

SUMMARY of PROCEEDINGS



JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING INFORMATION

May 28-29, 2025

Thyra Thomson State Office Building, Round House Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room 3024
444 W Collins Drive
Casper, Wyoming

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Wendy Schuler, Co-chairman
Representative Ocean Andrew, Co-chairman
Senator Evie Brennan
Senator Jared Olsen
Senator Chris Rothfuss
Senator Charles Scott
Representative Laurie Bratten
Representative McKay Erickson
Representative Joel Guggenmos
Representative Tom Kelly
Representative Martha Lawley
Representative Daniel Singh
Representative Tomi Strock
Representative JD Williams

LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Tania Hytrek, Operations Administrator
Matthew Willmarth, Senior School Finance Analyst
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. The Summary of Proceedings for each legislative committee meeting can be found on the Wyoming Legislature's website at www.wyoleg.gov.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Education Interim Committee (Committee) met to receive educational material regarding the Committee's interim topics including school discipline policies, K-12 teacher recruitment and retention efforts, K-3 literacy, charter schools, and higher education programs that prepare students to enter the workforce.

The Committee requested the following bills drafts for consideration at the August meeting:

- Require school districts to adopt policies authorizing teachers to discipline students as necessary, including removing them from the classroom and sending them to the principal's office, notifying parents of disciplinary actions within the school day, and repealing immunity for corporal punishment;
- Require the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (State Superintendent) to develop model disciplinary policies for school districts;
- Creating a categorical grant for schools to focus on student's strengths and barriers, helping to reduce risks, and provide professional development for teachers;
- A Teachers' Bill of Rights;
- Amend Wyoming's K-3 reading assessment and intervention program to authorize the State Superintendent to require enforcement of improvement plans, require screening through twelfth grade, and add additional personnel to the WDE to implement the requirements of the K-3 reading assessment and intervention program;
- Amend the charter school statutes to require the State Superintendent to review charter school applications for completeness and quality prior to the Wyoming Charter School Authorizing Board's (WCSAB) review;
- Authorize utilization of Hathaway Scholarship funds at private accredited institutions including (career and technical education) CTE institutions;
- Resurrect 21LSO-0064, Hathaway lump sum merit scholarships, from the Wyoming's Tomorrow Task Force; and
- Eliminate the continuous enrollment requirement for Wyoming's Tomorrow Program and the Kickstart Wyoming's Tomorrow Program.

The Committee also directed staff to draft a letter to the Select Committee on School Finance Recalibration expressing the Committee's support to study the resources for behavioral specialists for the general education population and to review the average daily membership (ADM) calculations in the education resource block grant model for charter school funding. Additionally, the Committee requested staff prepare a letter to the Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) expressing the Committee's support for additional funding for the Wyoming Works programmatic grant program.

The meeting can be viewed on the Legislature's YouTube channel within the [Committee's playlist](#).

CALL TO ORDER (WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025)

Chairwoman Schuler called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. The following sections summarize the Committee proceedings by topic. Please refer to [Appendix 1-01](#) to review the Committee Meeting Agenda.

Adoption of Rules

The Committee affirmatively voted by a voice vote to operate under the Joint Interim Committee Sample Rules as adopted by the Wyoming House of Representatives. The Co-chairmen announced absentee voting

by Committee members will be allowed if the member has been present for the majority of the discussion on a bill.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Review Governing Statutes and Case Law

Tania Hytrek, Operations Administrator, Legislative Service Office (LSO), provided an overview of Wyoming Statutes regarding suspension, expulsion, seclusion, and restraint. See [Appendix 2-01](#). Ms. Hytrek explained suspensions and expulsions over 10 days require a hearing under the Wyoming Administrative Procedures Act, while shorter suspensions have less formal processes. She outlined the grounds for expulsion, including willful disobedience and possession of weapons, and stated criminal statutes may also apply. The Committee asked questions about appeals processes, interactions with special education laws, and notification requirements for seclusion and restraint. Ms. Hytrek noted federal laws govern discipline of students receiving educational services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504).

