

# A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR A STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR WYOMING

A Report from the Collaborative Council of the  
Wyoming Statewide System of Support to the State  
Board of Education

**Written on behalf of the Statewide System of Support Collaborative  
Council by:**  
**Joel Dvorak, Facilitator**  
**Statewide System of Support Collaborative Council**

April 8, 2016

## Collaborative Council Members

1. **University of Wyoming, College of Education**
  - a. **Audrey Kleinsasser, Ph.D.**, Executive Director of School/University Partnership
  - b. **Leslie Rush, Ph.D.**, Associate Dean
2. **Wyoming Center for Educational Leadership**
  - a. **Mark Stock, Ed.D.**, Director
3. **Wyoming Association of School Administrators**
  - a. **Kevin Mitchell**, Superintendent, Park County SD#1
  - b. **Gerry Chase, Ed.D.**, Superintendent, Johnson County SD#1
  - c. **Diana Clapp**, Superintendent, Fremont County SD#6
  - d. **Owen St. Clair**, Superintendent, Fremont County SD#14
4. **Wyoming Community College Commission**
  - a. **Jim Rose, Ed.D.**, Executive Director
5. **Wyoming State Curriculum Directors**
  - a. **Kelly Hornby**, Assistant Superintendent, Campbell County
  - b. **Joanne Flanagan, Ed.D.**, Assistant Superintendent, Fremont 25
6. **Wyoming Association of Secondary Principals**
  - a. **Ken Griffith**, Executive Director
7. **Wyoming Association of Elementary Principals**
  - a. **Scott Schiller**, Principal, Southside Elementary, Powell
8. **Wyoming Education Association**
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  - b. **Jeff Jelskey**, High School Teacher, Natrona County High School, Casper
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  - b. **Pete Gosar**, Chairman, or designee
  - c. **Kathryn Sessions**, Board Member
10. **Wyoming Department of Education**
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  - b. **Jillian Balow**, Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee
  - c. **Shelly Andrews**, Accountability Division
11. **Professional Teacher Standards Board**
  - a. **Andrea Bryant**, Executive Director
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12. **Wyoming School Boards Association**
  - a. **Brian Farmer, JD.**, Executive Director
  - b. **Janine Teske**, President
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  - a. **Mick Wiest**, Instructional Facilitator for Development of Professional Learning Communities, Sheridan (2014 Wyoming Teacher of the Year)
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# **A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR A STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR WYOMING**

## **Introduction**

The Collaborative Council focused its work on the creation of a Statewide System of Support that can be successfully deployed, that is sustainable, and that will build capacity in all Wyoming schools as part of a concerted effort to improve student outcomes.

The Council was guided in its work by the January 2012 Accountability Report; Wyoming State Statute W.S. 21-2-204 (f) and (k); and the Governance Study for the State of Wyoming Joint Interim Education Committee submitted on September 10, 2014, by Cross & Jofus. The Council used these documents as guides to establish the parameters of the Statewide System of Support and to ensure that the system design met all the requirements of state statute. The Council members then employed their expertise and varied perspectives to generate recommendations for a Statewide System of Support that would build capacity for all districts and schools in Wyoming as they work to improve outcomes for students. We highlight the recommendations below and then provide details in the sections that follow.

### **Collaborative Council Recommendations**

1. Develop a mission for the Collaborative Council and a framework to ensure that the Council becomes an enduring and resilient initiative that can consolidate the efforts and utilize the resources of multiple educational agencies in the state.
2. Create a strategic plan for the Statewide System of Support with goals, strategies, and action steps that delineate a clear path to implementation.
3. Create a logic model that communicates the framework and process for supporting schools and districts as they work to improve student outcomes.
4. Provide support to the schools in Wyoming demonstrating the greatest need during the 2015-16 school year; transitioning the Statewide System of Support to align with requirements of The Every Student Succeeds Act during the 2016-17 school year; and continuing to design a comprehensive support system for all schools.
5. Develop an Evaluation Model for the Statewide System of Support to measure its effectiveness.

The remainder of this document is organized by first providing more detail regarding each recommendation above and then offering a rationale for the recommendation. The final part of this document is a discussion of challenges that need to be overcome for the successful implementation of each of the recommendations as well as a discussion of the potential of this unique framework to build a positive collective impact on Wyoming's pK-12 education system.

