Press Release

Pinedale High School, Worland High School, and Torrington Middle School have been selected to participate in an innovative school-community engagement initiative that will begin this fall.

John Anderson, a political scientist who teaches online for the University of Wyoming, will guide the initiative. The initiative is sponsored by the Wyoming School-University Partnership and will occur over 18-24 months.

The purpose of the initiative is to engage students as citizens in their community. Students will take the lead by identifying a community improvement project. Then, students and teachers will work with the community to implement it.

Enthusiasm for starting the work is strong. Anderson, who lives in Pinedale, says, “It is always interesting to see how young people perceive community needs.”

The initiative offers an early college experience through the engagement of college and university professors who will meet with the classes and teachers to provide help and expertise. Later in the project, students will also have opportunities to visit the University of Wyoming and to present their work at several conferences. According to Anderson, “Students get to learn that college professors are real people who actually like to laugh.” While learning that professors are people, students will also learn what it is like to work with someone who has been immersed in learning a subject and has deep insights about it.

Similar work has already been done by teachers and they were chosen because of their experiences and their enthusiasm for learning through experience. Projects in other schools have proven to be quite successful. In one case, a middle school helped re-open the movie theater in their community. In other instances, students improved their community by designing and painting a public mural, started a brand new community celebration and completed a school improvement project.

Support for the work also comes from the National Network for Educational Renewal, the University of Wyoming Office of Student Affairs, and the local school district.

To learn more about the project, contact John Anderson at jander61@uwyo.edu or call 307-367-3554. For complete information about the initiative, including the other Wyoming schools that were selected, go to www.uwyo.edu/wsup.