**Wyoming School-University Partnership**

**Governing Board Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 29, 2014**

**10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Natrona County School District, Jefferson Room

970 N. Glenn Road, Casper, Wyoming 82601

Those in attendance included the following board members, guests, and staff.

***Governing board members:***

*Dave Barker (Platte 2), Boyd Brown (Campbell 1), Andrea Bryant (Professional Teaching Standards Board, executive director), Aaron Carr (Niobrara 1), Diana Clapp (Fremont 6), Dennis Fischer (Platte 1), Kathy Hitt (Fremont 1), Michelle Hoffman (Fremont 14), Paige Fenton Hughes (Wyoming Department of Education, State Board of Education), Marty Kobza (Sheridan 1), Dee Ludwig (Eastern Wyoming College, Vice President for Learning), John Lyttle (Laramie 1), Ray Schulte (Park 6), Kathy Vetter (Wyoming Education Association, president), John Weigel (Converse 1), and Walt Wilcox (Natrona 1) .*

***Via Conference Call:***

*Michael Day (UW, College of Education, interim dean), Joe McCann (Wyoming Community College Commission), Leslie Rush (UW, College of Education, Teacher Education, associate dean), Audrey Shalinsky (UW, College of Arts & Sciences, associate dean)*

***Guests:***

*Vehbi Bayhan (Inonu University, Turkey),Gerry Chase (Johnson 1), Ami Erickson (Northern Wyoming Community College District), Celalettin Korkmaz (Inonu University, Turkey), Savim Ozturk (Inonu University, Turkey), Ali Sucu (University of Wyoming undergraduate student in history), and Mark Stock (UW, College of Education).*

***Staff:***

*Audrey Kleinsasser (Partnership director) and Beth Wiley (Partnership office associate).*

Diana Clapp called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. She welcomed everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Special guests included three academic visitors from Turkey, Vehbi Bayhan, Celalettin Korkmaz, and Savim Ozturk, along with a guest translator, University of Wyoming undergraduate student, Ali Sucu. These academics visited Wyoming because they are interested in learning more about similarities and differences between the Turkish educational system and the American educational system. They are specifically interested in how to work with their K-12 schools as a university and issues around the delivery of professional development. Their other interests include educational leadership and improving education from the teacher student level on up.

Diana asked Audrey Kleinsasser to present the meeting agenda and supporting materials which included the financial report, the July 9 meeting minutes, and the director’s report. Audrey K. briefly explained each item. Boyd Brown moved to approve the agenda and related consent agenda items. Dave Barker seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved.

Diana explained that the Partnership board discusses a reading at each meeting to ground members in the principles of the Partnership, especially the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. She introduced Ray Schulte to lead the discussion about *Teacher Evaluation in the Current Era: Implications for Teacher Education Policy and Pedagogy* by Kevin Froner and Nicholas M. Michelli. Ray commented that even though the authors are from the east coast, the article is very timely for Wyoming. Ray pointed out that there are conflicting goals for education. Are we preparing students for life in a civil society or are we preparing them for career work? Can they be the same thing?

Ray asked for insights from the article. Michelle Hoffman enjoyed Einstein’s quote that not everything that matters can be counted and not everything we count matters. Michelle expressed concern that we might be sacrificing creating well-rounded students if the focus continues to stay on testing. Mark Stock and John Lyttle commented that they noticed the rush to create teacher assessments when there is no data yet on whether student growth is improved by certain kinds of teacher and administrative assessments. John L. explained that Cheyenne schools were part of a two year nation-wide study on that subject. Information from the study has not been released yet. But, principals who received training on evaluations told John L. that they found the training helpful.

Dave Barker wondered why people and policy makers have a tendency to look at assessment as an end point instead of a beginning. Assessments could be used to help teachers and schools improve, not simply used for punitive measures or rewards. Kathy Hitt shared that measuring student growth versus student achievement gives a more accurate picture of student learning. Mark and John L. shared that teachers in Cheyenne were ranked based on their ability to improve student growth on specific measures. Low ranking teachers were very discouraged. Kathy Vetter thought that all the teachers should see that measurement in a different light. Even at the top of those rankings, educators should always want to learn how to improve.