### **Recommendations for a Statewide System of Support for Wyoming**

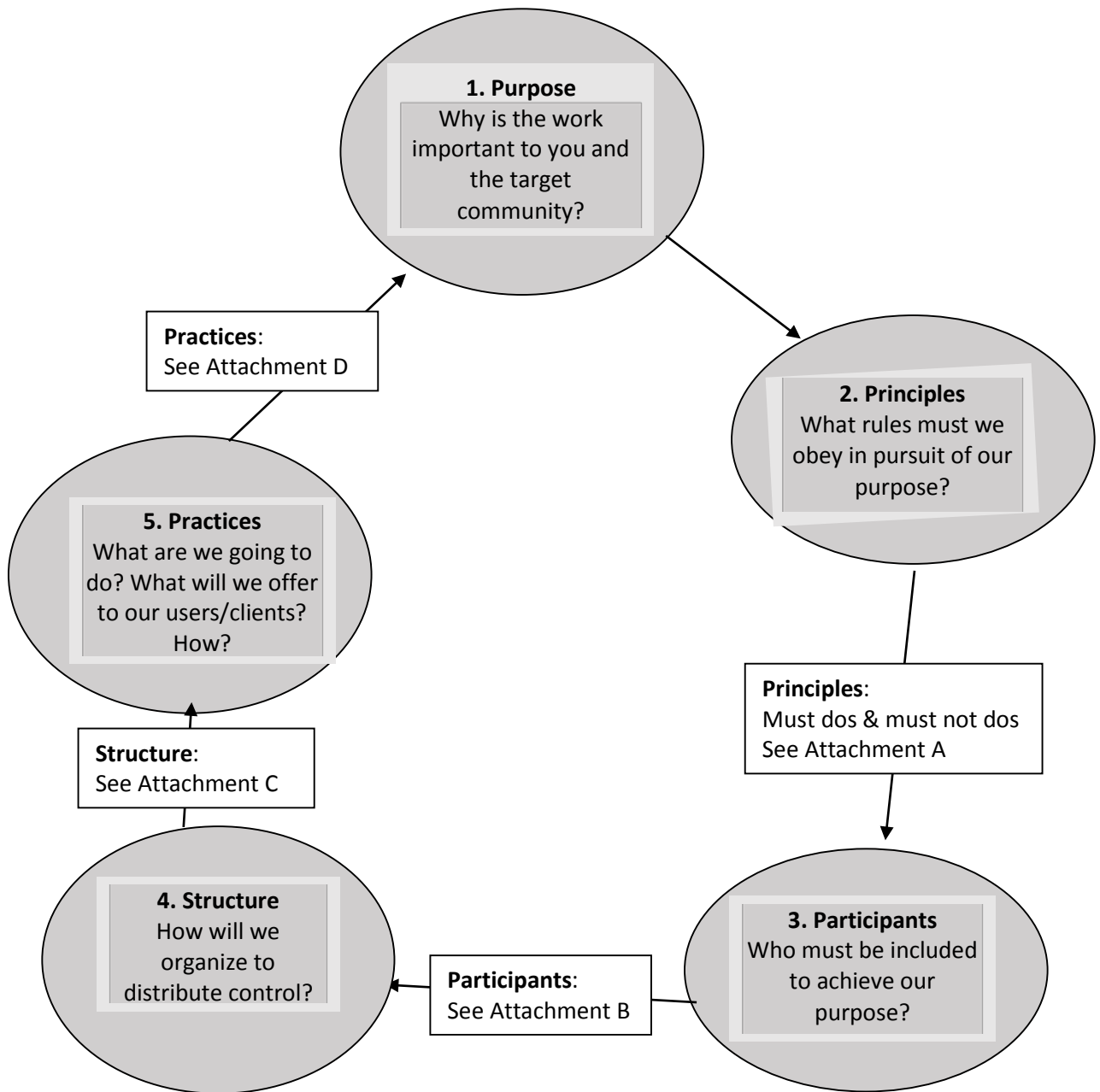
#### Recommendation #1: A Framework for an Enduring and Resilient Collaborative Council

It is recommended that the Collaborative Council for the Statewide System of Support adhere to the Five Principles of an Enduring Initiative developed collaboratively over a series of Council meetings. The process used to create the framework of a durable and resilient Collaborative Council was adapted from the work of Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless in their book, *The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures* (2013). The Purpose to Practice (P2P) liberating structure guided the Collaborative Council as it worked to define the five principles it would employ to become a high performing initiative that would thrive far into the future regardless of the “changing of the guard” in state governance structures. The following page is the P2P framework. It is followed by the attachments that provide detail to the function of the Collaborative Council.

**Principles to Practice (P2P) Model**  
**SSoS Collaborative Council**

**Purpose:**

The Collaborative Council exists to provide strategic direction for the purpose of unifying and aligning the efforts of multiple education stakeholders who will develop and deploy an effective Statewide System of Support for all Wyoming students.



Source: Lipmanowicz, Henri & McCandless, Keith. *The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures: Simple Rules to Unleash a Culture of Innovation*. San Bernardino: Liberating Structures Press. 2013. Print.