Review State Rules and Federal Guidance

Dicky Shanor, Chief of Staff, and Nathan Tedjeske, Chief Innovations Officer, Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), reviewed the WDE's role and federal guidance regarding school discipline policies. See [Appendix 2-02](#). Mr. Tedjeske explained that local districts have significant authority over discipline, with most schools using behavior matrices to ensure consistency in consequences. He noted there are protections for students with disabilities to avoid disciplining disabilities rather than behaviors. Mr. Tedjeske discussed the role of behavioral specialists, the challenges of cell phone use in classrooms, and the potential for state-level legislation on discipline issues. Mr. Shanor noted federal guidance to states regarding student discipline has varied since 2014.

School District Policies

Brian Farmer, Executive Director, Wyoming School Boards Association, and Boyd Brown, Executive Director, Wyoming Association of School Administrators, referred the Committee to their materials for information on school district policies on seclusion and restraint. See [Appendix 2-03](#).

Mr. Farmer and Dr. Brown emphasized the importance of local flexibility, positive behavioral interventions, and due process. They highlighted the complexity of managing student behavior amid federal laws like IDEA, Section 504, Title IX, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Dr. Brown stated current Wyoming Statutes generally support effective local discipline policies and encouraged continued support for school counselors, behavioral specialists, and teacher training. Mr. Farmer emphasized the need for stakeholder engagement when considering adoption of legislation like a "Teachers' Bill of Rights."

Public Comment

Angela Jerabek, Building Assets Reducing Risks (BARR) Center; Heidi Fiechtner, Amy Rozell, and Tessa Garmen, Moorcroft Secondary School in Crook County School District Number One; Brent Moser, Havelly Bauersachs, Kate Anfinson, and Jamie Miller, Douglas Upper Elementary in Converse County School District Number One; Cody Hartung, New Frontier High School in Lincoln County School District Number One (Lincoln #1); Annie Crank and Bianca Zuniga, Kemmerer Junior/Senior High School in Lincoln #1; and Jonathan Willoughby, Canyon Elementary in Lincoln #1, described the impact the BARR program has had in the respective schools.

K-12 TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Review Governing Statutes

Ms. Hytrek and Matthew Willmarth, Senior School Finance Analyst, LSO, reviewed statutory teacher recruitment and retention efforts, including the Teacher Shortage and Adjunct Professor Loan Repayment programs, National Board Certification incentives for teachers, and adjustments for extra compensation for teachers. See [Appendix 4-01](#). Ms. Hytrek noted the sunset dates for the loan repayment programs and that teachers certified on or after July 1, 2021 are limited to 15 annual payments of \$4,000, for being certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. Mr. Willmarth explained appropriations for and expenditures under the programs. Ms. Hytrek stated the adjustment for teacher extra compensation is intended to entice teachers to unique locations, and Mr. Willmarth added 11 school districts participated in the adjustment for extra compensation during school year 2023-2024.

Retention and Recruitment Task Force and Teacher Apprenticeship Program

Mr. Shanor and Mr. Tedjeske discussed teacher recruitment and retention efforts of the WDE. See [Appendix 4-02](#). Mr. Shanor explained teacher shortages are measured by the number of teachers in a subject area teaching without full licensure and critical shortage areas are those with 5 percent or more teachers without a full license. Mr. Tedjeske outlined actions taken by the WDE as a result of the Retention and Recruitment Task Force, including a principal academy, micro-credentialing, recalculating graduation rates, and implementing Reimagining and Innovating the Delivery of Education recommendations.

Mr. Tedjeske explained three school districts participated in the Teacher Apprenticeship Program and moving forward, the school districts will be responsible for applying to the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) for the necessary grants, with the WDE available for coordination and support.

Teacher Certification

Brendan O'Connor, Executive Director, Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB), described the pathways prospective teachers may take to get licensed in Wyoming. See [Appendix 4-03](#) and [Appendix 4-04](#). Mr. O'Connor explained the role of PTSB, including licensing teachers through traditional, alternative, and special permits. Mr. O'Connor encouraged the Committee to continue supporting the apprenticeship program and further explained micro-credentialing as a competency-based model.

