



WYOMING  
STATE BOARD  
OF EDUCATION  
100 YEARS

# Celebrating 100 Years

of Advocacy, Support and Policy Making  
for Wyoming's Students and Schools



# HISTORY OF THE BOARD

Since its formation 100 years ago, the Wyoming State Board of Education has been a consistent and stabilizing force for the public school system. Even as responsibilities have expanded in volume and importance, the board continues to maintain its focus on enhancing student outcomes through steady, nonpartisan policy making.

Created by the Wyoming legislature in 1917, it was a time of great ferment throughout the country. The U.S. Senate was contemplating entering World War I, and Wyoming had been a state for only 27 years. John B. Kendrick, cattleman and politician from Sheridan, Wyoming, was governor. Colonel “Buffalo Bill” Cody also died that winter, and Governor Kendrick delivered the eulogy. The state legislature was considering the adoption of a state flag and state flower. They also took up the hotly debated issue of prohibition, which they rejected, despite its approval at the federal level.

New School Code legislation was perhaps the most important thing the Wyoming legislature considered that winter. Drafted following a comprehensive, statewide survey designed to investigate the real needs of the public school system, it served as the catalyst for a complete revision of the existing code.

New provisions included the establishment of a nonpartisan Wyoming State Board of Education, to serve in an advisory capacity to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The board was also given all necessary powers to work with the Federal Board of Vocational Education to promote

education in agriculture, trades and industries in an effort to prepare teachers of vocational subjects. The New School Code further revised standards for curriculum, teacher certification, school attendance and school buildings. ([wyoshpo.state.wy.us/Schools/History/Progressive.aspx](http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us/Schools/History/Progressive.aspx))

The New School Code bill was adopted without opposition on February 17 and signed by Governor Kendrick on February 21, 1917. In 1919, the Fifteenth State Legislature expanded and more clearly defined the board's responsibilities, including general oversight of vocational or other special schools receiving state aid; prescription of standards regulating the general course of study for elementary and



high schools, and for any other institution which receives

state aid; regulation of construction and site selection of school houses; supervision of the examination of superintendents and teachers for the public schools; and cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education regarding the examination and instruction of children with special needs. “The board is entrusted with these and other important duties prescribed by law.” (wyoarchives.state.wy.us/pdf/WyomingBlueBookTwo.pdf p. 144)

Until 1959, the volunteer board was supported by a paid Commissioner of Education. The legislature later reinstated funding for a professional staff member to help the board fulfill its duties and maintain an independent point of view.

Education reform gained momentum in the 90s, and the State Board of Education became statutorily required to consider and implement additional elements of new education laws. In 2011, the legislature enacted the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA), and the board took on new components, including convening the Professional Judgment Panel (PJP) and overseeing the development and deployment of a comprehensive, multi-tiered system of support, managing expanded accreditation requirements, and determining graduation requirements, among other things. In 2015, the U.S. Congress also passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); cementing an even greater need for active, nonpartisan state boards across the nation.

The Wyoming State Board of Education is mainly seated by 11 volunteer regional representatives, appointed by the governor for staggered six-year terms. There are currently two additional ex-officio members, State Superintendent Jillian Balow and executive director of the Wyoming

Community College Commission, Jim Rose. The board will soon add an ex-officio member from the University of Wyoming.

State Board composition ensures broad stakeholder representation; members begin with an understanding of community concerns and ideas, and they continue the conversation throughout their tenure on the board. Citizens and partners in education have direct access to board members and are invited to offer input at any time.



# Accountability

Wyoming's Supreme Court guarantees students equal access to a quality education. The Wyoming Accountability in Education Act was designed to hold schools, leadership and teachers to a universal set of standards, and to help each improve performance. The board is responsible for developing accountability rules for evaluations, and has joined a system of support and collaborative council to promote educator and student success. A State Board member also sits on an advisory council to the Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability, which provides additional stakeholder engagement opportunities.

## Assessment

The board partners with the Wyoming Department of Education to approve rigorous assessments of student knowledge that measure proficiency and student progress, and promote college and career readiness. Assessments are one of several accountability measures, and include statewide tests (PAWS, MAP and ACT) as well as locally developed and administered assessments of the Wyoming State Content and Performance Standards. Assessments provide information about teaching and learning which assist schools, educators, students and parents in improvement efforts.



# Standards

The board approves the Wyoming State Content and Performance Standards across nine content areas. Standards ensure that all schools align their locally developed curricula with the same expectations, and are designed to promote college and career success in a 21st century economy. Standards must be reviewed or updated at least every nine years. Stakeholders are offered a number of opportunities to share input through review committees, public meetings, online engagement and extensive public comment periods.

# Accreditation

Wyoming citizens want to know how well their local schools are performing as measured against statewide standards for teaching, curricula and student success. Wyoming's K-12 schools are accredited by the State Board of Education, using the AdvancED process which empowers districts to implement remedies and improve performance.



Thank you to all citizens who have served on the Wyoming State Board of Education for the past 100 years, ensuring every student has equal access to a quality education.



To learn more about Wyoming's  
State Board of Education, visit  
[edu.wyoming.gov/board](http://edu.wyoming.gov/board)