

SPRING 2025

LEGACY

TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION

R.J. Kost

History of Wyoming Standards

- 1970-1990 - No statewide standards
- 1990-1999 - Wyoming state standards developed
- 1999 - Wyoming adopts state Science & S.S. Standards.
- 2000-2007 - Embedding state standards into all content areas
- 2008 - Reauthorization of state standards
- 2010-2011 - National standards CCSS (ELA and math)
- 2013-2016 - National standards NGSS (science)
- 2015-2020 - Computer science as an added content area, Native American studies added to Social Studies, and an approved uniform format for standards approval

Reimagining and
Innovating the
Delivery of Education
in Wyoming



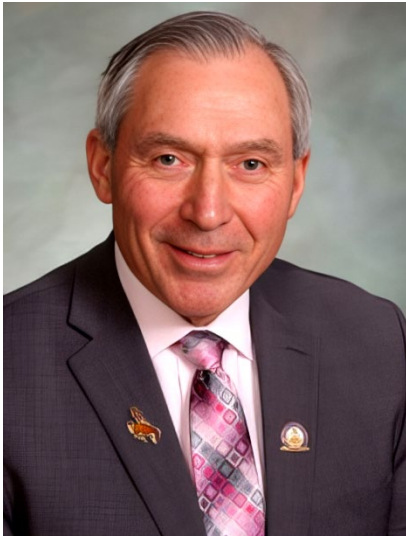
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Reimagining and Innovating the Delivery of Education in Wyoming

R.J. Kost, M.Ed., Executive Director, Wyoming ASCD, Member, Wyoming State Board of Education, Former State Senator, District 19 Wyoming Legislature, Powell, Wyoming

In a world of changing attitudes around education in Wyoming and around the country, the Wyoming Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (WY-ASCD) has made shifts from the pre-COVID era to today's post-COVID world.

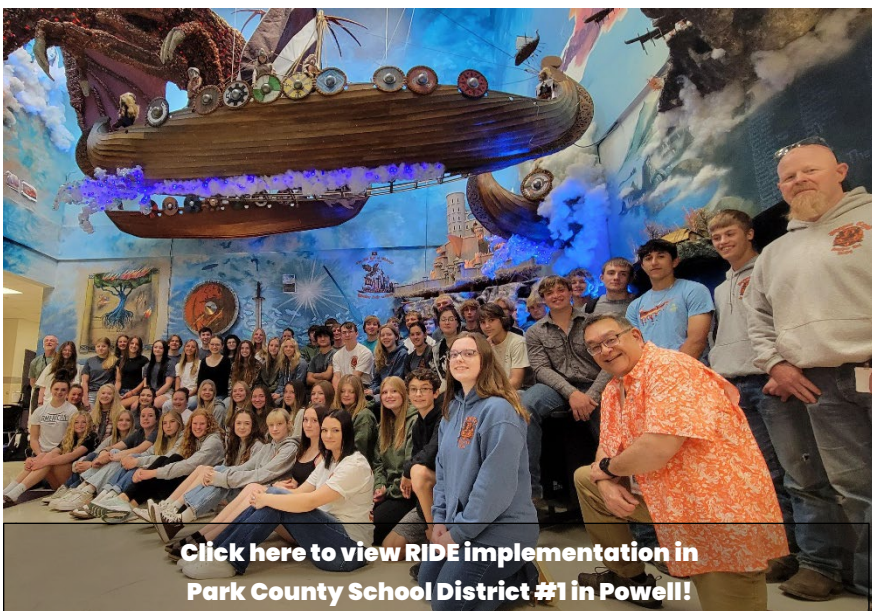
WY-ASCD struggled during and since the pandemic with districts focusing on internal challenges, from online learning to absences to failures, forced to respond in ways for which we were not prepared as teachers, curriculum directors, and administrators, and the unanticipated negative and counterproductive implications have created less than desirable learning environments for our students.

