wyoming imagination library program. The Committee received recommendations from the Wyoming Charter School Authorizing Board and the Mental Health and Vulnerable Adults Task Force and received information regarding the University of Wyoming (UW) Lab School.

The Committee voted to sponsor 25LSO-0229, Wyoming imagination library program, as amended, and 25LSO-0365, Career technical education equipment grants amendments, for the 2025 General Session.

This meeting can be viewed on the Legislature's YouTube channel within the **Committee's playlist**.

## CALL TO ORDER

Co-chairman Northrup called the meeting to order at 8:32 AM. The following sections summarize the Committee proceedings by topic. Please refer to **Appendix 1-01** to review the Committee Meeting Agenda.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the June 12-13, 2024; August 28-29, 2024; and September 26, 2024 Committee meetings were approved.

## 25LSO-0095, MEDICAID AND CHILD HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM BILLING.

Tania Hytrek, Operations Administrator, Legislative Service Office (LSO), reviewed 25LSO-0095, Medicaid and child health insurance program billing, and the amendments directed at the Committee's August meeting to include billing for Child Health Insurance Program expenses, change the effective date to July 1, 2026, and add a position in the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to assist school districts with billing Medicaid. See **Appendix 2-01**. Matthew Willmarth, Senior School Finance Analyst, LSO, answered the Committee's questions regarding funding and reimbursement.

### ***Estimated Fiscal Impact***

Trent Carroll, Chief Operations Officer, WDE, stated the WDE believes the funding and the position in the bill draft should be transferred to the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH), allowing the WDH to contract with a provider to assist school districts with billing Medicaid. Mr. Carroll explained there is a vendor that already works with school districts and early childhood providers for individual education program documentation within the WDH.

Sara Rogers, Provider/Benefit Operations Administrator, Division of Healthcare Financing; Justin Browning, School-Based Services Program Manager; and Jesse Springer, Deputy Division Administrator for Healthcare Financing, WDH, responded to members' inquiries from the August Committee meeting. See **Appendix 2-02**. Ms. Rogers explained nine school districts would be required to participate, covering approximately 61 percent of students and described the services covered by the Medicaid school-based services program.

Mr. Browning estimated Wyoming would receive \$2.8 million in reimbursements annually and the administrative costs would be approximately \$500,000 per year for \$4.6 million in savings each biennium. He stated the administrative costs are based on school district employees billing on behalf of 60 percent of eligible students. Mr. Springer explained school districts would be expected to do the same record keeping they currently do for reimbursement from the state for special education expenditures and Mr. Browning

stated the WDH is working to simplify the process. Mr. Browning and Mr. Springer explained where the cost savings would be recognized and how much of the estimated costs would be matched by the federal government.

**Public Comment**

Boyd Brown, Executive Director, Wyoming Association of School Administrators, and Alicyn Roberson, teacher, Natrona County School District Number One, expressed concern regarding the additional administrative burden on teachers. Dr. Brown expressed appreciation for WDH simplifying the Medicaid billing process for school districts.

**Committee Directives**

Co-chairman Scott moved, seconded by Co-chairman Northrup, that the Committee sponsor 25LSO-0095, Medicaid and child health insurance program billing. The motion failed unanimously by a roll call vote with Senator Steinmetz and Representative Clouston excused.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MENTAL HEALTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS TASK FORCE (MHVATF)**

Representative Lloyd Larsen, Co-Chairman, MHVATF, explained the MHVATF worked with the WDE to develop a recommendation for the Committee to sponsor legislation providing funding for all school districts to implement Project Advance Wellness and Resiliency in Education (AWARE). Co-Chairman Larsen informed the Committee there is not enough data to support implementing the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) program at a statewide level, but some school districts are using BARR independently.

Anna Johnson, Staff Attorney, LSO, explained 25LSO-0363, K-12 mental health program-2 reappropriates up to \$5.8 million from 2024 Wyoming Session Laws, Chapter 118, Section 331(a) and appropriates \$5.8 million from the public school foundation program account to the WDE for school district grants for the purpose of implementing Project AWARE. See **Appendix 9-01**.

