



## WYOMING LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE

# Memorandum

**DATE** May 20, 2026

**TO** Members, Joint Education Interim Committee

**FROM** Tania Hytrek, Operations Administrator  
Ashley Phillips, Legislative Editor

**SUBJECT** K-12 Public Education Basket of Goods and Services

### INTRODUCTION

As part of the Joint Education Interim Committee's (Committee) Priority #1 Interim Topic: Educational Basket of Goods and Services, the Committee requested the Legislative Service Office to provide a summary of Wyoming laws governing the educational basket of goods and services. This memorandum is in response to the Committee's request.

### HISTORY

In the 1995 *Campbell I* decision, the Wyoming Supreme Court (Court) mandated the Legislature must "define and specify what a proper education is for a Wyoming child" as part of the Legislature's duty to establish and maintain a complete and uniform system of public instruction.<sup>1</sup> The Court held the educational opportunity provided by the State must not only be equal, but it must equip students for their "roles as citizens, participants in the political system, and competitors both economically and intellectually." The Court also noted that the definition of a proper education would not be static. In the 2008 *Campbell IV* decision, the Court determined the Legislature had, at the time, met its constitutional duty to define what constitutes a proper education.<sup>2</sup>

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (EDUCATIONAL BASKET OF GOODS AND SERVICES)

In response to the Court's directive, the Legislature enacted the "educational basket of goods and services" commonly referred to as "the basket" to ensure a uniform, quality educational program is provided to all students across Wyoming, regardless of location. The educational basket of goods and services includes more than a simple list of subjects. It is comprised of several interrelated components, together creating the educational basket of goods.

The "common core of knowledge" and the "common core of skills" form the foundation of the state's required educational program or the educational basket of goods and services. The common core of knowledge includes instruction in reading and language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, fine and performing arts, physical education, health and safety, humanities, career and technical education, world

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<sup>1</sup> *Campbell I – Campbell County School District v. State*, 907 P.2d 1238 (Wyo. 1995).

<sup>2</sup> *Campbell IV – Campbell County School District v. State*, 181 P.3d 43 (Wyo. 2008).

cultures and languages, computer science, and government and civics.<sup>3</sup> The common core of skills includes problem solving, interpersonal communication, computational thinking and computer applications, critical thinking, creativity, and life skills, including personal financial management skills.<sup>4</sup> The common core of knowledge and skills has changed minimally since its enactment in 1997. The only substantive revisions occurred following the 2017 recalibration effort, which repealed "applied technology," added "computer science" to the common core of knowledge, and replaced "keyboarding" with "computational thinking" in the common core of skills.<sup>5</sup> School districts are required to provide programs for children with disabilities and gifted and talented students and establish standards to ensure these students are provided the opportunity to learn the common core of knowledge and skills.<sup>6</sup> School districts must "endeavor to maintain" class sizes of not more than 16 students per teacher in kindergarten through third grade.<sup>7</sup> While it is not required, school districts are encouraged to establish cocurricular activity programs to provide educational experiences not otherwise provided by the school district.<sup>8</sup>

In grades one through eight, reading, writing and mathematics are required to be emphasized in delivery of the educational program. Additionally, foreign language instruction is required for students in kindergarten through second grade.<sup>9</sup> To satisfy the common core of knowledge requirements relating to instruction in government and civics, all publicly funded schools and colleges in the state are required to provide instruction on the essentials of the Wyoming and United States constitutions, including the study of and devotion to American institutions and ideals. The statute requires this instruction for a minimum of three years in kindergarten through grade eight and for at least one year at the secondary and postsecondary levels. In addition, students may not receive a high school diploma or college degree without passing an examination on the Wyoming and United States constitutions.<sup>10</sup>

The required educational program is further refined by the content and performance standards. These are rules enacted by the State Board of Education (State Board) that establish the skills and benchmarks for each area of the common core of knowledge and skills for every grade level to further ensure equitable access to a quality education for all students. The State Board is required to review the content and performance standards for uniformity and quality, at minimum once every nine years and those findings, and any recommendations for modification, are reported to the Joint Education Interim Committee during the interim following the review.<sup>11</sup>