A bit of information for those who might be reading this from outside of Wyoming. We have 48 school districts statewide and many are pretty small, so curriculum directors can be wearing two or more hats, which can make it hard to completely focus on their primary responsibilities. We have a total of about 92,000 students across the state and we cover a lot of miles between districts, so it isn't easy for a small district with only one teacher per grade level to connect with colleagues and have input. In many cases, that sole teacher can feel like they are stranded on an island. Working to get them in touch with educators in other similarly sized districts can help address this sense of isolation.



[Click here to view the total district implementation of RIDE in Park County School District #6 in Cody!](#)

With all this in play, we decided it was time to become more active and help all directors in the state not only understand the focus and purpose of WY-ASCD, but to feel they are all an important and active part of the association. But how? Charlotte Gilbar, president of WY-ASCD, developed the executive committee with the including our president, president elect, treasurer, secretary, and past president initiated monthly online meetings for district and regional curriculum directors. Wyoming is divided into five regions, with representation from districts of all sizes, which translates into an additional ten extra seats on our board.



[Click here to view RIDE implementation in Park County School District #1 in Powell!](#)

Another strategy was to enhance in-person professional learning. We have always had a fall and spring conference, but attendance was dwindling during and since the COVID-19 disruption. So in the summer of 2024, we decided to partner with our state elementary principals' association, secondary principals' association, and special education association so that our conferences can provide better breakout groupings while expanding our capacity and offerings of speakers and sessions. This has proven to be a great success, with an increase in attendance and membership. Since many administrators in our small districts wear multiple hats, joining relevant organizations can provide necessary supports while being efficient with time and travel.

This spring, our conference will focus on meeting the needs of curriculum directors as they begin to plan for the next school year, bringing in the State Board of Education to report on its current work and introduce new officers. The Wyoming Department of Education will also attend and present what is changing federally and how it impacts our state since the state legislature has convened. Many of the bills introduced will have a direct effect on schools' daily operations, as well as the other areas legislators feel need attention. The information provided at the conference will help everyone attending stay current, ask questions and get answers that help them effectively plan for these coming changes. WY-ASCD anticipated these shifts in education happening at the state level, and we have been strategizing since the 2023-2024 academic year to strengthen our reputation in the state as a trusted partner educators can rely on for direction, support, and assistance during this time of change.



The State Board of Education tasked to develop a Profile of a Graduate, our governor appointed a group to focus on making innovative changes in education by developing the project entitled “Reimagining and Innovating the Delivery of Education” (RIDE, for short).

Andrea Gilbert, the curriculum director for Converse County School District #1 in Douglas, Wyoming describes how RIDE looks in some districts:

*“Governor Gordon’s RIDE program, supported by expert consultants from **2 Revolutions**, is transforming Converse County School District’s assessment practices by integrating engaging performance assessments into a balanced system. These assessments, designed to be more dynamic and comprehensive than traditional tests, require students to demonstrate their understanding through real-world tasks that align with multiple standards.*

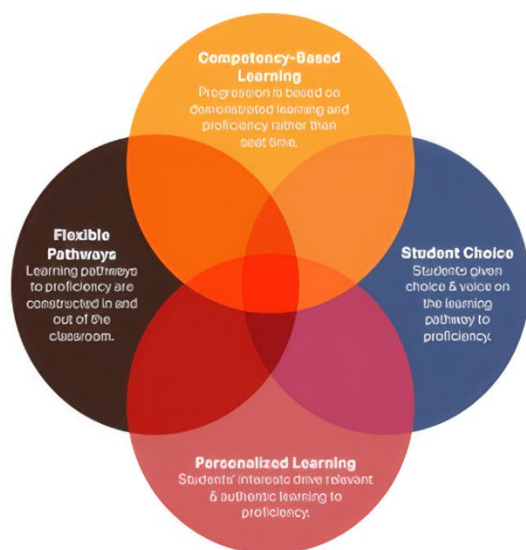
Teachers have adapted their instructional strategies to focus on student choice and voice, fostering a more personalized learning experience. This shift has also better prepared students for more rigorous summative assessments. The program has encouraged cross-curricular collaboration, uniting core subjects with specials like the arts, STEM, computers, library, and PE, enriching the learning process and providing a holistic education that bridges subjects and skills.”