## **Attachment A**

### **“Must Do’s” from February 5, 2016 Collaborative Council Meeting**

#### **Norms for the Collaborative Council**

1. Remember your customers
2. Communicate back to the organization you represent
3. Bring your organizations feedback to the Council
4. Attend and engage in Council meetings
5. Be a learner
6. Be a listener
7. Limit distractions
8. Complete tasks (be dependable)
9. Be Action Oriented
10. Rise above the politics
11. Exhibit systems thinking
12. Honor collective agreements
13. Display equitable treatment for all agencies
14. Establish clarity
15. Empower the target constituencies
16. Build systems and work that are sustainable

## Attachment B

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## **Attachment C**

### **Structures for Collaborative Council**

1. The Collaborative Council recommends that at an appropriate time WDE hire a director for the Statewide System of Support: The person holding this position will lead the continued deployment of the SSOS and facilitate the work of the Collaborative Council.
2. The Council will use the DuFour's Model for Consensus Decision Making. It is defined as follows:

Consensus is achieved when:

  - a. All points of view have not only been heard but solicited, and
  - b. The will of the group is evident to those who most oppose it.
3. Agencies who are a part of the Council will use their own processes for rotating/transitioning their representatives on the Collaborative Council. A priority is to stagger transitions so the Council maintains its history and integrity. The director shall communicate clearly to prospective members:
  - a. The length of terms (TBD)
  - b. The time commitment required
  - c. The responsibilities of council members (See Attachment A)
  - d. The process by which members are accepted to or released from the Collaborative Council (TBD)
4. A communication document will be prepared with "Talking Points" at the end of each Council meeting.
5. Format for meetings: face-to-face vs. ZOOM technology, will be determined at a later date.

## Attachment D

### Practices of the Statewide System of Support

#### SSOS Goal

**The Goal of the Statewide System of Support is to increase the percentage of schools that meet or exceed Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) expectations each year and to assist all schools toward demonstrating improvement by school year 2022-23.**

#### Strategies

**Strategy #1:** Inform continuous improvement through comprehensive needs assessment.

#### **Action Steps:**

1. The Wyoming Department of Education will complete steps 1, 2, and 3 of the SSOS Logic Model by Summer, 2016, for the 17 schools identified by the Wyoming Accountability Framework as “not meeting expectations” for two consecutive years.
  - a. Dr. Dvorak will set a second meeting with each superintendent/leadership team to coordinate with the Data Review/Root Cause Analysis training dates.
  - b. Dr. Dvorak will bring plus/deltas back to the Collaborative Council from each meeting with districts to inform continuous improvement of the process.
  - c. The Council will build a glossary of terms for the Statewide System of Support.
  - d. The WDE team will complete an electronic meeting with each of the 17 schools and 12 districts to discuss and inform leadership as to process and rules of the system of support and Wyoming Accountability Model. All efforts will comply with ESSA requirements.
2. The Wyoming Department of Education will build and execute a Data and Root Cause Analysis Retreat by summer of 2016.
  - a. A team from WDE and the Collaborative Council will meet to coordinate the Data and Root Cause Analysis Retreat with the Human Centered Design/Root Cause Model.
  - b. Joel Dvorak and Mick Wiest will plan a pilot of the Human Centered Design Root Cause Model with Supt. Owen St. Clair of Wyoming Indian Schools when appropriate.
  - c. School level needs assessment will result in a comprehensive plan for school improvement.
3. The Wyoming Center for Educational Leadership will offer an academy, the content of which will be primarily based on conducting needs assessment for schools (Syllabus to include root cause analysis training, etc.). It will be open to all schools.

**Strategy #2:** Build capacity in all schools, districts, and the state through collaborative processes, communication, and a commitment to high student achievement.

#### **Action Steps:**

1. Modify and integrate the Wyoming Association of School Administrators Statewide PLC Model into a Statewide System of Support Model.
  - a. A team from WDE and the Council will work on integrating the Statewide PLC Flowchart.



- b. WDE will develop the job descriptions, deliverables, and contracts for the SSOS Director and Regional Support Coordinators.
  - c. The Director will develop a training program for regional support coordinators that include the following skill sets: Professional Learning Communities, AdvancED Accreditation, Needs Assessment, Coaching of Adults, Networking Practices, and Understanding Poverty.
  - d. WDE may hire or assign staff as a Director of the Statewide System of Support that will also lead the Collaborative Council.
  - e. The Director will create and lead a high performing team of regional support coordinators.
2. Continue the Work of Project ECHO.
    - a. Engage in ECHO projects for principals (to be focused on turn around strategies).
    - b. Use ECHO Project as a mechanism to provide training and bridge the gap before full implementation of the SSOS can be implemented.
    - c. Provide professional development and training on Professional Learning Communities through an ECHO Project in Educational Leadership.
    - d. Joel Dvorak will work collaboratively with district superintendents to build regional networks around the state. One objective will be build rural networks to share best practice and professional development.
    - e. Seek necessary resources: District funds (IF positions), State Funds (SSOS Director, School Needs Assessment and ECHO)
    - f. Scale the initial work of ECHO to fill regional support coordinators positions who will continue to network districts/schools with ECHO resources.
    - g. Identify methods of leveraging various funding sources to support capacity building.
  3. Continue and expand executive leadership coaching training through WyCEL (7 principals are currently being coached).

