

## 2022 WSBA Delegate Assembly – Items Approved

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The 2022 WSBA Delegate Assembly considered four resolutions and the 2023 Advocacy Agenda. Resolutions adopted by the 2022 Delegate Assembly will become the guiding principles for the 2023 Legislative Session and will be referred to the Board of Directors for possible inclusion in the 2024 Advocacy Agenda. The Board of Directors will commence work the 2024 Advocacy Agenda at their July 2023 meeting. The 2023 Advocacy Agenda will guide the advocacy efforts of WSBA in the coming year, including but not limited to guiding responses to legislation in the 2023 Legislative Session.

### RESOLUTIONS

#### **2024.1 BOCES as LEAs to Receive Funding**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Wyoming School Boards Association supports legislative action that would authorize a Board of Cooperative Educational Services to act as a local education agency for the limited purpose of applying for eligible federal and state grants or for acting as a local education agency for participating school districts that choose to apply for, receive, or administer a grant through a grant program created by a federal or state statute or program.

The resolution is *not intended* to:

- **Enable BOCES to become classified as Wyoming school districts.** The resolution establishes that such entities are not prohibited from **applying for federal and state grant money**. Additionally, legislation would allow for the creation of a consortium for which the BOCES **may** be the fiscal manager. No BOCES, however, will be included in the block grant or other funds specifically directed to local school districts.
- **Take money from school districts.** This is not designed to take resources from schools. It provides an opportunity to leverage partnerships as an efficient use of available grant funds.
- **Pit school districts against BOCES.** With a provision requiring that a BOCES would need to obtain approval from two school districts before applying for a grant, a consortium approach would encourage partnerships. Other districts who do not wish to join such a partnership would still apply for grants on their own behalf. This would give districts multiple *options*. The onus would be on BOCES to demonstrate how a partnership would be in the best interests of multiple districts.

The resolution *is intended* to support:

- **Needed funding for underfunded programs while reducing the need to increase costs to for districts.** Because BOCES provide a host of specialized programs and services, a wide array of highly qualified staff, as well as varied settings (residential, day schools, teleservices) we can fill the educational gaps for districts. Many groups misunderstand the funding sources for a BOCES and fail to grasp that these sources are vastly different from the funding model for schools. With the increased costs educational programs are facing, Wyoming BOCES can continue to provide specialized supports at reasonable rates by using alternative grant funding to offset some costs.
- **Encourage partnerships and reduce expenditures.** When consortiums can be formed and duplication of efforts (such as resources required for the fiscal management of a grant) eliminated, there are benefits to students, districts, and the taxpayers of Wyoming. Small school districts don't always have the personnel to complete grant applications and manage grants,

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especially when grant allocations are based on enrollment. Joining a consortium affords them the opportunity to share in the resources.

**Rationale:** Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, (BOCES) are active participants in our Wyoming K12 educational system, playing a key role in educating students with some of the most challenging needs. When districts reach out to BOCES to provide services for their students, they do so because they usually cannot provide those intensive supports at the local level. BOCES programs, both residential and day schools, have suffered from many of the same impacts as K-12 districts but have not been able to access any federal relief or support. They struggle with recruiting, covering staff, finding alternative supports for students who are unable to access services traditionally, while faithfully serving students with increased anxiety, insecurity, depression, and mental health issues. BOCES are not eligible for some federal and state grants, because in Wyoming they are not classified as a Local Education Agency (LEA). Allowing LEA status for BOCES to apply for federal and state grants could be extremely beneficial to students, districts, and the taxpayers of Wyoming.

**Submitted by:** Teton County School District #1

**Delegate Assembly Action:** *Affirm as Amended*

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### 2024.2 Compulsory Attendance and Early Intervention – First Grade Students

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Wyoming School Board Association supports a change to state statute §21-4-102 adding the words “*or while enrolled in first grade*” to the statute to read: “(a) Every parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of any child who is a resident of this state and whose seventh birthday falls on or before August 1, or September 15 if the child started kindergarten pursuant to an approved request under W.S. 21-3-110 (a)(xxxviii), *or while enrolled in first grade*, of any year and who has not yet attained his sixteenth birthday ... shall be required to attend...”.

**Rationale:** School attendance is vital to a student’s success. State statute §21-4-302 allows enrollment in the first grade in the year in which a student’s sixth birthday falls on or before August 1. The current requirement for compulsory attendance is age seven (7). Many first grade students turn seven (7) after August 1 of their first grade year. Compulsory attendance statutes for first grade students who turn seven (7) after August 1 have no effect and cannot be enforced. This addition to the compulsory attendance statute will allow local school boards the legal authority to provide early intervention in a timely fashion for a poor attendance pattern developing during the first grade year. Early intervention is the key to success for a student struggling with poor attendance. Penalty for failure to comply would not exceed those found in W.S. §21-4-106.

**Submitted by:** Uinta County School District #1

**Delegate Assembly Action:** *Affirm*

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### **2024.3 Special Education Graduation Counts**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Wyoming School Boards Association supports the development of an alternative diploma by the state of Wyoming in order to recognize special education students as a part of the extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The State of Wyoming should take advantage of the flexibility provided under current federal law to recognize special education students who complete appropriate requirements as outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) but who do not otherwise meet graduation standards. These students should be counted for their efforts at completing measures toward high school completion as defined by their IEP.

