

SUMMARY of PROCEEDINGS



SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL FACILITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING INFORMATION

October 27, 2025
Thyra Thomson State Office Building, Round House Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room 3024
444 W Collins Drive
Casper, Wyoming

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bill Landen, Chairman
Representative Abby Angelos, Vice Chair
Senator Dan Dockstader
Senator Taft Love
Senator Troy McKeown
Senator Chris Rothfuss
Representative Laurie Bratten
Representative Rob Geringer
Representative Paul Hoeft
Representative Karlee Provenza

LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Tania Hytrek, Operations Administrator
Matthew Willmarth, Senior School Finance Analyst
Catherine Camarotte, Fiscal 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 Select Committee on School Facilities (Committee) met to receive information from the State Construction Department (SCD) in follow up to the Committee's August 20, 2025 meeting, receive the SCD's required major maintenance expenditure report, consider draft legislation regarding the School Facilities Commission's (SFC) proposed budget for the fiscal year (FY) 2027-2028 biennium, and forward the Committee's K-12 school facilities budget recommendation for the FY 2027-2028 biennium to the Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) and the Governor. The Committee voted to sponsor 26LSO-0086, K-12 School facilities appropriations, as amended, and recommend the bill draft to the JAC and the Governor to be considered as a budget recommendation in the 2026 Budget Session. The meeting can be viewed on the Legislature's YouTube channel within the [Committee's playlist](#).

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Landen called the meeting to order at 8:31 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 August 20, 2025 Committee meeting were approved.

STATE CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT FOLLOW UP INFORMATION

Del McOmie, Director; Shelby Carlson, School Facilities Division Administrator; and John Rexius, Construction Supervisor, School Facilities Division, SCD, provided responses to Committee requests from the August 20, 2025 meeting. See [Appendix 2-01](#).

Project and Budget Updates

Ms. Carlson discussed proposed projects contained in the FY 2027-2028 biennium budget request, including Jackson Hole High School in Teton County School District Number One (Teton #1), which requires \$2.8 million for design since previous funding only covered construction; Moorcroft Junior High in Crook County School District Number One, needing system replacements; East High School in Laramie County School District Number One (Laramie #1), which faces overcrowding and plans to add classrooms and expand its cafeteria; and Hobbs Elementary in Laramie #1, which will be fully replaced due to its deteriorated condition. Ms. Carlson provided context for the Fremont County School District Number Twenty-Five (Fremont #25) project, outlining a decade-long plan to reduce the district from five to three elementary schools, including constructing a new, right-sized Rendezvous Elementary School, with demolition and abatement scheduled later.

Ms. Carlson reviewed reversions totaling approximately \$26 million from completed or scaled-back projects. The Committee discussed exploring the ability to redirect these funds toward Jackson Hole High School for design. Director McOmie described changes to the SCD's school facilities budget request reflected in 26LSO-0086, K-12 school facilities appropriations.

Ms. Carlson provided a brief report on the most cost effective remedy (MCER) studies, which evaluate whether repairing, renovating, or replacing schools is the best financial decision. She stated ten MCER studies covering 15 facilities have been completed, and three more are anticipated to be completed before the end of the year. Ms. Carlson added 12 additional MCER studies remain in progress.

Director McOmie and Ms. Carlson discussed developing prototype designs for transportation facilities and the advantages and limitations of doing so. They explained that while standardizing designs could be cost

effective, site-specific factors such as soil conditions, climate, and local needs may make prototyping difficult.

Safety and Security Needs

Director McOmie discussed the school safety and security survey the SCD conducted, outlining each school district's number one and number two safety and security priorities and noting the wide range of projects school districts would like to address. Director McOmie reiterated the SCD's request for \$10 million to be split between \$2-3 million for security vestibules and vehicle barricades and \$7-8 million for other security projects brought by school districts. He noted most requests fall in the top 20 security projects included in the 2015 safety and security assessments. Ms. Carlson estimated the cost to design and construct vestibules and vehicle barricades for all schools where they are still needed to be approximately \$20 million.

Capacity Methodology

Ms. Carlson explained the history of Wyoming's school capacity methodology and why it differs from the K-12 education resource block grant model's student to core teacher ratio. She stated that in 2011, the Legislature enacted a law requiring a 16:1 student-teacher ratio for kindergarten through grade three, prompting the SFC to adopt a new instructional-area methodology for determining building capacity in 2012. Ms. Carlson stated this methodology calculates capacity on a square footage per student basis rather than simple classroom counts, using 50 square feet for students in kindergarten and grade one and 40 square feet for students in grade two through grade six or open instruction plans, with a classroom restricted capacity for elementary grades of 16 students in kindergarten through grade three and 25 students in grade four through grade six. She explained for secondary grades, the capacity methodology for general classrooms is 37.5 square feet per student and for specialized rooms 60-125 square feet per student, with a classroom restricted capacity for general classrooms of 25 students and specialized classrooms with a restricted capacity ranging from 24-50 students. She indicated although the 16:1 student-teacher ratio law was repealed in 2017, public input in 2018 led the SFC to retain the restricted instructional-area capacity methodology.

Ms. Carlson reviewed student enrollment trends for on-site, virtual, and homeschool students in Wyoming, explaining virtual student enrollment data has been tracked only since 2017, while homeschool data will no longer be collected due to 2025 Wyo. Sess. Laws, Ch. 49, which removed the requirement for families to submit curricula to school districts. She clarified virtual students spend 50 percent or more of their schooling online and are public school students, while homeschoolers are not. Ms. Carlson described graphs showing virtual student enrollment spiked during COVID, then fell to about 2,400 students, while homeschooling has continued to rise. She stated overall, the data indicates a declining trendline in statewide student enrollment in public schools.

