



SENATE RESOLUTION #3026

TITLE: ASUW Supports the Continued Operation of the UW Laboratory School

DATE INTRODUCED: 11/26/24


AUTHOR: Senator Brown


SPONSORS: Senators Christensen, Culp, Langford, Morales, Schliebe, and Shosh, First-Year Senator Pike

1. WHEREAS, the purpose of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming
2. (ASUW) is to serve our fellow students in the best manner possible; and,
3. WHEREAS, the University of Wyoming Laboratory School (UW Lab School) provides
4. students with unique experiential opportunities in various capacities; and,
5. WHEREAS, in June of this year the University of Wyoming announced that they have
6. no plans for extending the current memorandum of understanding (MOU) past the 2024-
7. 2025 school year; and,
8. WHEREAS, UW students should be given every opportunity to develop teaching skills
9. at every stage of their degree path; and,
10. WHEREAS, the UW Lab School offers students the opportunity to conduct research and
11. experiment with different approaches to educational instruction, with research
12. supporting that fact outlined in Addendum A; and,
13. WHEREAS, one of President Seidel's top goals in the strategic plan calls for an
14. expansion of access to experiential learning opportunities as outlined in Addendum B;
15. and,
16. WHEREAS, every legislator in the Albany County delegation has spoken out against the
17. ending of the MOU attached in Addendum C.

18. THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Associated Students of the University of
19. Wyoming (ASUW) Student Government advocates for the continued operation of the
20. UW Lab School; and,
21. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to President
22. Seidel, the Board of Trustees, Dean of the College of Education Shim, and the Albany
23. County School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent upon its passage.

Referred to: SWAC, HOPE

Date of Passage: December 3rd, 2024 **Signed:** 
(ASUW Chairperson)

“Being enacted on December 3rd, 2024, I do hereby sign my name hereto and approve
this Senate action.” 

ASUW President

Addendum A

Excerpt from *Laboratory Schools: Updated or Outdated (1981)*

Respondents reported that in-service education, the process of developing and/or refining teaching skills, was accomplished in a variety of ways. The primary method was internal training for laboratory school teachers with a rating of 37.7%. Conferences of local, state, regional, and national levels accounted for 24.3% of in-service education. Additional external consulting services offered school systems by laboratory school faculty members provided a 20.3% utilization. Other options for in-service education combined for 17.7%.

Addendum B

University of Wyoming

FINAL Jan 27, 2023

President Ed Seidel - Summary of Presidential Goals 2023-2026

Strategic Direction 1: Student Excellence

Aligns to Strategic Plan Objectives 1, 4, 5

Key Goals

- Enhance academic, distance education, and advising programs to *support student success and increased student enrollment with particular focus on recruitment, retention, and graduation rates*
- Expand access to experiential learning with an emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches

Strategic Direction 2: Personnel Investment and Engagement

Aligns to Strategic Plan Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5

Key Goals

- *Strengthen the University's foundations and business processes* through a ground-up, multi-year plan that includes all divisional units and addresses key support areas such as human resources, operations, research services, sponsored programs, technology transfer, academic services, compliance, and financial resources
- Enhance and implement programs that better support and celebrate faculty and staff excellence
- Foster a climate of freedom of expression and civil discourse across campus

Strategic Direction 3: External Relationships

Aligns to Strategic Plan Objectives 2, 4, 5

Key Goals

- *Develop and foster relationships with statewide stakeholders to support and advance UW's mission*
- Grow relationships with national funding agencies and private foundations to enhance support for student education and faculty research
- Increase support for local economic development and cultivate corporate partnerships across the State and region
- Enhance engagement with community colleges, individually and through the Wyoming Innovation Partnership, to enhance the State's overall educational and research capacity and attainment

Strategic Direction 4: Long-Range and Strategic Planning

Aligns to Strategic Plan Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5

Key Goals

- Prioritize and foster excellence in core areas of *academics and research that are responsive to the needs of students, employers, and the State*
- Drive student success and enrollment growth through coordinated, cross-campus initiatives
- Enhance research and development and external funding opportunities including those related to the Science Initiative, Tier 1 Engineering, agriculture, veterinary science, energy, natural resources, and the arts and humanities

Strategic Direction 5: Budget Priorities

Aligns to Strategic Plan Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5

Key Goals

- *Develop and implement a transparent budget allocation model* that enhances incentives for growth in key areas and aligns funding with the university mission
- Grow and diversify revenue streams from national funding agencies and philanthropy to provide predictable funding

Addendum C

August 12, 2024



To: **WYOMING HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES**

- University of Wyoming Board of Trustees
- University of Wyoming Administration
- Albany County School District Board of Trustees
- Albany County School District Administration

CC:

- Joint Education Committee of the Wyoming Legislature
- School Facilities Committee of the Wyoming Legislature
- Chairman Nicholas and Senator Nethercott
- Governor Mark Gordon
- Superintendent Megan Degenfelder

Subject: Opposition to University of Wyoming Laboratory School Closure

We, the Albany County Legislative Delegation, are writing to express our profound concern and firm opposition to the recent decision by the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees to limit the extension of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the UW Lab School to a single year and to cease sponsorship of the school beyond July 2025. This decision has significant implications for our community, the University, and the state's educational landscape. We are committed to finding a long-term solution that ensures the continued operation of the UW Lab School as a K-8 public school of choice on the University of Wyoming campus. Despite our consistent communication of this priority to both the Albany County School District and the University of Wyoming administration, we are disappointed by the decision to limit the agreement to just one year. We will actively oppose this decision and work to secure a stable and sustainable future for the UW Lab School.