Diana observed that the article focused on conflicts concerning the economic goals of schooling. There are economic as well as political factors to public schools. Everyone agrees that we need an educated citizenry, but the goals differ. Some see it as an economic issue, others a social justice issue, and others a democratic issue. Ray agreed, adding that the question appears to be: what is a good citizen?

Marty Kobza would like to see the school culture change to one where teachers work together, possibly sharing teaching burdens and playing to their strengths. Marty suggested looking at Daniel Pink’s work on motivation; people in a social business will do their best when they feel like they can successfully contribute. Gerry Chase added that collaboration of that kind has to take place in a trusting environment, especially when teachers are looking at being assessed by using data from their students. The administrators are responsible for helping to create a trusting culture. Gerry said if you don’t develop the culture, the culture will develop itself. We all have to work together.

Audrey K. agreed and pointed out that one major difference between European and Middle Eastern school systems and American systems is the American idea that the individual can do everything. However, if policy makers could expand the unit of analysis away from the individual (e.g. individual student, individual teacher), to a building unit of analysis, the power to shift usual practices increases significantly, as does the need to collaborate. Several other board members affirmed that individuality did create problems. Paige expressed a desire to change the system. She commented that not much has changed in school culture since she was a student; we’re just looking for new ways to evaluate teachers on the same old variables.

Dee Ludwig, Ami Erickson, Andrea Bryant, and Leslie Rush added that the effect is being felt at the community college and university level, too. In particular, the economic side of education is hard to balance at higher levels. No one wants students to pay for more classes than necessary (e.g., so called remedial courses), but administration is still trying to balance that with allowing students to experiment.

Ray wrapped up the discussion by commenting again that these issues are very timely for Wyoming, and asked everyone to take the insights they shared home with them.

Diana asked Ali Sucu if there were any comments or concerns from the Turkish delegation. Sevim Ozturk commented that there were many ways that the Turkish system was similar. Both education systems seem to be struggling with a lot of bureaucracy and red tape.

Diana introduced Michael Day and Mark Stock. Michael provided some background on the idea of a Wyoming Center for Educational Leadership based at the University of Wyoming. There are some challenges with the current infrastructure at UW. However, the big idea is that the College of Education wants to find ways to focus on providing service to the state even as it provides graduate programs in principal and superintendent preparation.

Mark explained that goals were created this past summer for the center. The goals include: 1) Creating annual conferences for educational leaders across the spectrum. One example is the upcoming Wyoming School Law Symposium next summer; 2) Training and developing leaders at all levels; 3) Serving as a clearing house for matching up district needs with capacity; creating a master list of the go-to people in Wyoming on every issue; 4) Providing technical assistance to WDE for statewide issues under accountability plan; 5) Supporting ongoing principals in mentoring and coaching; provide individual coaching or school coaching; 6) Creating short-term professional development opportunities around the state for human resources, business managers, directors of technology, curriculum and development, or special education, or others who don’t currently have professional development opportunities; 7) Training, recognizing, supporting, and rewarding leadership of those who are not in administration; creating teacher leaders.

However, Mark explained, the center currently does not have a funding source. Plans for the center include a director and an administrative assistant. Perhaps districts will pay to participate. Mark and Michael are proposing to UW that the center have an endowed chair. Boyd asked if the experts would come from Wyoming. Mark answered that it might depend on the funding available, but he plans to have a combination of local and national experts.

Mark also added that the college is currently changing the doctoral program to include an option that is oriented toward practice, not research. There were no further questions. Diana thanked Mark. There was a break for lunch.