Wyoming’s Future of Learning Reimagining & Innovating the Delivery of Education (RIDE) Pilot

An Overview

- One Wyoming-wide goal to transform instruction and assessment.
- Four interrelated strategies to support student-centered teaching and learning.
- Unlimited ways to customize in districts to be community responsive.

Wyoming’s Student-Centered Learning Domains



Student-Centered Learning

Competency-Based Learning

- Competency-based learning creates transparent, relevant, rigorous, and flexible pathways to reach agreed upon learning outcomes and proficiency. This might look like the following:
- Students engage with resources for support or enrichment as they are ready so that learning is always happening at a pace that meets the learners’ needs.
 - Students progress through learning based on increasing skill and proficiency, not time on task. They have multiple opportunities and a variety of ways they can demonstrate learning.
 - Assessments not only measure learning but empower learners by providing timely, relevant, actionable evidence and next steps in their learning pathway.
 - Students engage with learning activities where they not only learn and apply content but also transferable skills like communication, collaboration, and creative problem solving.
 - Students progress through increasingly more complex learning expectations based on compelling evidence, regardless of where that evidence came from: all learning and demonstrations are valued and inform next steps.

Personalized Learning

- Personalized learning is intentionally connected to the unique interests, passions, and needs of the learner so that learning is relevant and authentic. This might look like the following:
- Performance-based assessments where students are solving real-world problems from their communities while gaining and demonstrating new skills and knowledge.
 - Students writing letters to the editor about topics of personal relevance that impact their lives and community to demonstrate and practice persuasive writing.
 - Instruction that incorporates technology where students access the personalized level of resources and support they need to meet rigorous learning outcomes.

Flexible Pathways - Anytime, Anywhere

- Learning can take place anytime, anywhere and is not limited to the classroom but can include extended learning opportunities, internships, public-service, career-based learning, and enhanced Career & Technical Education (CTE) pathways. This might look like the following:
- Students participate in career-based learning, internships or extended learning opportunities (ELO) where they receive credit for activities where they are gaining and demonstrating rigorous real-world knowledge and skills.
 - Increased access to CTE pathways aligned with Wyoming needs, where students can earn credit for subjects like math, science, English, and social studies through career-based training and other aligned outside of school learning opportunities.
 - Students progress through increasingly more complex learning expectations based on compelling evidence, regardless of where that evidence came from: all learning and demonstrations are valued and inform next steps.

Student Choice in Learning

- Students have increasing voice and choice to help make decisions about how they learn and how they show what they know which leads to increased engagement. This might look like the following:
- Students reflect on personal strengths and needs aligned to expected learning outcomes, set goals for growth, and have agency in selecting activities to reach those goals.
 - Students can choose how they will demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a way that is meaningful to them.
 - Students help to select the topics, define the essential questions, and make personal choices as they navigate rigorous and flexible pathways to proficiency.

After holding sessions around the state listening to educators and public education stakeholders, the State Board of Education decided to reduce the number of standards in each content area, which continues to be a gigantic undertaking. The table at the top of the next page breaks down the standards reduction in six of ten state content areas from 386 to 140, with math and science standards reduced by the largest percentages.

WY-ASCD is stepping up to make a huge difference in the outcome of these reductions and helping to provide support for successful implementation. WY-ASCD is having our curriculum directors connect with their classroom instructors to review the reductions in standards and what they mean for the continuity and quality of instruction. As a result, the changes and their implications are better understood by everyone involved, and curriculum directors have the necessary buy-in from educators and stakeholders to support an effective rollout.