**Rationale:** Currently, special education students that complete a Certificate of Completion by meeting their prescribed IEP Goals and Learning Plans as outlined by the IEP team equate to “Drop Out” status on the WDE 950. ESSA does not allow for these students to be counted as on-time graduates unless they meet all of the qualifications set out for graduation. However, ESSA does allow students who have received an alternative diploma to count toward the extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. Wyoming does not currently have an adjusted diploma. We could learn from other states who have pursued this option and have developed an alternative diploma for special education students. These students, and the staff that works with them, work incredibly hard to meet their individualized needs, and to see that work equate to the status of “drop out” is demoralizing, unfair, and unjust.

**Submitted by:** Sheridan County School District #1

**Delegate Assembly Action:**                   **Affirm**

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### **2024.4 Elimination of Corporal Punishment in Wyoming Public Schools**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Wyoming School Boards Association stands in opposition to the current legal protection afforded to the use of spankings or swats of any kind as a form of corporal punishment for disciplinary purposes in Wyoming public schools while maintaining immunity for the use of force to protect students and staff.

**Rationale:** The last twenty years of research on the detrimental effects of corporal punishment is overwhelming. The findings are so robust at this point, there are now meta-analyses of studies all indicating that there are far better alternatives. In a recent study of Wyoming school administrators, 90% either “Disagreed” or “Strongly Disagreed” with the statement “*I believe corporal punishment should remain legal in Wyoming public schools.*” Also, of the 48 school districts in Wyoming, only two still use it as per board policy. Finally, no incidents of corporal punishment have been reported in Wyoming public schools in the last decade. The evidence is clear, it is time to remove the legal protection for corporal punishment in the state of Wyoming’s public schools.

**Submitted by:** Sheridan County School District #1

**Delegate Assembly Action:**                   **Affirm as Amended**

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## 2023 WSBA ADVOCACY AGENDA

1. **Equity and Flexibility for Local School Districts: Support the provision of quality educational opportunities for all Wyoming students and allow local districts flexibility in how they meet the needs of students.**
  - Provide equitable access to educational opportunities for all students to receive a world class education while supporting flexibility for local school districts in the delivery of the educational program; meeting graduation requirements; meeting Hathaway requirements; and the provision of educational opportunities.
  - Support innovative approaches to the delivery of educational opportunities by Wyoming districts to meet student needs.
  - Encourage careful consideration of items added to the basket of goods to ensure ad hoc additions are balanced with existing priorities. Encourage policymakers to “stay in their lanes” by using existing processes rather than legislative mandates for additions to deliverables by school districts.
  - Ensure standards provide meaningful learning opportunities for students while being manageable for local school districts to deliver.
  - Prioritize the protection of local control relating to assessment systems by reducing mandated requirements for assessment.
  
2. **Prepared for Their Future: Support an educational program that provides students with world class educational opportunities and prepares them for life after high school.**
  - Support finalization of a Profile of a Graduate that prepares Wyoming students for life after high school. Support innovation and the removal of systemic barriers for school districts in order to meet the needs of students.
  - Support an emphasis on reading, writing, and mathematics for K-3 students to build a strong foundation for future success.
  - Support enhanced early childhood education through partnerships.
  - Support strong social studies standards rooted in the U.S. and Wyoming Constitutions and a locally determined curriculum to meet these standards. Encourage districts to make curriculum and materials available to the public.
  
3. **Public Schools are the Choice: Support options for parents and students to choose educational programs within Wyoming public schools rather than diverting dollars to programs that lack transparency, accountability, and local oversight.**
  - Support educational choices that are offered through Wyoming public schools rather than those that do not have the same accountability and transparency.
  - Support local districts as the appropriate entity to evaluate all charter applications.
  - Recognize that parents are critical partners for student success.

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4. **School Funding: Support a school funding model that accurately reflects the cost of providing a quality education and allows local districts block-grant flexibility.**
  - Oppose further cuts to education and maintain funding in accordance with a funding model that is cost-based and reflective of the actual cost of providing a quality education in all Wyoming communities.
  - Advocate for regular and predictable adjustments to the model (including ECA and RCA adjustments) to account for the effects of inflation and changes in cost.
  - Monitor accuracy of state and consultant reports and interpretations.
  - Support the block grant concept and retaining local school board authority to deviate from the model to address needs of the district.
  - Advocate for resources to support the recruitment and retention of school district personnel recognizing market pressures and shortages.
  - Continue support of the 2016 Education Funding White Paper.
  - Support efficiencies in the statewide education system that don't compromise the education of Wyoming's school children and incentivize the sharing of resources across the state.
  
5. **School Safety: Support efforts to provide all students with safe and supportive learning environments while providing flexibility for local districts in meeting student and staff safety needs.**
  - Support the funding and use of school resource officers.
  - Support a comprehensive approach that considers preventative measures, facility and infrastructure needs, critical incident planning and training, critical incident response, and recovery efforts.
  - Support adding suicide prevention training to state standards, requiring such training in the health curriculum while allowing districts to determine the best way to meet the needs of their students.
  - Encourage measures that empower the local board and community.
  - Consider the mental health needs of students and provide wrap-around services that connect student needs with appropriate resources.
  - Support the maintenance of a positive school culture.
  - Support collaboration and sharing of best practices to enhance safety.

### **Other Issues/Positions**

1. Monitor efforts to transition to monthly collection of ad valorem taxes and seek mechanisms to minimize the amount of uncollected taxes.
2. Support raising the mandatory attendance age to 18 or graduation, whichever comes first, and exempting home-schooled students from the regulation.
3. Support reduction of requirements for hiring coaches in order to improve recruitment and retention of staff that support extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.