Public Comment

Kim Amen, President, and Tate Mullen, Government Relations Director, Wyoming Education Association (WEA), commented on student behavior, the need for teacher support, and potential impacts of a "Teachers' Bill of Rights."

Kyle Washut, President, Wyoming Catholic College, informed the Committee many of the College's graduates leave Wyoming to teach where there are fewer licensing requirements.

Mark Mathern, Chairman, and Diana Clapp, Coordinator, State Board of Education (SBE), explained the content and performance standards, graduation requirements, and the Profile of a Graduate. Mr. Mathern indicated the SBE is reducing the number of standards in each subject area to lessen burdens on teachers. See [Appendix 4-05](#).

Dan Mayer, Executive Director, Region V BOCES, and Clark Fairbanks, Director, Wyoming Youth Service Association, spoke about services for high-needs students and those with mental health issues.

Committee Actions

The Committee requested the WDE work with the Education Commission of the States to provide a summary of other states' disciplinary laws and provide a comparison between the graduation rate reported to the federal government and the rate calculated internally. The Committee also asked the WEA for a proposed Teachers' Bill of Rights and summary from Ed Week on improving teacher morale.

K-3 LITERACY

Review Governing Statutes

Ms. Hytrek reviewed Wyoming's K-3 reading assessment and intervention program, which requires all districts to implement multi-tiered, evidence-based reading programs aligned to state standards. See [Appendix 6-01](#). Ms. Hytrek explained school and district improvement plans, reporting requirements, and professional development requirements.

Review State Rules and Implementation

Shelley Hamel, Chief Academic Officer, WDE, provided background information and discussed how the WDE has implemented the reading assessment and intervention program. See [Appendix 6-02](#). She explained the WDE's Chapter 56 rules govern data collection and program implementation and stated the WDE collects data through the WDE 626 form, which requires districts to report student proficiency, curriculum choices, and professional development plans.

Public Comment

Megan Hesser, Chandell Pine, Carrie Rodin, and Annie McGlothlin described their experiences as guardians of children with dyslexia and other reading difficulties and encouraged the Committee to review the reading assessment and intervention statutes. See [Appendix 6-03](#).

Committee Actions

The Committee requested that PTSB and the University of Wyoming report back to the Committee on inclusion of structured literacy in teacher certification and education.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Review Governing Statutes

Ms. Hytrek and Mr. Willmarth discussed the governing statutes and funding for charter schools. See [Appendix 8-01](#). Ms. Hytrek explained that charter schools are public schools, subject to the same requirements as traditional public schools, and can be authorized by either local school districts or the WCSAB. Mr. Willmarth reviewed the distribution of resources to charter schools through the resident school district and how central office funding was amended in the 2025 General Session. Mr. Willmarth and Ms. Hytrek addressed the Committee's questions regarding what would happen if a charter school closed and provided information on the state and district authorized charter schools in operation.

Operations and Administration

Elaine Marces, Charter School Liaison, WDE, reviewed the WDE's role in supporting and overseeing charter schools. See [Appendix 8-02](#). Ms. Marces explained the WDE has helped the WCSAB develop processes and procedures, promulgate rules, and create the charter school application.

John Wahler, Executive Director, WCSAB, discussed the WCSAB's mission and responsibilities in ensuring the quality and compliance of charter schools. See [Appendix 8-03](#). Mr. Wahler and Janine Bay-Teske, Chairman, WCSAB, answered the Committee's questions about the Alpine charter school and its intention to change service providers. Ms. Bay-Teske discussed the status of charter school applications,

focusing on Alpine's progress with its lease and service provider changes. She reviewed challenges with the current application process, including the need to extend timelines and improve financial oversight and presented recommendations for budget adjustments and process improvements.

Public Comment

John Weigel, Superintendent, Platte County School District Number One (Platte #1), and Christian Winger, Chief Executive Officer, Prairie View Community School, located in Platte #1, discussed funding issues due to the education resource block grant model's ADM calculations being impacted by the increase in charter school ADM and the decrease in non-charter school ADM.