One of the unique and powerful aspects of this recommendation for the Wyoming Statewide System of Support is the structure and function of the Collaborative Council. Because of the size, population and nature of Wyoming it was possible to bring key stakeholders from 15 education agencies together to shape and support this recommendation. The collective intelligence and unique perspectives of the leaders of these agencies have been put to good use in this effort. Each representative's expertise and perspective on Wyoming's pK-12 education system was heard, valued, and incorporated into the design of this model. An added benefit to the work of the Collaborative Council is the ownership of this system and the support that goes along with that ownership. Fifteen education agencies that have a direct role in shaping Wyoming's pK-12 education system now have ownership in the Statewide System of Support because they were involved in the design process that created it.

The ownership and cooperation engendered by active participation in the design process of this system of support by these 15 agencies is unique to the state of Wyoming's model. The Wyoming State Board of Education and the Wyoming Department of Education are to be commended for supporting the development of this organic model. No other state system of support of which we are aware has involved this type of collaborative effort. As the Collaborative Council continues to mature and improve in its function, it will become even more effective in setting strategic direction, deploying effective strategies, and creating a positive (and aligned) collective impact on the pK-12 education system in Wyoming.

## Recommendation #2: A Strategic Plan for the Statewide System of Support

It is recommended that the Strategic Plan developed by the Collaborative Council guide the deployment of the Statewide System of Support. The Strategic Goal of the Statewide System of Support is to increase the percentage of schools that will meet or exceed Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) expectations each year and to assist all schools toward demonstrating improvement by school year 2021-22. This goal is supported by two major strategies:

1. Inform continuous improvement through comprehensive needs assessment.
2. Build capacity in all schools, districts, and the state through collaborative processes, communication, and a commitment to high student achievement.

Each of these comprehensive strategies is supported by a continuously evolving and improving set of action steps. The first strategy is being acted upon in the 2015-16 school year by deploying data and root cause analysis retreats facilitated by Wyoming Department of Education staff for the 17 schools in Wyoming who have “not met expectations” for two consecutive years as determined by the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act metrics. As follow-up to the school data summits, a root cause analysis is being conducted with each school. The root cause analysis findings inform the schools’ improvement planning documents and processes. The school data summits have begun, and the intent is to complete the first round of work with 17 schools by the summer of 2016

There is also an effort underway to build a Root Cause Analysis process using Human Centered Design to enhance the Data and Root Cause Analysis Retreat currently being implemented. Most barriers to high student achievement in schools and districts fall into two general categories: structural barriers and/or attitudinal barriers. The intent of the Human Centered Design Process is to go deeper into the attitudinal barriers that may be contributing to a culture that does not promote/support all students learning at high levels. These attitudinal barriers may exist in the classroom, the building, the district or the community. This human centered design process is intended to help discover the root attitudinal cause wherever it may exist in a district/community.

One major action step that supports the second strategy of building capacity in schools, districts and the state through collaborative processes, communication and a commitment to high student achievement is the development and deployment of a regional support model. This model entails the deployment of regional support coordinators that would not only serve schools and districts within their region but across the entire state, based upon matching needs with expertise. These regional support coordinators would bring with them a wide variety of experiences and a high degree of credibility from successfully leading effective and high performing classroom/schools/districts in Wyoming. They would also receive common training and become highly skilled in the areas of: Professional Learning Communities, AdvancED Accreditation, Needs Assessment, School Improvement, Coaching Adults, Understanding Poverty and Networking. This high performing team of Wyoming educators will become the workforce of hands-on people who will work directly and continuously with schools and districts to support the hard work of improving student achievement. They will build positive, trusting relationships with the educators in their region and come to have intimate knowledge of each school’s culture and school improvement efforts. This direct, on-site regional support model is the cornerstone of the strategy to build capacity in all schools in Wyoming.

This regional model for supporting and building capacity in schools/districts is not only advocated by the Collaborative Council but is also supported by the Governance Study for the State of Wyoming Joint Interim Education Committee submitted on September 10, 2014, by Cross & Jofus. On pages 33 and 34 of this report one reads the following: “Educators with proven track records should be hired and assigned as **Regional Support Coordinators** to: get to know the strengths and needs of their assigned districts and schools well, and –coordinate supports and information sharing with the WDE, other districts, and other providers, as appropriate.”