Cost Per Square Foot Comparison

Mr. Rexius presented a comparison of Wyoming's school facility construction costs with those of nearby states. He emphasized costs depend on many factors such as building finishes, site conditions, regional labor, climate, and design standards, so direct per-square-foot comparisons are limited. Mr. Rexius reviewed data from Utah, Colorado, Idaho, and Montana, which showed wide variation to Wyoming's average per square foot cost of \$467. He stated Wyoming's per square foot cost is roughly 10 percent higher than regional averages, but 9 percent below the United States' median. Mr. Rexius indicated current construction projections are \$513 per square foot in 2025, rising to \$544 per square foot in 2026, with large high schools possibly reaching \$655-\$700 per square foot due to inflation and rural challenges. Mr. Rexius said Wyoming's higher costs partly reflect its high-quality and energy-efficient standards. He also noted Utah officials plan to visit Wyoming to study its funding and cost management system.

Public Comment

Ross Schriftman, Casper resident, expressed concern regarding declining student enrollment, noting it may lead to school closures or underutilized facilities. See [Appendix 2-02](#) and [Appendix 2-03](#).

Dave Bartlett, Campbell County School District Number One, and Andy Knapp, Laramie #1 emphasized the need to modernize school safety and communication systems, noting rapid technological changes and aging infrastructure making maintenance costly and upgrades essential.

Charlotte Reynolds, Executive Director of Communications and District Services, Teton #1, and Jodi Ibach, Superintendent, Fremont #25, expressed appreciation to the Committee for supporting their respective school projects.

26LSO-0086, K-12 SCHOOL FACILITIES APPROPRIATIONS.

Tania Hytrek, Operations Administrator, Legislative Service Office (LSO), presented 26LSO-0086, K-12 school facilities appropriations, and explained the Committee is required to submit its recommendation to the Governor and the JAC for a K-12 school facilities budget, pursuant to W.S. 28-11-301(b)(v), annually not later than November 1. See [Appendix 4-01](#).

Ms. Hytrek stated the bill draft was similar to the version the Committee reviewed at the August 20, 2025 meeting. She noted major maintenance and agency operations amounts are not included in the bill draft because those will be included in the SCD's (Agency 027) biennial budget request. Ms. Hytrek indicated the funding for specific projects contained in the bill draft may be contained in the Budget Bill as Section 313. She indicated the bill draft has been updated since the August 20, 2025 meeting, to embed priorities and amounts for projects. Ms. Hytrek flagged differences between the SCD's October 9 budget request and the request received in August and noted the bill draft includes the Committee's directive to reduce unanticipated costs by \$600,000, and \$10 million for safety and security consolidated into a grant program in Section 2 of the bill draft. She identified funding requests effective immediately including component projects, approximately \$1.1 million for major maintenance, approximately \$1.2 million for demolition of Arp Elementary in Laramie #1, and approximately \$2.8 million for design of Jackson Hole High School in Teton #1. She also outlined the charter school contingency fund and language that allows the SCD to expend funds to complete component projects consistent with the most efficient use of funds.

Public Comment

Director McOmie expressed concerns about requiring MCER studies for all safety and security projects and answered the Committee's questions about existing safety and security funds.

Brian Farmer, Executive Director, Wyoming School Boards Association, encouraged the Committee to support a more flexible approach to distribute safety and security funding. Mr. Farmer stated security needs have evolved since the 2015 study and noted districts are engaged in risk assessments through insurance providers.

Committee Directives

Representative Provenza moved, seconded by Senator Rothfuss, that the Committee sponsor 26LSO-0086, K-12 school facilities appropriations, and recommend the bill draft to the JAC and the Governor to be considered as a budget recommendation in the 2026 Budget Session. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote with the following amendments:

Page 14, line 9 After "is" delete "the most", insert "a".

Page 14, line 10 After "need" delete balance of line.

Page 14, line 11 Delete "by W.S. 21-15-117".

STATE CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT STUDY OF MAJOR MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURES

Director McOmie and Ms. Carlson reviewed the major maintenance expenditure report due pursuant to 2025 Wyoming Session Laws, Chapter 118, Section 1(j). See [Appendix 5-01](#). Director McOmie outlined options if the State were to assume direct oversight of major maintenance for Wyoming school districts: a full statewide takeover; a narrower takeover for projects from 2022-2026; or a consultative model where a small state team assists districts on larger, complex projects while districts handle routine fixes. Director McOmie highlighted the complexity and scale of potential projects, the logistical costs, and how new buildings reduce maintenance costs. The Committee discussed whether this aspect of major maintenance should be an interim topic during the 2026 interim.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Senator Bill Landen adjourned the meeting at 12:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Bill Landen, Chairman

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
2-01	State Construction Department Follow Up Information	August 20, 2025 Follow Up Information	State Construction Department
2-02	State Construction Department Follow Up Information	Association of Mature American Citizens Article	Public Comment
2-03	State Construction Department Follow Up Information	Heritage Foundation Article	Public Comment
4-01	Committee Discussion of the Recommendations to the Joint Appropriations Committee and the Governor (November 1: W.S. 28-11-301(b)(v))	26LSO-0086 v1.1 K-12 school facilities appropriations.	Legislative Service Office
5-01	State Construction Department Study of Major Maintenance Expenditures	Report on Major Maintenance Study	State Construction Department