Dustin Brown, Court Ordered or Medically Necessary Placement of Students Program Manager, WDE, provided background information on Project AWARE, explaining it has been piloted in school districts with desirable results. Mr. Brown stated Project AWARE uses a referral model and parents are involved throughout the process. He explained the funding in the bill draft is enough for each school district to hire a community project manager who would connect community providers with school districts and supplement existing systems.

**Committee Directives**

Representative Berger moved, seconded by Representative Provenza, that the Committee sponsor 25LSO-0363, K-12 mental health program-2. The motion failed by roll call vote with Co-chairman Scott; Senators Biteman and Brennan; and Representatives Andrew, Lawley, and Obermueller voting no and Senator Steinmetz and Representative Clouston excused.

**25LSO-0229, WYOMING IMAGINATION LIBRARY PROGRAM.**

TaLise Hansen, Staff Attorney, LSO, presented 25LSO-0229, Wyoming imagination library program, which would create the Wyoming Imagination Library Program to provide one age-appropriate book monthly to children ages birth to five at no cost to the children's families. The program would be funded 50 percent from each county-based affiliate program and if funding is available, 50 percent from the State. See **Appendix 5-01**.

Representative Brown moved, seconded by Co-chairman Scott, to waive the legislative privilege under W.S. 28-8-116 and release an LSO memo with privileged and confidential legal advice related to 25LSO-0229, Wyoming imagination library program. See **Appendix 5-02**. The motion passed by a voice vote.

**Public Comment**

Representative Mike Yin, House District 16, and Norrine Briggs, Executive Director of the Dollywood Foundation, answered the Committee's questions regarding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program, including the costs of the program, the books provided, the contracting process, and some examples of local program affiliates.

Kara Hill, parent; John Corbin, 2024 Teacher of the Year; Gay Wilson, retired teacher; Ruth Troyenek; and Ms. Roberson expressed support for the bill draft.

**Committee Directives**

Senator Rothfuss moved, seconded by Representative Berger, that the Committee sponsor 25LSO-0229, Wyoming imagination library program, as amended. The motion passed by roll call vote with Senators Biteman and Brennan and Representatives Andrew and Obermueller voting no and Senator Steinmetz and Representative Clouston excused.

The Committee adopted the following amendment:

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Page 6-line7 | Delete "XXX (\$XX.00)" and insert "three hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$320,000.00)". |
|--------------|---|

**25LSO-0098, CONSOLIDATION OF CTE GRANTS.**

Representative Lawley explained she and Co-chairman Northrup met with the WDE and representatives from the Wyoming Association for Career and Technical Education (WACTE) about the policy considerations in 25LSO-0098, Consolidation of CTE grants. See **Appendix 4-01**. She stated they concluded the two grant programs should remain separate and recommended the Committee not consider 25LSO-0098, Consolidation of CTE grants. The Committee took no action on the bill draft.

Co-chairman Northrup described 25LSO-0365, Career technical education equipment grants amendments, stating the bill draft would increase the maximum grant award for CTE equipment grants from \$50,000 to \$75,000 and change the CTE expenditure requirements from the previous five years to the previous two years. See **Appendix 4-02**. He requested the Committee consider sponsoring the bill draft.

**Public Comment**

Wanda Maloney, Chief Policy Officer, and Jennifer LaHiff, College and Career Readiness Manager, WDE, expressed the Superintendent's support for CTE.

Jessie Dafoe, Public Affairs, and Rob Hill, Public Policy Chairman, WACTE, expressed support for the 25LSO-0365, Career technical education equipment grants amendments, highlighting the importance of CTE.

**Committee Directives**

Co-chairman Scott moved to consider 25LSO-0365, Career technical education equipment grants amendments, as a Committee bill draft. Senator Rothfuss seconded the motion, and it passed by a voice vote.

Co-Chairman Scott then moved, seconded by Representative Lawley, that the Committee sponsor 25LSO-0365, Career technical education equipment grants amendments. The motion passed by a roll call vote with Senator Steinmetz and Representative Clouston excused.

