



WYOMING
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Creating Opportunities
for Students to Keep
Wyoming Strong*

Jillian Balow

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dicky Shanor

Chief of Staff

Brent Bacon

Chief Academic Officer

Lisa Weigel

Chief Policy Officer

Dianne Bailey

Chief Operations Officer

Cheyenne Office

Hathaway Building, 2nd Floor
2300 Capitol Avenue
Cheyenne WY 82002-2060
Phone: (307) 777-7675
Fax: (307) 777-6234

Riverton Office

320 West Main
Riverton, WY 82501
Phone: (307) 857-9250
Fax: (307) 857-9256

On the Web

edu.wyoming.gov
wyomingmeasuresup.com

MEMORANDUM NO. 2016-096

TO: District Superintendents
High School Principals
High School Counselors
Accountability Coordinators
WISE Coordinators
Technology Coordinators

FROM: Lisa Weigel, Chief Policy Officer

DATE: August 22, 2016

SUBJECT: 2016-17 Pilot for Alternative School Accountability

YEAR 1 PILOT FOR ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

Note: Although this memo pertains to alternative school accountability, some parts of the model solicit action from ALL Wyoming high schools. Please read carefully.

During the 2015 legislative session, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) was directed to form an Alternative Schools Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and develop a framework for alternative school accountability. The TAG was charged with developing a system that provides more accurate representations of alternative school performance than the current model under the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA). [Alternative school accountability](#) will be based on a model that meaningfully differentiates performance among *alternative* schools, rather than comparing them to traditional high schools. The performance expectations for students remain the same, and the overall goal continues to be the improvement of alternative schools.

The [original framework](#) was presented to the legislature in October 2015. In the 2016 legislative session, the WDE was further directed to develop business rules for a pilot. The business rules were created in collaboration with the TAG and aligned to the framework presented in 2015. There will be two pilot years as the alternative school accountability model is implemented and refined. Year 1 is school year 2016-17, and Year 2 is 2017-18. During both years of the pilot, alternative schools will receive performance reports for informational purposes only; an official school performance rating will not be assigned. An overview of the accountability model for alternative schools can be found [here](#), along with the [revised framework](#) that was submitted to the legislature on July 1, 2016. Additionally, an [implementation manual](#) is provided for your reference.

What will change for alternative schools during Year 1 of the pilot (2016-17)?

The framework for alternative school accountability is comprised of four indicators: Academic Performance, Readiness, Climate, and Engagement. Below is a description of each indicator:

Academic Performance

Just like the current model under WAEA, Achievement and Growth will be part of the alternative school accountability model. The student performance levels will remain the same for Achievement until new cut scores are set after Year 2 of the pilot. Achievement scores will be based upon an achievement index that is described in the pilot year [implementation manual](#). Median Growth Percentiles (MGP) will continue to be used to determine Growth.

Readiness

The Readiness indicator will include Hathaway eligibility and graduation rate just like the current model. However, credit earning will include credits earned in grades 9, 10, and 11 and will be computed based on credits earned over credits **attempted** in each grade level. This is different from the current model in which only credits earned in 9th grade are included and the denominator is the number of credits **required** for an on-time graduation. Alternative high schools will need to provide transcripts that include credits earned for students who were enrolled in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade during the 2015-16 school year on the WDE949. The submission window for the WDE949 will be October 3-28, 2016.

Attainment is a sub-indicator of Readiness and is based on “exit outcomes” for students enrolled at an alternative school. Examples of exit outcomes are a high school diploma (including extended time graduation), a high school equivalency certificate, and post-secondary credits earned during a student’s enrollment at the alternative high school. The aforementioned [links](#) provide details about Attainment (exit outcomes) and how they will be included in the model.

Climate

The alternative school accountability model will include two indicators not present in the current model: Climate and Engagement.

Climate will be measured through a student survey, which will be administered by all alternative high schools during the **week of October 17, 2016** and again during the **week of February 20, 2017** on a day and time chosen by the district during each window. ***All high schools are invited to participate in the student survey***, but it is required for all alternative high schools.

The survey contains 20 questions about students perceptions related to *trust, respect, high expectations, and support* – concepts which have been linked to high-performing schools¹. Each question is followed by a Likert scale in which students can indicate their level of agreement with each item. Additionally, the survey includes one open-ended question: “Is there anything else you want to tell us about your experience at this school?” The survey will be administered online and should take no longer than 20 minutes for students to complete. Administration guidelines and the survey questions can be found on pages 12-17 of the [July 1 report](#).

Traditional high schools that wish to participate in the student survey must notify Julie Magee **no later than September 6, 2016**. Additionally, all participating high schools, including the alternative schools,

will need to provide a student roster by **September 16, 2016**. The WDE opened a collection called the WDE688 Climate Survey Roster that is posted on the [forms inventory page](#). The collection window will be **September 12-16**. Roster information will be shared with the vendor, Panorama Education, who will assign a unique identifier to each student. This identifier will be used by students to login and will prevent students from responding to the survey multiple times. The race, ethnicity, and other subgroup information will be used to provide aggregated reports back to the state, district, and schools. *Individual student responses will not be reported back to the WDE or district staff*. Panorama Education has provided a [technology checklist](#) for district Technology Directors to review to ensure they are setup to support online survey-taking.

Engagement

Engagement will be assessed through a Student Success Plan (SSP). The legislature required the inclusion of a SSP during the 2016 session. The purpose of the SSP is to provide relevant feedback and actionable goals for alternative school students. Each student will work with a mentor at least twice per year to examine the following components: *student goals/interests, academic history, attendance rate/history, and post-secondary plans*.

The TAG has provided guidance and a template for the SSP (see pages 18-29 of the [July 1 report](#)). Alternative schools are not required to use this template and may create their own form so long as the required components listed in the previous paragraph are included. **During Year 1 of the pilot (2016-17), the SSP is optional.**

Next Steps

The purpose of each pilot year is to determine which components of the framework will work for alternative school accountability and which components will need to be revised. Following the first pilot, the TAG will reconvene and refine the model as needed. Additional refinements may be made after the second pilot, and cut scores will be set following the 2017-18 school year. The alternative school accountability model is scheduled to be fully implemented by the 2018-19 school year.

For questions about the alternative school accountability model, please contact Julie Magee, Director of Accountability, at 307-777-8740 or julie.magee@wyo.gov.

¹Anthony S. Bryk, Penny Bender Sebring, Elaine Allensworth, Stuart Luppescu, John Q. Easton. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*, University of Chicago Press.