

To: Joint Education Interim Committee

From: Shelley Hamel, Chief Academic Officer, Wyoming Department of Education
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Date: May 1, 2020

Subject: K-3 Reading Assessment and Intervention

Background

In accordance with Section 10 of House Enrolled Act 94 of the 2020 State of Wyoming Legislative Session, not later than May 1, 2020, the University of Wyoming (UW) and the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) will jointly submit a report to the Joint Education Interim Committee (JEIC) in regards to the 2019 Wyoming Session Laws, Chapter 155 and the feasibility of the University of Wyoming College of Education conducting a summer 2020 pilot program for K-3 teachers. The primary purpose of this memo is to provide the JEIC with an update on the implementation of the aforementioned legislation that made changes to W.S. 21-3-401 and planning efforts for the summer 2020 professional development opportunity.

At its January 2020 meeting, the UW Board of Trustees, recognized the importance of implementing scientifically validated instructional techniques related to literacy, and outlined a pilot program for kindergarten through third grade instructors from approximately five districts in Wyoming during the summer of 2020. In February 2020, representatives from UW and WDE determined the importance of professional development for all Wyoming school districts in addition to any pilot program offered through UW, and decided to collaboratively offer a 2020 summer conference.

Implementation Update

Since the 2019 legislative changes to W.S. 21-3-401, the WDE has provided multiple presentations to districts regarding the reporting requirements of the statute. The WDE has informed districts of the data collection report WDE626 and the changed requirements of each district's Early Literacy Plan (ELP). To assist districts in ensuring each required component is included in the ELP, the WDE has created a template available for district use.

In the summer and fall of 2019, WDE hosted conferences that provided professional development opportunities focused on scientific-based literacy instruction. At those conferences, the University of Wyoming College of Education faculty presented content around the skills predictive of third grade reading proficiency as outlined in legislation.

In October of 2019, the WDE released a K-3 Reading Assessment and Intervention guidance document that largely focuses on equipping teachers with an understanding of Dyslexic or Dyslexic-like symptoms and tools available for use with students struggling to develop literacy skills. The WDE is currently working with McREL International, as the North Central Comprehensive Center, University of Wyoming College of Education and UW Literacy Research Center and Clinic, and Wyoming reading experts to add to the guidance document. When complete, the document will not only include components for identification of

Dyslexic challenges and appropriate tools, but a comprehensive framework for implementing scientifically validated practices in teaching early literacy.

Additionally, the WDE remains active in seeking grants to fund on-going professional development for pre- and inservice teachers in the area of literacy.

The University of Wyoming College of Education has partnered with the WDE to host a 2020 summer professional development pilot program that provides instruction and skill development to district leaders and teachers in the core components of reading instruction. Participation in the 2020 summer pilot program will be available to all forty-eight school districts and will provide participants with scientifically validated instruction techniques on how and why to assess and directly and systematically teach phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and techniques to improve reading fluency. Originally planned to be hosted as a face-to-face event, the pilot program will now be a virtual offering in light of COVID-19. While the platform has changed, the commitment to providing this comprehensive professional development remains a top priority for the UW College of Education and the WDE.