### **WYOMING CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZING BOARD (WCSAB)**

Janine Bay-Teske, Chairman, WCSAB, provided an update from the WCSAB. Ms. Bay-Teske introduced John Wahler as WCSAB's new executive director and stated the WCSAB approved a charter school in Alpine as the fourth state-authorized charter school. She outlined recommendations from the WCSAB, including establishing and supporting the WCSAB's autonomy, supporting legislation that would allow state authorized charter schools to access block grant funding directly, and establishing a reserve account for charter schools to utilize during startup. See **Appendix 7-02**.

Dicky Shanor, Chief of Staff, WDE, reviewed the fiscal impact of state authorized charter schools in the report submitted by the WDE. See **Appendix 7-01**.

#### **Public Comment**

Christian Winger, Chief Executive Officer, Prairie View Community School, answered the Committee's questions regarding the charter school's operation.

### **UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING LAB SCHOOL**

Dr. John Goldhardt, Superintendent; Beth Bear, Board of Trustees Chair; and Randy Wilkison, Chief of Operations, Albany County School District Number 1 (Albany #1), described Albany #1's position on the UW Lab School. Chairwoman Bear provided a brief history of the UW Lab School and encouraged the Committee to let the UW Lab School be handled at the local level.

Mike Smith, Vice President, Governmental Affairs & Community Engagement; Bill Mai, Vice President for Campus Operations, UW; and Kermit Brown, Chairman, UW Board of Trustees, described UW's position on the UW Lab School. Chairman Brown explained the UW Lab School does not currently function as a laboratory for teachers and UW has chosen to instead place student teachers in schools throughout the state. See **Appendix 10-02**.

The Committee discussed the importance of innovation in teaching and having a laboratory school in Wyoming.

#### **Public Comment**

Sylvia Fonfara, Ashley Anderson, Jennifer Mellizo, Tammy Heise, Brook Fergon, John Gordon, Mary McLaughlin, Anne Brande, Jess Willford, Rick Simino, and Madeline Robinson provided public comment in support of the UW Lab School. See **Appendix 10-03** and **Appendix 10-04**.

### **MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Co-chairman Northrup adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative David Northrup, Co-chairman

# Committee Meeting Materials Index

| Index Number | Agenda Item  | Document Description  | Document Provider |
|--------------|--|---|-------------------|
| 1-01         |  | Agenda  | LSO               |
| 1-02         |  | Sign-In Sheet   | LSO               |
| 2-01         | 25LSO-0095, Medicaid and child health insurance program billing. | 25LSO-0095 v1.1 Medicaid and child health insurance program billing.    | LSO               |
| 2-02         | 25LSO-0095, Medicaid and child health insurance program billing. | Medicaid School-Based Services Overview                                 | WDH               |
| 4-01         | 25LSO-0098, Consolidation of CTE grants.                         | 25LSO-0098 v1.0 Consolidation of career technical education grants.     | LSO               |
| 4-02         | 25LSO-0098, Consolidation of CTE grants.                         | 25LSO-0365 v0.2 Career technical education equipment grants amendments. | LSO               |
| 5-01         | 25LSO-0229, Wyoming imagination library program.                 | 25LSO-0229 v0.6 Wyoming imagination library program.                    | LSO               |
| 5-02         | 25LSO-0229, Wyoming imagination library program.                 | Legal Memo on 25LSO-0229  | LSO               |
| 7-01         | Wyoming Charter School Authorizing Board (WCSAB)                 | Fiscal Impact of State-Authorized Charter Schools                       | WDE               |
| 7-02         | Wyoming Charter School Authorizing Board (WCSAB)                 | WCSAB Recommendations   | WCSAB             |

| <b>Index Number</b> | <b>Agenda Item</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>                   | <b>Document Provider</b> |
|---------------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| 9-01                | Recommendations from the Mental Health and Vulnerable Adults Task Force (MHVATF) | 25LSO-0363 v0.5 K-12 mental health program-2. | LSO                      |
| 10-01               | University of Wyoming Lab School   | Albany County Delegation Letter               | UW                       |
| 10-02               | University of Wyoming Lab School   | UW Response Letter                            | UW                       |
| 10-03               | University of Wyoming Lab School   | Comment Letter                                | Public Comment           |
| 10-04               | University of Wyoming Lab School   | Lab School Packet                             | Public Comment           |