



MEMORANDUM

To: Representative Del McOmie, Co-Chair, Joint Education Committee
Senator Hank Coe, Co-Chair, Joint Education Committee

From: Lawrence O. Picus

RE: Summer School and Extended Day Issues for December JEC Meeting

Date: November 20, 2007

This memo summarizes our recommendations regarding summer school funding in Wyoming. Our recommendations are based on extensive conversations with the summer school design team (including meeting with the committee on November 14, 2007), and on evidence available to develop an effective, cost based funding program.

It is our position that summer school funding is part of a set of strategies to help struggling students. These strategies should be designed to help struggling students succeed in the regular curriculum and meet Wyoming student performance standards. As such, summer school and extended day programs should be funded through a separate categorical program outside of the Wyoming School Funding Model's block grant.

While we support (and encourage) the use of enriched learning strategies to master statewide content and performance standards in summer school for struggling students, our funding recommendations do not include funding for academic enrichment programs beyond support for struggling students. If school districts wish to provide such enrichment, we believe it is appropriately and adequately funded through existing funding levels in the Wyoming School Funding Model's block grant.

BACKGROUND

The November 2005 recalibration report calls for providing extended day and summer school to 1/2 the at risk count in classes of 15. Our estimate in that report is that each 15 students in either summer school or extended day generate 0.25 of an FTE teacher position, and under that assumption each program would cost about \$15 million.

These programs were not included in the funding model in 2006 and instead current policy is to provide funding of \$1,000 per student for 10% of the ADM in a district. This costs about \$9 million in 2007-08. There are a series of regulations that guide how schools can use the money, but the main issues of concern about the program include: with what is offered; how much time

is spent in the classes; how many weeks of summer school are offered; and whether extended day and summer school funding should be combined or separate. At the present time, extended day programs can be provided through the summer school funds if district choose, but are not funded separately.

Additionally, since many districts had substantial carryovers of summer school funding in past years, the state currently only pays districts for actual program expenditures up to the program generated funding level (10% of ADM times \$1,000).

Recommendations

Following a meeting with the summer school design team, Lawrence O. Picus and Associates recommend the following policies for summer school and extended day programs:

Categorical Funding: We recommend the state continue to fund summer school and extended day through a categorical funding program rather than as part of the block grant. Districts would be eligible for funding as determined by the formula described below, but would only receive revenues for actual expenditures they incur, up to the categorical funding level.

Funding Level: In accord with the recommendation of the summer school design team, we support funding the program at a level of 0.09 FTE teachers for every 30 at risk students for summer school and 0.06 FTE teachers for every 30 at risk students for extended day programs, for a total of 0.15 FTE teachers for each 30 at risk students in a district. At risk students are defined as those qualifying for free and reduced price lunch, ELL and mobile students in grades 6-12. In addition, each school district would receive minimum funding equivalent to 0.5 FTE for summer school and extended day programs. Current estimates anticipate a funding level of approximately \$10 million per year (including monitoring, teacher training, administration, and statewide assessment programs), with seven districts receiving the estimated minimum payment (which varies by district depending on the average salary of teachers in each district). Finally, we recommend that districts choosing not to utilize the full level of funding available for these programs only be reimbursed for the amount expended in summer school and extended day programs for struggling students, AND that they not be reimbursed for expenditures exceeding the amount of the categorical grant – such expenditures would thus come from their block grant funding.

Use of Funds: The actual distribution of expenditures between summer school and extended day would be determined by each district, but total expenditures funded through the categorical grant would be limited to no more than the amount of the categorical program.

Instructional Time: The November 2005 recalibration report recommended six week summer school programs with at least four hours a day devoted to core curriculum and two hour per day, five day per week extended day programs. The summer school design team has recommended a minimum of 60 hours of instruction over at least 15 days for summer school, and a minimum of sixty instructional hours per subject for high school students. No recommendations were made for extended day. Current funding estimates are based on 60 hours of instruction and 30 hours of planning time per teacher for summer school (0.09 FTE) and 60 hours of instruction for extended day programs (0.06 FTE).

Adequacy

These recommendations are less than the recommendations contained in our November 2005 recalibration report. However they represent a consensus of Wyoming based educators as to an adequate level of summer school and extended day services for struggling students. Thus we believe that using this funding level at present and continuing to assess the adequacy of summer school and extended day support for struggling students is consistent with our proposals in that document. At these lower levels of instructional time (and funding), we strongly recommend that the instructional focus be on core subjects.