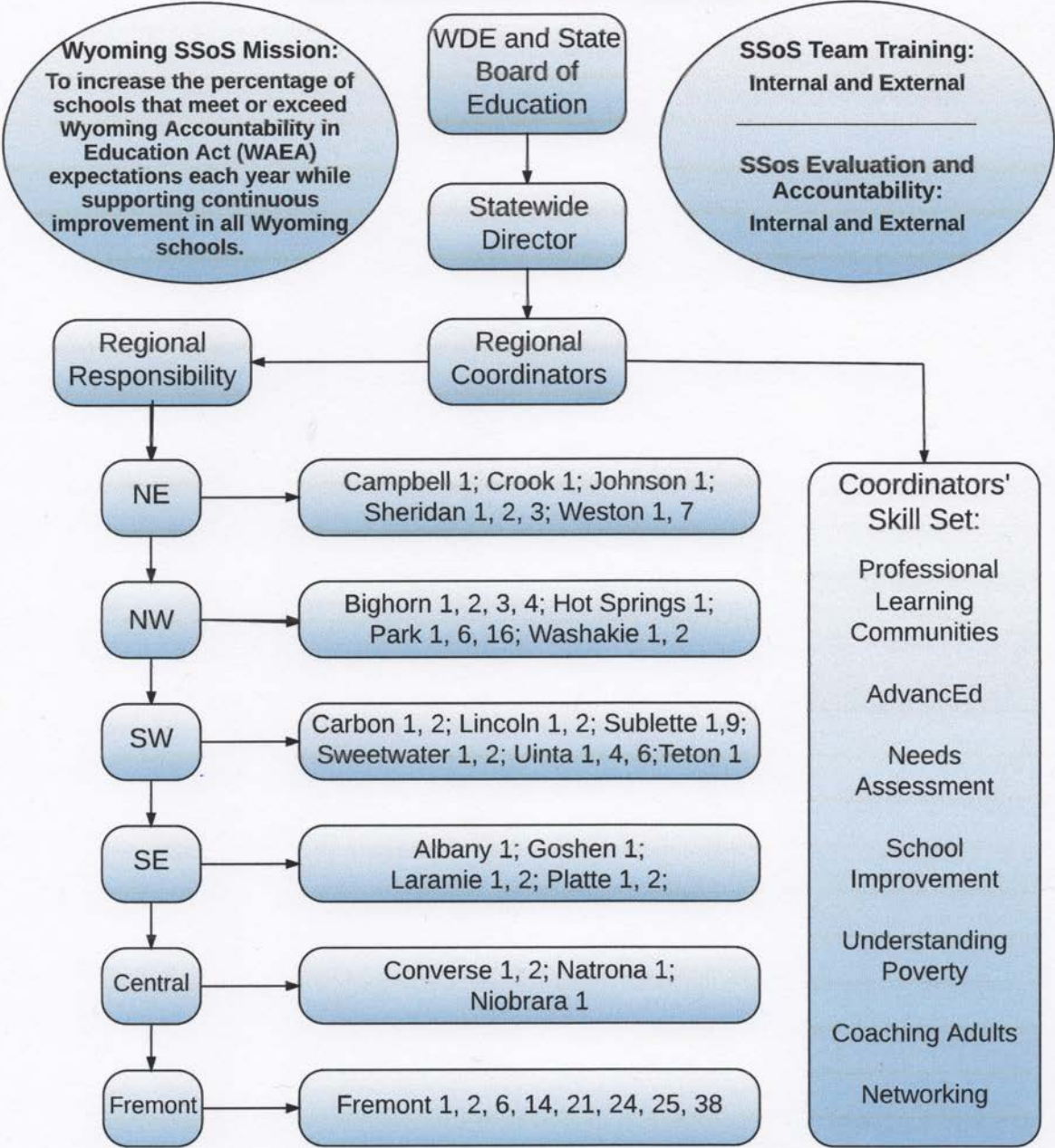
On the following page you will find a Statewide System of Support Flowchart that describes the structure of the regional support model. This model distributes the resource of regional support coordinators in an equitable

manner. It also takes into consideration the extra support needed in Fremont County as they work hard to meet the needs of the Native American student population in that county. The model also recommends that a Director for the Statewide System of Support be hired to lead the development, training and deployment of the regional model as well as facilitate the work of the Collaborative Council.

The first work of the Director of the Statewide System of Support would be to deploy a support system for one or two regions in the state. This first work would support the most needy schools as well as create lighthouse schools/districts that could act as models and hubs for sharing of best practice for the entire state. These two regions would be lay the groundwork for and would act as a bridge to full implementation of the regional model when funds become available. The level of funding for the Statewide System of Support during the 2016-17 school year will determine the deployment of the two region model.