MEETING RECESS

The Committee recessed at 4:58 PM.

CALL TO ORDER (THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2025)

Chairwoman Schuler called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

Review Governing Statutes and Programs

Ashley Phillips, Legislative Editor, LSO, presented an overview of the Hathaway, Wyoming Works, and Wyoming's Tomorrow scholarship programs. See [Appendix 11-01](#). Ms. Phillips described the eligibility criteria, academic requirements, funding, and award amounts for each program.

Wyoming Hathaway Scholarship Program Implementation

Mr. Shanor and Bradley Barker, Hathaway Scholarship Program Consultant, WDE, discussed the Hathaway scholarship program in detail, including new enrollment trends, tuition coverage, and recent legislative changes. See [Appendix 11-02](#). Mr. Barker answered the Committee's questions about the percentage of tuition and fees covered by the Hathaway scholarship, the impact of part-time enrollment, and the integration of needs-based and merit-based components. The Committee requested the LSO prepare analysis with the assistance of the WDE on the value of the Hathaway scholarship at the University of Wyoming and Wyoming community colleges at the inception of the scholarships and under current tuition and fees at the institutions.

Wyoming's Tomorrow Program and Wyoming Works Program

Ben Moritz, Executive Director, and Laurel Ballard, Deputy Director and Chief Academic Affairs Officer, Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC), discussed the importance of career and technical education (CTE) at community colleges. See [Appendix 11-03](#), [Appendix 11-04](#), [Appendix 11-08](#), [Appendix 11-10](#) and [Appendix 11-11](#). Dr. Moritz noted a growing trend of students enrolling in CTE programs, with a shift towards certificates rather than associate degrees, reflecting changing workforce needs. He also discussed the challenges of aligning educational programs with emerging industries and the importance of intentional planning for dual and concurrent enrollment programs. Dr. Moritz and Dr. Ballard presented data on the effectiveness of these programs and highlighted the need for flexibility in how students can use their scholarships.

Dr. Brad Tyndall, President, Central Wyoming College, highlighted the strong connections between colleges and business through advisory committees and emphasized the high return on investment of CTE programs. Walter Tribbley, President, Sheridan College, and Joe Schaffer, President, Laramie County Community College, shared insights on linking academic programs with industry and the importance of experiential learning.

Public Comment

Erin Taylor, Executive Director, Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees, discussed the positive impacts community colleges have on Wyoming, expressed appreciation for the Committee's work, and recommended ways the Legislature could continue to support community colleges. See [Appendix 11-09](#).

Workforce Development Training Fund and State Apprenticeship Expansion Funding

Elizabeth Gagen, Director; Holly McKamey Simoni, Workforce Programs Administrator; and Ivie Kourajian, State Apprenticeship Program Lead, DWS, discussed various workforce development programs in Wyoming, focusing on apprenticeships and internships. See [Appendix 11-05](#). Director Gagen outlined different types of grants available, including business training, pre-hire economic development, and apprenticeship grants. Ms. McKamey Simoni provided the Committee with data regarding the number of interns, industries, and counties served by, and the amount awarded under the internship grant. Ms. Kourajian explained the components of registered apprenticeship programs and the grants available to support them. The Committee discussed the potential for expanding apprenticeship programs to non-traditional occupations.

Wyoming Innovation Partnership

Lauren Schoenfeld, Executive Director, Wyoming Innovation Partnership (WIP), reviewed the WIP's activities and impact. See [Appendix 11-06](#) and [Appendix 11-07](#). Ms. Schoenfeld explained that the WIP was established in 2021 to support workforce development and economic growth across Wyoming's higher education institutions. She stated the program focuses on sectors such as energy, healthcare, tourism, technology, and manufacturing, with particular emphasis on meeting industry needs and developing sustainable programs. Ms. Schoenfeld highlighted the success of various initiatives, including new degree programs, workforce training, and partnerships with K-12 schools and industries. President Tyndall discussed the return on investment (ROI) of WIP programs, noting that the ROI is estimated at 690 percent over five years.

