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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHARGE TO THE ACCOUNTABILITY DESIGN TEAM TO PROPOSE DETAILS FOR A SCHOOL-LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM BASED ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE FOR WYOMING

Prepared for
The Wyoming Select School Finance Recalibration Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
CHARGE TO THE ACCOUNTABILITY DESIGN TEAM
TO
PROPOSE DETAILS FOR A SCHOOL-LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM BASED ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE FOR WYOMING

The Wyoming Select School Finance Recalibration Committee continues to move forward the process to design the first phase of a school-level accountability system for Wyoming that is based exclusively on student performance. The Select Committee fully understands that its recommendations will need to be reviewed by both the interim Joint Education Committee, and the 2011 Legislature's Education Committees and the entire Legislature, as well as reflect substantial input from the Wyoming education system.

The Select Committee recommends that Wyoming start with a basic, school-based approach to accountability, knowing that a more comprehensive accountability system could be created in the future. However, the Select Committee understands that even for a basic, school-based accountability system, there are a large number of important, value-laden, and complex technical decisions that must be made even for a straight forward school-based accountability system.

Thus, this document summarizes initial decisions made by the Select Committee and outlines the "charge" to an Accountability Design Team to address those many technical decisions that must be made in order to operate a school-based accountability program.

The Select Committee has decided that the school based accountability system should include:

Education process indicators were considered.

- **Just student performance indicators and not education process indicators**
- **Multiple student performance indicators,** somewhere between 5 and 10 core indicators
- Indicators of all subjects currently tested, and additional indicators at secondary schools such as graduation rates, ACT scores and eligibility for Hathaway scholarships
- Indicators reported in terms of performance at various levels **(proficient and advanced)** and **reflecting the achievement gap and college readiness, and**
- **Indicators aggregated to the school (and not grade) level.**

We prefer growth modeling and do not believe we should be using NCLB related performance levels.

After making these overall decisions, the Select Committee recognized that there are six basic steps to address in developing a school level accountability system:

1. **Identifying the core student performance indicators for the system**

2. Deciding how to measure those indicators
3. Setting rules for "leveling the playing field" Note the issue of growth.
4. Deciding how to "calculate" change for those measures to show growth or decline
5. Setting targets for desired improved performance
6. Determining consequences for meeting or not meeting targets – rewards and sanctions

To appropriately guide the process, the Select Committee has decided that it should make initial decisions for Step 1 -- selecting the core indicators – that will be included in the system, as well as the general shape of any rewards or sanctions for Step 6. It is charging the Accountability Design Team to address the technical issues involved in Steps 2-5 above, with some general guidance in each of those areas.

The Select Committee recommends the following core indicators:

Elementary Schools (K-5 or K-6)

1. School level (grades 3-5) proficiency in reading
2. School level (grades 3-5) proficiency in **writing** We do not have a statewide writing test.
3. School level (grades 3-5) proficiency in mathematics
4. School level (grades 3-5) proficiency in science
5. An indicator of the "**achievement gap,**" which would be test scores for at-risk[1] children compared to those of non-at-risk children. We prefer growth modeling.
6. A school wide and cross subject area indicator of advanced performance.

Middle Schools (Generally grades 6-8)

1. School level (grades 6-8) proficiency in reading
2. School level (grades 6-8) proficiency in **writing** We do not have a statewide writing test.
3. School level (grades 6-8) proficiency in mathematics
4. School level (grades 6-8) proficiency in science
5. An indicator of the "**achievement gap,**" which would be test scores for at-risk children compared to those of non-at-risk children. We prefer growth modeling.
6. A school wide and cross subject area indicator of advanced performance.
7. ACT Explore score in Grade 8.

[1] Using the definition of *at-risk* students that is used in the Wyoming Funding Model.

High Schools (Generally grades 9-12)

1. School level (grade 11) proficiency in reading
2. School level (grade 11) proficiency in **writing** We do not have a statewide writing test.
3. School level (grade 11) proficiency in mathematics
4. School level (grade 11) proficiency in science
5. An indicator of the "**achievement gap**," which would be test scores for at-risk children compared to those of non-at-risk children. We prefer growth modeling.
6. A school wide and cross subject area indicator of advanced performance.
7. ACT scores for all students in Grade 11
8. Four year high school graduation rate
9. Percent of students who qualify for **Hathaway Scholarships** This is a Wyoming University system scholarship program.

For Rewards and Sanction, the Select Committee suggests that:

This is all very similar to what was in Pathways to Excellence.

- The primary "**reward**" **will be non-interference** from the state and the primary "**sanction**" will be some restrictions on use of block grant dollars (e.g., use of tutoring dollars just for teacher tutors) and/or **technical assistance from the state** to help the school and district improve, that could or could not be linked to the state's accreditation process.

The Select Committee Recommends that an Accountability Design Team be created and charged with the task of addressing the technical issues required to design a school-based accountability system. The composition of the Design Team should include members representing teachers, principals, superintendents, the legislature, the governor, the state superintendent, parents, the public and the business community. The Charge to the Design Team is to:

a. **Determine how to measure each of the core indicators including necessary PAWS fixes for the short term, the appropriate reporting scale to use, and issues related to measurement error and stable measures (detailed on pp. 8-11)**
b. **How to level the playing field to adjust measures to account for ELL students, poverty students, mobile students, student with disabilities, etc. (detailed on pp. 12-13)**
c. **How to calculate "change" for each measure (detailed on pp. 13-14)**
d. **How to set targets for improved performance in order to show a profile of school performance and not just a pass or fail grade, recommending the use of a "balanced scorecard" approach (detailed on pp. 14-15).**

The Design Team will be asked to report preliminary recommendations to the joint education committee by August 1, 2011 and final recommendations by November 1, 2011, including a modeling of how the suggested program would have operated in the 2010-2011 school year.