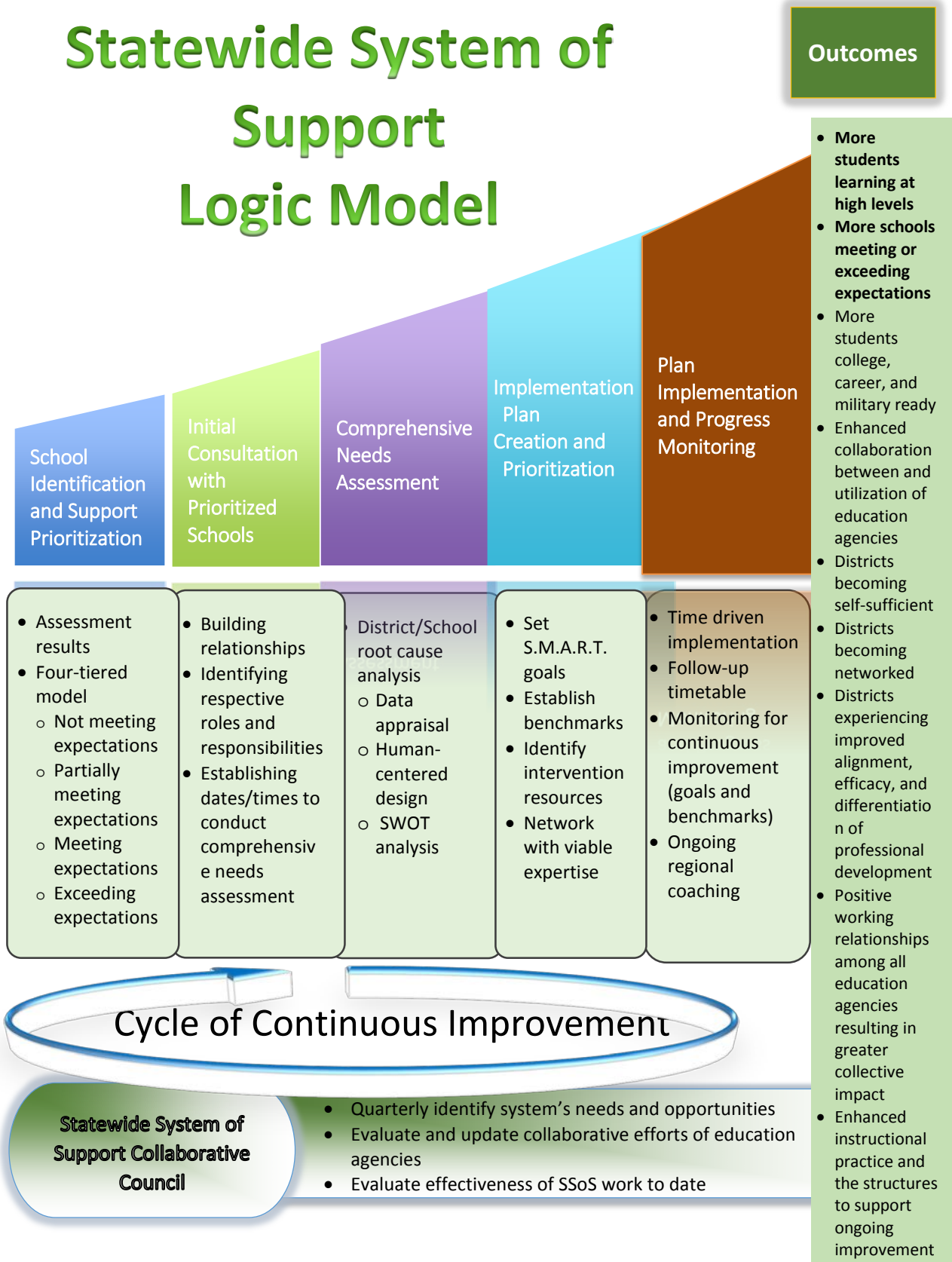
# Statewide System of Support

Building High-Performance Learning Systems through Collaborative Frameworks and Targeted Support



Recommendation #3: A Logic Model for the Statewide System of Support

It is recommended that the Statewide System of Support be informed by the following Logic Model:



This one-page logic model is an implementation framework for the Statewide System of Support that reflects the strategic thinking of the Collaborative Council. This model contains the major strategies and action steps that are a part of the strategic planning process undertaken by the Council. This one document brings coherence and alignment to the strategic work of the Council and the implementation framework to deploy the Statewide System of Support.

One important outcome that will be forthcoming from this Logic Model will be its use as the framework for an implementation handbook that will be developed and shared with all school districts in Wyoming. The various sections can be explained in greater detail in a pull-down menu on a WDE web page. In addition, this logic model can be used as a single page communication guide to frame how the Statewide System of Support will use the continuous improvement process to help build capacity in all schools. This framework can and will be differentiated to meet the individual needs of all schools. Schools that are not meeting expectations as well as those that are partially meeting, meeting, or exceeding expectations can all benefit from this framework.

#### Recommendation #4: A 2015-16 and 2016-17 Action Plan for Supporting Schools “Not Meeting Expectations”

It is recommended that the Statewide System of Support focus its initial efforts on positively affecting those schools in Wyoming demonstrating the greatest need during the 2015-16 school year; transitioning the Statewide System of Support to align with requirements of The Every Student Succeeds Act during the 2016-17 school year; and continuing to design a comprehensive support system for all schools. It is clear to the State Board of Education, the Wyoming Department of Education and all the agencies represented on the Collaborative Council that we have schools in Wyoming that need support in raising student achievement right now. This urgency was not lost on the Collaborative Council. Therefore, some of the first work of the Council was to determine what action steps could be taken immediately to provide support to those schools.