Committee Actions

The Committee requested additional information regarding the methodology and data used to determine WIP's ROI. The Committee also requested the WCCC provide supplemental information regarding the loan repayment programs and enrollment and expenditure data for "Kickstart Wyoming's Tomorrow."

The Committee requested the following bills drafts for consideration at the August meeting:

- Require school districts to adopt policies authorizing teachers to discipline students as necessary, including removing them from the classroom and sending them to the principal's office, notifying parents of disciplinary actions within the school day, and repealing immunity for corporal punishment;
- Require the State Superintendent to develop model disciplinary policies for school districts;
- Creating a categorical grant for schools to focus on student's strengths and barriers, helping to reduce risks, and provide professional development for teachers;
- A Teachers' Bill of Rights;
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- Authorize utilization of Hathaway Scholarship funds at private accredited institutions include CTE institutions;
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The Committee also directed staff to draft a letter to the Select Committee on School Finance Recalibration expressing the Committee's support to study the resources for behavioral specialists for the general education population and to review the ADM calculations in the education resource block grant model for charter school funding, and a letter to the JAC expressing the Committee's support for additional funding for the Wyoming Works programmatic grant program.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Andrew adjourned the meeting at 2:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Wendy Schuler, Chairwoman

Committee Meeting Materials Index

Index Number	Agenda Item	Document Description	Document Provider
1-01		Agenda	Legislative Service Office
1-02		Sign-In Sheet	Legislative Service Office
1-03	Call to Order	Joint Rule 17-1 and Sample Rules	Legislative Service Office
2-01	School Discipline	Overview of School Discipline	Legislative Service Office
2-02	School Discipline	School Discipline Memo	Wyoming Department of Education
2-03	School Discipline	School District Seclusion and Restraint Policies	Wyoming School Boards Association
4-01	K-12 Teacher Recruitment and Retention	K-12 Public School Teacher Recruitment and Retention	Legislative Service Office
4-02	K-12 Teacher Recruitment and Retention	K-12 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Memo	Wyoming Department of Education
4-03	K-12 Teacher Recruitment and Retention	Teacher Certification Memo	Professional Teaching Standards Board
4-04	K-12 Teacher Recruitment and Retention	License Pathways Presentation	Professional Teaching Standards Board
4-05	K-12 Teacher Recruitment and Retention	RIDE and Profile of a Graduate Update	State Board of Education
6-01	K-3 Literacy	Wyoming's Reading Assessment and Intervention Program	Legislative Service Office

Index Number	Agenda Item	Document Description	Document Provider
6-02	K-3 Literacy	K-3 Literacy Department Rules and Implementation	Wyoming Department of Education
6-03	K-3 Literacy	K-3 Literacy Informational Material	WYO Right to Read
8-01	Charter Schools	Overview of K-12 Public Charter Schools	Legislative Service Office
8-02	Charter Schools	Charter Schools Memo	Wyoming Department of Education
8-03	Charter Schools	State Authorized Charter Schools Update	Wyoming Charter School Authorizing Board
11-01	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Overview of Higher Education Programs	Legislative Service Office
11-02	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Hathaway Scholarship Program	Wyoming Department of Education
11-03	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Community College Workforce Training Update	Wyoming Community College Commission
11-04	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Wyoming Works Program Update	Wyoming Community College Commission
11-05	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Workforce Development Training Fund and State Apprenticeship Expansion Funding Information	Department of Workforce Services
11-06	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Revised WIP Update	Wyoming Innovation Partnership
11-07	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Phase II Report	Wyoming Innovation Partnership
11-08	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Evaluation of ROI on WIP	Wyoming Community College Commission
11-09	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Economic Value of Wyoming Community Colleges	Wyoming Community College Commission
11-10	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	Gillette College Commencement Program	Wyoming Community College Commission
11-11	Higher Education and Workforce Programs	WCCC Slide Deck	Wyoming Community College Commission