This decision goes beyond a simple agreement between the district and the university; it impacts the entire state's educational system. The UW Lab School is not just a local or university concern—it is a critical part of Wyoming's public school fleet and plays a vital role in our state's educator training program. As such, it falls under the purview of the Select Committee on School Facilities, the Wyoming School Facilities Commission, the State Construction Department, and the Joint Appropriations Committee, all of which are responsible for the careful planning and coordination of our K-12 school facilities. Additionally, the legislature has a vested interest in ensuring that the UW Lab School continues to facilitate high-quality educator training, which is crucial for our state's K-12 teachers and is a priority for the Joint Education Committee. Finally, the UW Lab School has been an integral part of the University and the Laramie community for nearly as long as the University has existed. Decisions regarding the future of the UW Lab School must be made with full consideration of their statewide impact and the broader educational framework of Wyoming.



WYOMING HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

The UW Lab School holds a distinguished place in Wyoming's educational history, established in 1887 to serve as a cornerstone for teacher training and innovative educational practices. The school's unique integration with the University provides invaluable hands-on training for future educators, a benefit that extends far beyond the confines of the classroom. The longstanding collaboration between the UW Lab School and the UW's College of Education has produced countless skilled teachers who contribute to educational excellence throughout Wyoming.

Through our meetings and discussions over the past few months, we have identified several concerns that have exacerbated the situation:

- The abrupt nature of this decision has caused considerable distress among parents, students, staff, and school administrators. The community strongly supports the UW Lab School and greatly benefits from the additional educational opportunities it provides. Many families have chosen the UW Lab School for its unique educational approach, which includes outdoor-based learning and access to University resources. The potential displacement of students and the disruption of this educational model are significant concerns that need to be addressed thoughtfully and collaboratively.
- The decision-making process of the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees has raised serious concerns. The majority of discussions regarding the UW Lab School MOU were held in executive sessions, with minimal opportunity for public input. This lack of transparency and community engagement is troubling, especially given the profound impact this decision has on local families and the broader educational landscape of Wyoming.
- The Albany County School District has incrementally reduced the UW Lab School of its curricula autonomy, leading the university to perceive the school as merely a traditional public school on campus rather than a vital academic and teacher training program. Additionally, the University has taken the brunt of major maintenance, routine maintenance, and security funding. Due to statutory frameworks limiting who can pay for major and routine maintenance, disagreements regarding funding have contributed to a standstill in progress being made around components of the MOU agreements.
- Both parties have expressed frustration with each other, each blaming the other for the breakdown in communication. This situation has devolved to the point where personal conflicts seem to be overshadowing objective decision-making, which should be focused on the best interests of the state and the students at both the UW Lab School and the University.

All of these challenges are addressable, and it is important to remember that we had a highly functioning school serving the University, school district, and state for many years prior to this disagreement.





WYOMING HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES


We are drafting legislation to establish a clear statutory framework for the UW Lab School's operation within the University of Wyoming, requiring collaboration between the University and the school district on key issues such as school autonomy, integration with the College of Education, school-level funding, and facility maintenance and security. This legislation is essential to ensure that the UW Lab School continues to fulfill its dual mission of providing high-quality K-8 education and facilitating educator training for Wyoming's future teachers. We strongly urge the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees to reconsider the one-year extension and engage in good faith negotiations to secure a multi-year agreement that guarantees the UW Lab School's long-term stability.


We urge all parties to continue working towards a compromised long-term solution that addresses all the challenges raised. Specifically, we need to ensure longer-term stability for the UW Lab School beyond a one-year contract. We must address the concerns raised by the University to ensure the UW Lab School fulfills its mission rather than becoming just another public school on campus. A functional and accountable communication process between the parties is essential, and it must be transparent and open to parents, staff and the broader community. This decision has far-reaching implications for the entire state of Wyoming and cannot be made without engaging the legislature.


Sincerely,



Chris Rothfuss Senate Minority Leader Wyoming State Legislature


Karlee Provenza Representative Wyoming State Legislature


Dan Furphy Senator Wyoming State Legislature


Ken Chestek Representative Wyoming State Legislature


Ocean Andrew Representative Wyoming State Legislature


Trey Sherwood Representative Wyoming State Legislature