Table 3. Overall Standards Reduction, from Currently Adopted to Proposed, by Content Area and Grade Band

(current # / proposed # | % of reduction)

Grade Band	Overall Reduction	Math	Science	PE	Health	F&P Arts	Comp. Sci.
K-2	235/69 70.64%	70/31 55.71%	39/13 66.67%	16/6 62.50%	22/6 72.73%	70/8 (K-4) 88.57%	18/5 72.22%
3-5	220/74 66.36%	79/32 59.49%	51/17 66.67%	17/9 47.06%	50/10 (G3-6) 80.00%	proposed 4 in K-2 + 4 in 3-5	23/6 73.91%
6-8 (MS)	282/99 64.89%	81/38 53.09%	60/28 53.33%	17/8 52.94%	27/11 (G7-8) 59.26%	72/5 (G5-8) 93.06%	25/9 64.00%
9-12 (HS)	409/108 73.59%	156/39 75.00%	71/29 59.15%	17/7 58.82%	28/11 60.71%	73/11 84.93%	64/11 82.81%
TOTAL K-12	1146/350 69.46%	386/140 63.73%	221/87 60.63%	67/30 55.22%	127/38 70.08%	215/24 88.84%	130/31 76.15%

In 2023, the Wyoming State Board of Education asked the WY-ASCD to form a state Curriculum Directors Advisory Committee (CDAC). The CDAC was asked to get information out to the staff of each district and receive their input. Our monthly online meetings proved to be very productive, with everyone indicating the value of our collaboration made a significant difference in the process.

The President of the WY-ASCD Curriculum Directors, Charlotte Gilbar explains the work of the CDAC. Charlotte is the Executive Director in Natrona County School District #1 in Casper, Wyoming:

“The Wyoming Curriculum Director’s Advisory Committee (CDAC) plays a pivotal role in shaping the state’s educational standards and rules. Composed of a representative group of curriculum directors and educational leaders from various school districts, CDAC is a committee that was formed by the Wyoming State Board of Education (SBE). The CDAC also collaborates with the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to review, audit, and recommend modifications to the state’s content and performance standards.



Students visiting the Wyoming State Capitol in Cheyenne.

Key Responsibilities: Standards Review and Recommendations: CDAC evaluates existing educational standards across the ten content areas Math, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Computer Science, Physical Education, Health, World Language, Career and Technical, and Fine & Performing Arts. The committee reviewed proposed changes to the Math and Science Standards, leading to a 61% reduction in K-12 Science Standards and a 64% reduction in K-12 Math Standards.

Provide Feedback: The CDAC reviewed feedback on the proposed Wyoming Math, Science, Computer Science, Fine and Performing Arts, Health and PE Standards that were gathered through surveys and virtual public meetings by the SBE and WDE, ensuring that community perspectives inform educational decisions.

Impact: Through its collaborative efforts, CDAC collaborates with the SBE to help ensure that Wyoming’s educational standards are rigorous, relevant, and responsive to the needs of students and educators. By integrating public input and expert recommendations, the committee plays a crucial role in maintaining high-quality education across the state.”

The SBE's work to reduce standards is intended to provide greater focus on essential learnings while making room and providing flexibility for schools to implement the vision of the Profile of a Graduate:



Seven Key Competencies derived from the Wyoming Profile of a Graduate

- Master, apply, and transfer foundational knowledge and skills.
- Think critically and creatively to solve complex problems.
- Communicate effectively to various purposes, audiences, and mediums.
- Identify and use credible sources of information to build knowledge and make decisions.
- Demonstrate strong interpersonal and collaboration skills.
- Cultivate curiosity, self-awareness, resilience, and a growth mindset.
- Practice effective work habits, including organization, time management, attention to detail, and follow through.