Diana reconvened after lunch. Audrey K. handed out a copy of an article from Vehbi Bayhan. Vehbi conducted research in Rome that he thought was relevant to board members’ discussion. He found that European schools needed a sociologist to help differentiate between class barriers. School itself wasn’t enough to help students succeed. Audrey K. explained that we might call this a social justice curriculum in the U.S. Diana suggested making Vehbi’s article a reading in the future. She thought the changing roles of guidance counselors could be a useful discussion. Ali added that his experience at a large high school in New Jersey differed vastly from his experience at the university. In high school, he felt like simply a number. At the University of Wyoming, his advisor made him feel that she cared about him as an individual. Diana thanked them for sharing.

Diana then introduced Dee Ludwig. Dee provided everyone with handouts about Complete College Wyoming. The ultimate goal is to increase college completion among Wyoming citizens. This group is looking for buy-in from all stakeholders – how do we help students make sound decisions about their education? Dee shared some data about students who need remedial classes. Even the students who receive Hathaway Merit Scholarships still need some remedial help.

Dee also spoke about the 2+2 plan for Wyoming community colleges and the University of Wyoming. Course hours are transferring but not necessarily counting within a program toward a degree. The idea behind the 2+2 plan is to ensure that this doesn’t happen. Community colleges and the university are starting with seventeen high enrollment programs. Agreements will be signed among the community colleges and the university. Articulation is currently taking place and will be ongoing to make sure these agreements work. Audrey K. and Ami reinforced that the articulation and program agreements are a big step forward in communication at the postsecondary level. Kathy H. wants to see that communication work with the high schools as well, especially with dual and concurrent enrollment classes.

Diana asked Audrey K. to provide updates about the Partnership. Audrey K. explained that a proposal to hold the National Network for Education Renewal (NNER) summer symposium in Laramie was accepted. It will occur June 26-29, 2015. On June 25, there will be a special pre-symposium mostly for Wyoming participants. Audrey hoped everyone would plan to come and explained that detailed planning would start with two informational November conference calls, for Partnership constituencies. From there, a broad-based planning committee will form.

Diana thanked Audrey and Beth for their hard work in bringing the summer symposium to Laramie. Diana emphasized the importance of having school districts in Wyoming involved in the Partnership to make opportunities like this possible. She drew everyone’s attention to the fact that the Partnership is down several members this year. Diana asked the board members present to think about ways we can communicate the importance of the Partnership to other superintendents. She asked everyone there to talk to colleagues and to give suggestions to the executive committee. Andrea pointed out the Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) voted to become a paying member of the Partnership on Monday, October 27, 2014. She added that when Audrey K. gave her presentation, several of the teachers on the PTSB board had never heard of the Partnership. It’s the job of those present and other Partnership members to help us spread the word about this organization.

Diana then invited everyone to share any updates from their district, college, or organization. Several districts and community colleges are undergoing large construction projects. Many board members expressed their interest in seeing some of the leadership programs discussed earlier come to fruition. Paige shared that the state board is going to draft legislation suggesting that standards have an eight year rotation. If anyone had thoughts on that subject, they should share with Paige or Walt. Audrey K. mentioned that UW is still undergoing turnover. Four colleges are currently looking for deans. The College of Education search committee was finalized within the last week, and both Audrey K. and Diana will serve as committee members. If anyone had suggestions about what they wanted to see in the new dean or who might be interested in applying, they can share that information with Audrey K. or Diana. Michelle concluded the round-table sharing by reminding everyone that the Partnership and educators are here for students. She said the education community in Wyoming is a strong group of great people who are always willing to help each other.

Diana requested that everyone complete a meeting evaluation form (transcribed comments appear below) and adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Beth Wiley, October 31, 2014.

**Wyoming School-University Partnership**

**Governing Board Meeting Evaluation Form**

**October 29, 2014**

*Session feedback transcribed October 30, 2014 n = 14 responses*

*All responses from evaluation forms were transcribed exactly as written.*

*Not all respondents answered all questions.*

1. **Part of the reason the governing board has a grounding discussion at every meeting is to provide discussion that sends board members back to their districts renewed in their chosen profession. Did you find the grounding discussion renewing?**

* I found the discussion very sincere and motivating.
* My background knowledge was limited on the overall concepts in the article, but the discussion started to build my knowledge base.
* Yes – very interesting to me.
* Yes – always renewing and powerful.
* Yes.
* Most definitely!
* Yes.
* Yes – very enlightening to hear the different perspectives.
* Yes.
* Yes.
* Sometimes in my current work, I get/feel a long ways from work that matters for kids. This conversation helps me remember why policy work matters.
* This was a timely discussion – thanks for the article that created the healthy discussion.
* I always enjoy this activity, hearing everyone’s ideas about the readings.
* Valuable discussion.