These actions included face-to-face meetings with the leadership of each district, a Web meeting with each district (led by Brent Young), one-to-one principal coaching, professional development through the ECHO project, formative assessment training, and the deployment of the data and root cause analysis retreats. Joel Dvorak executed the meetings with each district’s superintendent and/or leadership team. The purposes of these meetings were to build relationships with the leaders, explain the work of the Collaborative Council, complete a simple needs assessment, and bring information back to the Council to inform next steps. The Web meetings led by Brent Young were intended to inform each of the 17 schools and their district leadership about the statutes, rules, and regulations that will impact them as they move through the processes of the Wyoming Accountability Model. These meetings were very well received and opened a dialog that led to the first data and root cause analysis retreat deployment in Fremont County. The Wyoming Center for Educational Leadership initiated a one-to-one principal coaching model that has included principals of schools most in need as well as the ECHO Project that provides professional development through the internet on a weekly basis. In addition, formative assessment training was delivered regionally by the Wyoming Department of Education. That training involved over 1000 teachers across Wyoming. Finally, on-site data and root cause analysis retreats are being scheduled this spring for the remaining schools that have been categorized as “not meeting expectations” for two years.

The support for these schools/districts will continue into the next school year with the addition of regular on-site coaching. As these schools and districts modify their school improvement plans as a result of the root cause analysis, on-site coaching will be provided to support implementation of strategies that the districts/schools have determined will best serve the needs of their teachers and students. This differentiation of support based on specific school/district needs is a critical attribute to this support framework.

The 2016-17 school year will be a time of transition for the Statewide System of Support. The schools most in need will continue to be supported using the methods mentioned above. In addition, much work will be undertaken by the members of the Collaborative Council to align the Statewide System of Support with the requirements of the

Federal Every Student Succeeds Act. The Wyoming Legislature has determined that one of the topics that will be studied in the interim this year is the alignment of the Wyoming Accountability Model to the Every Student Succeeds Act. This interim study and the recommendations that come out of this work will have a major impact on the Wyoming Accountability Model and therefore will also impact the Statewide System of Support Framework.

One specific change from the new federal legislation that will impact Wyoming's Accountability Model is the identification and separation of subgroups for accountability purposes. This change will impact the process and metrics used to determine which schools are identified as not meeting, partially meeting, meeting or exceeding expectations. The Statewide System of Support Logic Model will need to be modified to reflect these changes. This is just one example of how the Every Student Succeeds Act will impact Wyoming Accountability Model, which will impact the Statewide System of Support, which will impact how schools are identified for different levels of support. There are several additional examples of how the changes in federal law will trickle down to impact the Statewide System of Support Framework. As each of these changes become better defined through federal rules and regulations, the education community in Wyoming will continue the work of aligning our systems and processes to meet the expectations of the federal law. The Collaborative Council will be very active in steering the Statewide System of Support through this time of transition while continuing the monitoring and deploying of support for our schools.

#### Recommendation #5: An Evaluation Model for the Statewide System of Support

It is recommended that the work of the Collaborative Council and the Statewide System of Support be evaluated by outside experts to best inform all stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of deployment and the efficacy of both frameworks. The Wyoming Department of Education staff are working collaboratively with representatives from the Council to determine what the critical metrics should be to effectively and efficiently evaluate the function of both the Collaborative Council and the Statewide System of Support. Engaging in this collaborative process to determine metrics for evaluation early in the development process is best practice.

In the early stages of the implementation of the Statewide System of Support it will be important to have measures related to the fidelity of deployment of the strategies and action steps taken by the system. Some of this initial evaluation of deployment can be done by the Council. However, oversight by an outside provider can add credibility to the results of this portion of the evaluation model. As the system matures, the metrics would evolve to measure the impacts the Statewide System of Support strategies and action steps are having on adult behaviors and student outcomes. Measuring the impacts and changes in the adult behaviors within the schools and districts that are receiving direct/onsite assistance from the system of support would be helpful in continuously improving the strategies that are being implemented. This targeted approach to getting quality feedback from those adults most served by the system is an efficient and effective methodology that will provide data that informs the Council in making improvement in the services provided to these schools/districts. These data may be collected by reviewing school improvement plans and other documentation as well as onsite interviews. In addition to the evaluation of the direct/onsite work of the system of support on adult behaviors, it would also be helpful to use an outside provider to measure the impact of the ECHO Project on behaviors and networking among the educational leaders in Wyoming who are participating in the project. The ECHO Project has an evaluative process in place and therefore collecting data for review should not require a large expenditure of resources.

Evaluating the specific impacts on student achievement because of the work of the Statewide System of Support will be challenging from a psychometric perspective. This will require the use of an outside expert. This is not "first work" for the evaluation system because changes in student achievement are a trailing indicator of system improvement and will take time to see measureable differences. An additional challenge for the evaluation of the impact of the support provided to schools on student achievement will be in finding a direct correlation between the support provided and the increase in student achievement. Schools are working hard every day to improve

student achievement and are trying many strategies to accomplish this goal. Because of all of this hard work currently being done every day in schools, correlating the specific work being done by the system of support to increased student achievement will be difficult. In a more general sense, seeing an increase in the number of schools being served by the system of support meeting or exceeding expectations as determined by the accountability model will be a positive outcome.