WYOMING STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

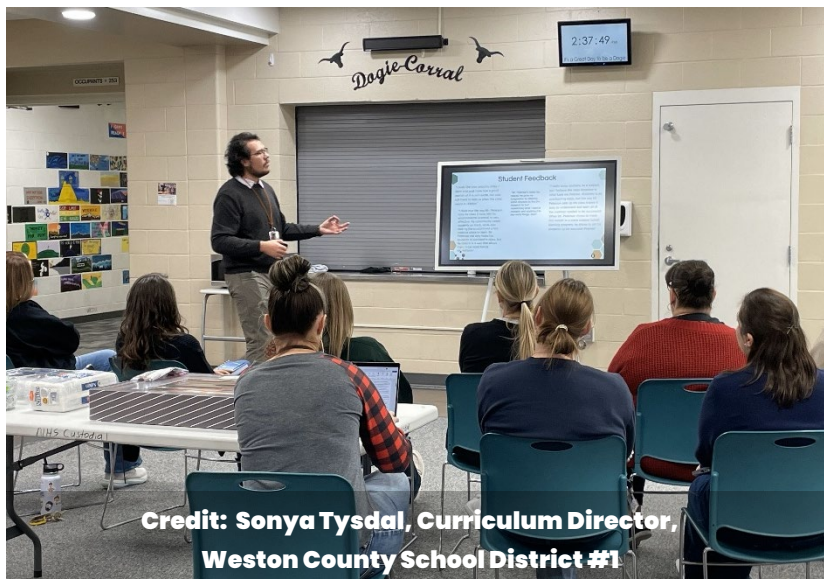
The Wyoming Profile of a Graduate is an initiative led by the State Board of Education and developed in partnership with students, families, educators, community leaders, and employers from across Wyoming. The purpose of the Profile is to articulate the knowledge, skills, and mindsets students need to thrive after graduation; establish a North Star for state and local policies; and create a strongly aligned educational system for Wyoming. For more information, visit the Profile of a Graduate [webpage](#).

The powerful combination of the innovation of the RIDE project with the reduction in standards and the connection to the profile creates many questions, challenges and opportunities, and WY-ASCD is positioned as a leader in this implementation work. The question is how to merge the standards with the profile to best identify graduates. Each district's accountability documents are being developed to meet state and federal requirements while allowing for local control, and we are working with curriculum directors to identify optimal solutions.

While the performance of our state compared to the nation is good, we are focused on finding ways to have an even greater impact on our students, and our state legislature who is asking to see an even better return on the investment in our schools. The three major changes we have discussed here task curriculum directors with much of the responsibility for implementation, under the direction of the Wyoming Department of Education and the State Board of Education, and WY-ASCD is a proud partner in this important work. Our collective goal is for students to be more excited, more engaged and more in control of their learning, connecting what is being taught about the world in which they live with their aspirations for the future.



An important additional consideration is the connection between career and technical education (CTE) and the academic standards all students should master. We feel we are on the right track there, as well. Whether it be a certification, an associate's or bachelor's degree, or entering directly into the work force post-graduation, we are working to provide each student with a quality education and the ability to achieve their dreams.



Credit: Sonya Tysdal, Curriculum Director, Weston County School District #1

As we implement the combination of the RIDE program, the reduction in standards, and the Profile of a Graduate, we must provide the flexibility and support that our instructors, their curriculum directors, and our district leaders need to implement new approaches that break free of the industrial-age practices to which we have been beholden for the last century.

WY-ASCD continues to be the leading voice in the education of Wyoming students, tackling challenges and growing membership as we engage with all of the districts in our state. As we reimagine the future, it is bright with educational innovation empowering our students to fulfill their potential and achieve success in school and in life.

References

Bernasconi, B. (December 19, 2024) [Wyoming: When Dreams Become Reality](#). 2 Revolutions.

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Shop class as a feature of RIDE implementation in the Park County School District #6 in Cody

Thank you to each of these outstanding leaders in Wyoming education who contributed to this article:



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Legacy is the official journal of The Worthy Educator, elevating the good work being done by leaders in education who are working to change the narrative on the profession and actively plan for impact that transforms its future to serve the needs of a diverse, decentralized, global society that is inclusive, equitable and open to all people as next generations adapt, evolve and contribute by solving problems and creating solutions that meet the needs of a world we have yet to envision.

Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis from educators who are implementing new and innovative approaches in the classroom and at the building and district levels. Information on specifications and instructions to submit can be found online at theworthyeducator.com/journal