1. **Why or why not?**

* Great diversity & active involvement w/ all around the table.
* The discussion around teaching and evaluation was informative. Took many good thoughts and potential actions from the conversation.
* Good topic.
* Always good/refreshing to hear others perspectives.
* Cause us to consider other points of view.
* Excellent selection for a “common read.”
* Relevant to what is important.
* I enjoyed hearing the shared & differing perspectives regarding teacher evaluation.
* Always good to discuss current hot topics. It brings always, for me, to forefront the notion of education our citizens for a democratic society – I think with stringent accountability, we move further & further from that notion.
* The topic was very timely for what is going on in Wyoming.
* A mix of theory & practice.

1. **If it were to come to development, what would you like to see available at the UW College of Education leadership center?**

* The description of the 9 areas are a wonderful set of directives.
* The list of priorities the collaborative meeting produced are excellent.
* I like all the goals that were discussed.
* Developing leadership capacity at all levels of the system and linking the multiple constituencies together.
* WILN-type training.
* Support for current supts./admin.
* Teacher leadership. I.e. 1 – supt., 3 – central office, 12 admin = 16; 200 – Teachers; 16 vs. 200
* I think the concept of academies for various leader groups is excellent. As these are “born” the quality must be present.
* Adapt to Wyo culture.
* Education leadership at all levels. Bridging info sharing from state to Univ. to local districts.
* Mentoring for graduates. Tie in w/ mandated work of districts such as WAEA & AdvancED accreditation. Building capacity of districts to support transformative initiatives.
* Some practical support out in the trenches for administrators. Superintendent’s academy would be very useful. Have local programs (instructors/mentors) to help us “grow our own” leaders in our communities. Teacher – leader – great idea!!!!
* I would like to see this as a resource for all of the school districts. WE need a place where school leaders can go to ask questions and learn best practices.
* Literacy outreach. Substitute teaching.

1. **How do you see the 2+2 and Complete College Wyoming plan with UW and the community colleges affecting K-12? Are there other happenings at the University of Wyoming and community colleges that you would like to be kept informed about?**

* Very helpful. The benefit is tremendous . . . thank you.
* Easier transfer of credits.
* I think it would be helpful to have a discussion about teacher preparation and the student teaching/residency experience and how different districts handling preparing/training mentor teachers and creating benefits to the district to host the pre-service teachers.
* Great idea to increase success!
* Good concept. Would like to see HS included.
* Especially pertinent for developmental education concerns.
* Developmental Ed & College Prep. Concurrent & Dual enrollment.
* Strengthening the K-12 to college transition programs can only help our kids be successful in a more articulated program from the CC’s to UW.
* As we continue to understand how students end up needing remediation so we can address some of the issues at K-12. 2+2 makes sense – you are finally talking to each other! Now, talk to High Schools in the same way 2+2+4??
* I think the 2+2 will help K-12 work with the students to plan their Jr. & Sr. yrs so that they can be successful in postsecondary education.
* Great idea. A bigger problem (indecipherable) is establishing comm. assessments. Use Canvas as a statewide platform.

1. **Reactions, suggestions, recommendations, or anything else you’d like meeting planners to know?**

* NA for this meeting.
* Food was excellent! So exciting to have the Turkey delegation at the meeting.
* Always enjoyable!
* Well organized as always!
* Again always helps refresh my perspective.
* Audrey & Beth do a great job.
* Very meaty agenda. ☺
* Good food – good setting. Thanks!
* Keep it up.