

HB 126
HEA 102

MATTHEW H. MEAD
GOVERNOR



2323 Carey Avenue
CHEYENNE, WY 82002

Office of the Governor

March 14, 2017

The Honorable Edward F. Murray, III
Secretary of State
2020 Carey Ave 6th Floor
Cheyenne, WY 82002



Dear Secretary Murray,

I have vetoed House Enrolled Act (HEA) 102, original House Bill (HB) 126, Elementary School Foreign Language Requirement.

Multiple studies report that the elementary school years are an ideal time to offer foreign language instruction. The most direct result is that young students are able to more effectively learn a foreign language. Additional benefits include the opportunity to learn about other cultures, as well as increased cognitive learning benefits. The research in this area is compelling.

Districts across the state have broad authority in the manner of offering instruction to students. Some districts have opened dual language immersion schools, with remarkable student results. These districts are effectively going beyond the current standards to capture the benefits of teaching foreign language to elementary school students. A statute that makes foreign language optional, inevitably, will result in opportunities for some students that are not available to other similarly situated students.

The Legislature also passed HEA125, original HB236, omnibus education funding. HEA125 creates a select committee of the Legislature. Its duties include "a study to review the state educational program under W.S. 21-9-101." We do not know what changes, if any, will be made to the Common Core of Knowledge or the Common Core of Skills in this statute. Stability is important. I do not believe it is prudent to change the (g) portion of the statute only to review and revise again, perhaps with a different outcome.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction has written a letter of concern about HEA102 and has proposed that computational coding could satisfy the foreign language requirement. This is an approach being used in schools across the country with positive results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew H. Mead".

Matthew H. Mead
Governor

MHM:dp

cc: The Honorable Eli Bebout, President, Wyoming Senate
The Honorable Steve Harshman, Speaker of the House, Wyoming House of Representatives
Matt Obrecht, Director, Legislative Service Office