The content and performance standards dovetail into the graduation standards, also established by the State Board, which require successful completion of coursework, or competency-based equivalency examinations, in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Specifically, students must complete four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science, and social studies, with one year of computer science permitted to satisfy one science requirement.<sup>12</sup> The State Board is then charged with establishing requirements, in consultation with local districts, to obtain a Wyoming High School Diploma and a Certificate of Completion, for those students with disabilities as identified under the federal

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<sup>3</sup> W.S. 21-9-101(b)(i).

<sup>4</sup> W.S. 21-9-101(b)(ii).

<sup>5</sup> The Legislature has also enacted other provisions that are extensions of the educational program. See W.S. 21-3-501, 21-4-602, and 21-16-1307.

<sup>6</sup> W.S. 21-9-101(c).

<sup>7</sup> W.S. 21-9-101(d).

<sup>8</sup> W.S. 21-9-101(e).

<sup>9</sup> W.S. 21-9-101(b)(ii) and (g).

<sup>10</sup> W.S. 21-9-102.

<sup>11</sup> W.S. 21-9-101(a), 21-2-304(a)(iii) and 21-2-304(c).

<sup>12</sup> W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.<sup>13</sup> Demonstration of meeting the requirements and standards associated with receipt of a diploma or certificate is completed through school district assessment systems<sup>14</sup> and demonstration of course completion. Local school districts are charged with establishing the curriculum to instruct students and ensuring the common core of knowledge and skills, the content and performance standards, and graduation requirements are delivered.<sup>15</sup>

### **MECHANISMS TO ENSURE DELIVERY OF THE REQUIRED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

Through accreditation and evaluation, the State Board ensures school districts are delivering an educational program in accordance with the statutes and rules. In the event a school district fails to deliver the common core of knowledge and skills or the content and performance standards or comply with the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act, the State Board maintains the ability to take appropriate administrative action, in consultation with the State Superintendent, that may include revocation or modification of the district's accreditation status.<sup>16</sup>

The statewide assessment system is designed to measure individual student achievement, school and district performance, and statewide educational outcomes. Students are assessed in English language arts and mathematics in grades three through ten and science in grades four, eight, and ten. The statewide assessment system emphasizes accountability, school improvement, valid year-to-year performance tracking, accommodations for diverse student populations, and timely reporting of results to support educational strategies and intervention efforts. The law also limits testing time to a maximum of 1% of the total pupil-teacher contact time, requires fair and unbiased assessments, and promotes transparency and comparability with other states.<sup>17</sup>

The Wyoming Accountability in Education Act, W.S. 21-2-204, serves as a comprehensive mechanism to measure, monitor, and report school performance using multiple performance and growth indicators and ensures the required educational program is delivered across all school districts. The indicators include student performance on the statewide assessment and college and career readiness examinations, graduation rates, ninth grade credit accumulation, and graduation rates. Each school receives a performance rating based on the various indicators. The Wyoming Accountability in Education Act includes a statewide system of support and intervention for schools that are partially meeting or not meeting expectations.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, each of the elements discussed above work in tandem and are interrelated. Changing one element will likely impact the other components of the educational basket of goods and services and mechanisms utilized to ensure delivery across Wyoming. For example, modification of the common core of knowledge and skills or the content and performance standards, impacts the statewide assessment system, graduation standards, school district accreditation, and the administration of the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act.

Please advise if you have any questions or need further information.

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<sup>13</sup> W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv).

<sup>14</sup> The SBE reviews and approves each district's assessment system every five years. W.S. 21-2-304 (a)(iv).

<sup>15</sup> W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xv).

<sup>16</sup> W.S. 21-2-304(b)(ii).

<sup>17</sup> W.S. 21-2-304(a)(v).