The evaluation of the collective impact of the Collaborative Council will require different metrics. These metrics should be designed to evaluate the impact the work of the Council is having on the strategic direction and the function of each participating agency and the pK-12 education system as a whole. Tools could be developed to measure changes in the strategic direction, processes and emphases that each partner agency is experiencing because of its participation in the Collaborative Council. This portion of the evaluation model would not require any time or effort from schools. These data could be collected from interviews, focus groups and surveys of the partner agencies who are a part of the Collaborative Council. Emphasizing, through evaluation processes, the collective impact that is being experienced by these agencies and the pK-12 system is very important. A positive collective impact on the pK-12 education system as a whole is a very powerful outcome of the Council's work.

### **Challenges for Implementation**

Full implementation of the recommendations for the Statewide System of Support faces several challenges. The first challenge to consider is adequate and sustainable funding. The Wyoming Department of Education has done an excellent job of reviewing agency budgets and creating a specific budget line item for the Statewide System of Support. The level of funding in this budget alone is not adequate to immediately fund full implementation of the Statewide System of Support recommendations. Therefore, one challenge will be how to prioritize and phase in the strategies and action steps within the plan. The structure of the Collaborative Council and the people who participate in its work make it an ideal group to provide the good thinking necessary to manage this challenge.

Another challenge will be how to continue to support the most needy schools in the state before full implementation can be reached. In Recommendation #4 there are several supports that can be continued within the budget resources that are available. One additional resource that can be added immediately is to provide a coordinator/coach for the most needy schools/districts. This person would be available to work on-site with district and school leadership as they implement the improvement strategies the district has determined through data reviews and root cause analysis processes. This person would provide the additional support these schools/districts need and would help sustain improvement efforts until this type of resource becomes available in all regions of the state.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has passed Congress and has been signed into law by President Obama. The ESSA requires the execution of several actions by states that are needed to meet the requirements of and align to the expectations of this reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. One challenge for educators and legislators in Wyoming is to modify the current Education Accountability Statutes to meet the requirements within the ESSA. A part of the modification of current law will be to ensure the Statewide System of Support meets all federal requirements. The opportunity in the ESSA is that there are Federal dollars available for states to use to support struggling schools. These federal dollars combined with the funds available within the Wyoming Department of Education could become an adequate and sustainable budget resource for the full implementation of the Statewide System of Support. These federal dollars are projected to become available in July, 2017.

Maintaining, nurturing and supporting the Collaborative Council as an enduring and resilient initiative will be a challenge. The initial work of the Council was to create a clear mission, determine how they were going to work



together, and then work collaboratively to build a strategic plan for the Statewide System of Support. This has been important work and it is only the beginning of the impact the Council can have on the 90,000+ pK-12 students in Wyoming. Another challenge in the 2016-17 school year will be successfully transitioning the Statewide System of Support Framework to meet new requirements as a result of the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act. This hard working group of volunteers from 15 education agencies in Wyoming is up to all of these challenges. The Collaborative Council has the potential to have a powerful collective impact on each of the agencies they represent as well as Wyoming's pK-12 education system. This impact is further discussed in the next section.

### **A Unique Framework and Collective Impact**

A unique aspect to the manner in which the State Board of Education and the Wyoming Department of Education approached the design process for the Statewide System of Support is the creation and function of the Collaborative Council. This design structure is unique to Wyoming and is more comprehensive than the design processes used by other states as they built their systems of support. Why is this so important? The fifteen agencies that have representation on the Council view the pK-12 education system through their unique lenses. These deep and specialized perspectives create a robust and insightful dialogue that adds value to the strategies and actions that will be deployed within the Statewide System of Support. In addition, networking among the members of the Council creates opportunities to build partnerships, avoid redundancy of effort, and coordinate and align work in a way that maximizes the impact of the various institutions and initiatives. Specific examples of this collective effort could include: policy work by PTSB to support individualized professional development for teachers; graduate students at the College of Education doing action research to support Wyoming schools; the Wyoming Center for Education Leadership providing on the job coaching to principals and superintendents; and the Wyoming School Boards Association aligning board training to specific needs brought to them by coordinators. These are just a few of the possibilities that can be reached if the work of the Collaborative Council can mature into an organization that creates a collective impact.

The mission of the Collaborative Council is: "The Collaborative Council exists to provide strategic direction for the purpose of unifying and aligning the efforts of multiple education stakeholders who will develop and deploy an effective Statewide System of Support for all Wyoming students." The best hope of the Council to have a profound impact on Wyoming's education system rests in this phrase of the mission statement, "the purpose of unifying and aligning the efforts of multiple education stakeholders". The positive collective impact on the young people of Wyoming that can be achieved by unified and aligned efforts from each of these agencies cannot be overemphasized.

Many of the challenges teachers, administrators, and board members in districts currently face in raising student achievement in Wyoming schools are the result of misalignment, miscommunication, and a lack of coherence from those agencies who have the good intentions of supporting them the most. To meet this systemic challenge, members of the Collaborative Council continue to engage in the hard work of unifying and aligning their agencies support efforts and create a Statewide System of Support that is second to none. When this mission is achieved it will have a transformational effect on the lives and outcomes for all of our pK-12 students in Wyoming.

## References

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