

Department of Education

Mission and philosophy

The Wyoming Department of Education's (WDE) mission is to lead, model and support continuous improvement of education for everyone in Wyoming.

The department works as a partner with students, parents, residents, government and public agencies, industry, education communities, and local decision-makers to ensure all learners have an opportunity to master an ambitious common core of knowledge and skills.

The department understands it is a service agency. It serves the people of Wyoming and believes that quality education is at the heart of a strong residency, economy and an improved quality of life.

Services are supported by the following agency core values:

The department is committed to:

- accountability, responsibility and to be self-directed productive employees;
- promoting and providing staff development and on-the-job training for all employees;
- honesty and integrity;
- building partnerships within and outside the agency;
- open and honest communication in all dealings; and
- granting employees at all levels the decision-making authority to perform their jobs.

Results of outcomes

The overarching goal for the WDE is to improve student achievement and increase school districts capacity to improve student learning. Wyoming Comprehensive Assessment System (WyCAS) results and accreditation results are the two categories the department monitors to evaluate the effects of its efforts as an agency.

WyCAS test

WyCAS is given to all fourth-, eighth-, and 11th-grade students on an annual basis. The test measures the effects of districts program work in math and language arts (the latter embodies reading and writing skills).

The results for the three years WyCAS has been administered are:

- The change in the percentage of students who scored at the proficient level or above significantly increased from the 1999-00 school year to the 2000-01 school year: 10 percentage point increase for fourth-graders in writing, 35 percent to 45 percent.
- However, there were a few less dramatic increases and some small decreases from the 1998-99 school year to the 2000-01 school year.

The state superintendent of public instruction is not satisfied with this level of achievement and has charged her staff to offer more and better professional

General information

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Other locations

Casper, Rawlins, Riverton, Sheridan, Laramie, Lander, Evanston and Powell

Year established

1890

Statutory references

Wyoming Constitution and W.S. 21-2-201 and 21-2-202

Number of authorized personnel

96 full-time employees, seven part-time employees, eight at-will employment contracts

Organization structure

Administration Unit, Data and Technology Unit, Finance and Personnel Unit, Health and Safety Unit, North Central Association, School Improvement Unit and Special Programs Unit

Clients served

The public including students, parents, educators and legislators

Budget information

Department operations	\$67,820,058
School finance	\$429,618,520
Total	\$497,438,578
State	\$104,805,658
Federal	61,769,130
Other	\$497,438,578

development opportunities for district staff focused on standards based reform, in addition to the other services the agency must provide.

To evaluate the effectiveness of district efforts to improve student achievement, nine or 10 districts are given an onsite visit annually. For each district, the intensive onsite evaluation takes place every five years.

The percentage of corrective actions in all components of accreditation has stayed nearly the same from year to year. Areas requiring improvement are measures/assessments, school improvement, staff development and at risk (as evidenced by the higher percentage of corrective actions).

Several WDE initiatives are being offered to address these areas of need:

- The Professional Development Institute offers teachers and administrators nine days of training on aligning teaching to the standards and using standards-based assessments in the classroom.
- The Wyoming Better Education through Standards and Technology (Wyo.BEST) impacts approximately 600 educators by training them to use technology to deliver better instruction and conduct more valid assessment of student learning.
- The North Central Association/Wyoming Department of Education (NCA/WDE School Improvement Conference takes place semi-annually and exposes more than 600 educators in the state to cutting-edge research and methodology proven to support school improvement.
- The Wyoming Education Gateway (WEdGate) provides teachers with a plethora of lesson plans and activities that are aligned to content standards; all on the WEdGate Website.
- There is collaborative cross training for Title I, NCA, and state accreditation for school improvement.
- The Wyoming State Improvement Grant (WySIG) will provide staff development opportunities for special-education teachers, general education teachers, parents and administrators to improve results for children with disabilities.

At the WDE, much work has been completed and will continue to support education reform. The office will push forward with oversight and support for school districts, and look for improved results in the WyCAS and accreditation evaluations.

Strategic plan changes

There were no significant changes in the strategic plan from 2000 to 2001.

Department of Education organization chart

