

WEA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2020

Policy on Candidate Questionnaire

Every candidate who desires to seek the endorsement of WEA-PACE, including incumbent office holders, must complete the official candidate questionnaire and participate in an interview with WEA representatives. The completed questionnaire and the information provided by the candidate are for internal use only, and shall not be disseminated to the media, the public at large, or the WEA membership at large. The chair of WEA-PACE, or the chair's designee, is permitted to characterize the views of a candidate with regard to responses on the questionnaire in broad terms, without reference to specific responses on the actual questionnaire, and especially in the context of explaining decisions of the WEA-PACE Council. Only under unusual circumstances, with the written permission of a candidate or former candidate, will the chair of the WEA-PACE Council (or the chair's designee) have the right to release a completed questionnaire for public use. Members of the WEA-PACE Council, WEA-PACE Steering Committee, the WEA Government Relations Commission, Director of Government Relations, and WEA Executive Committee shall have access to the data, as shall any WEA Professional staff member and the Information Specialist. Candidate Interview Teams shall have use of the completed questionnaires pertaining to candidates interviewed by that team, but will immediately return those completed questionnaires to the district UniServ Director. Completed questionnaires and related data will be collected and secured after any use by any of the groups or individuals mentioned above. Any WEA-PACE member may request to see, but not to copy, the responses of a candidate in his or her specific legislative district, and such cases shall occur under the supervision of a UniServ Director, the Director of Government Relations, or a member of the WEA Executive Committee. Under no circumstances will hard or electronic copies of any completed questionnaire be released or given to any person. All hard copies, including the original, will be kept at the WEA main offices in Cheyenne, and in the case of legislative candidates, copies of completed forms will be in the possession of UniServ Directors whose districts include the constituencies of those candidates. WEA members who are not also contributing members of WEA-PACE may appeal, in writing, to the chair of WEA-PACE to see, but not to copy, the completed questionnaire of a candidate in his or her specific legislative district, in which case the district UniServ Director will be instructed to comply with the request under the same terms as would apply to a WEA-PACE member.

Wyoming Education Association

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Running for: Senate District: 10

House District: _____

Candidate's Signature _____

Date: 5/27/2020

(your submission will serve as a signature – if you chose to send the hard copy back, please sign)

WEA Candidate Questionnaire – 2020

The following are WEA position statements on critical issues in the WEA Legislative Platform. For each issue, please check the response that indicates the extent to which you oppose or support the WEA's position. Please provide any additional comments you wish to share in the space indicated, and attach additional pages if needed. Be sure that each written comment on those additional pages indicates clearly the position to which it refers. Thank you for participating in this important process.

Candidate statement: to shorten the answers to some of the question below let me make a general statement.

I recognize the importance of and support the following statements:

- “The foundation of our political institutions, it is well known, rests in the will of the People, and the safety of the whole superstructure, its temple and altar, daily and hourly depend upon the discreet exercise of this will. How then is this will to be corrected, chastened, subdued? By education—that education, the first rudiments of which can be acquired only in common schools.” Report of U.S. House Committee on Public Lands, 1826
- “From the late 18th century through the middle of the 20th century, the federal government granted control of millions of acres of federal land to each state as it entered the Union. These lands were given in trust, with the stipulation that proceeds from their sale or lease be used to support various public institutions—most notably, public elementary and secondary schools and universities. These state land grants have played an important role in the development of the American system of public education and continue to provide revenues to maintain that system today.” Report of from the Center on Education Policy

All of the questions below are framed around the question of how do we provide the highest quality education to the people of our communities. As corporate America has long known, and health care is being forced to learn, you improve the quality of your product or service by looking at the structures and processes and measuring your outcomes. Many of these questions are about structure – the workforce and the facilities that are needed to produce the services. Without a stable, well-trained and qualified workforce you cannot produce a consistently high quality service, which is an education that allows the students to succeed and contribute to our communities. The same for the facilities. If you don't have adequate facilities with appropriate resources and appropriate student-to-teacher ratios it becomes more difficult to produce high quality education. Quality improvement requires transparency and accountability and that is for all parties, including state and local governmental agencies. Everybody must be held accountable if we are going to achieve an educated, informed and productive population that ensures the success and enhances the quality of life of the people of Wyoming. Our forbearers at the federal and state level wisely provided for public education through land grants and other provisions in our state constitution and many of these provisions are under attack.

The Constitution of the State of Wyoming

1. *The Wyoming Constitution makes education a fundamental right of every child and requires the State to provide an equal opportunity to a complete and uniform, thorough, education. The constitution specifically requires the legislature to properly fund that high-quality education for every child. WEA strongly opposes any attempt to amend, diminish, alter or weaken, in any manner, the Wyoming constitution to change the fundamental right to an education, the duty to fund schools and facilities, or the authority or ability of the courts to enforce the constitution.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 *My choice* 5

Comments: As noted, our forbearers wisely understood the importance of education for the future of the state and the people and they foresaw the potential for less wise individuals to undermine education. That's why they built protections into the state constitution. To undo these protections, one needs to provide a compelling state reason for permanent change. The current transitory problems are not justification for undoing the fundamental right to a quality education guaranteed by the constitution. Now, more than any other time in Wyoming history, Wyoming education is facing tumultuous times. The failure of our legislator to plan and respond to a known revenue crisis is not a justification for cutting education now. Wyoming education has been scrutinized repeatedly and multiple independent evaluations of our current system have indicated that Wyoming should increase spending; however, there have been repeated attempts to cut education funding and even amend the Wyoming state constitution. Now, more than ever, we need elected officials who understand education and will prioritize education in any budget decisions; not legislators who use their failure to generate revenue as an excuse to agree to cutting spending.

Legislative Compliance with the Supreme Court Directive to Fund the Actual Costs of Education

2. *The WEA supports legislation that requires the state to provide adequate and equitable funding for the delivery of the educational programs legally required by the state constitution (sometimes referred to as the "basket of goods and services").*

*Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 **My choice 5***

Comments: I strongly support this. It is irresponsible for the legislature to not provide funding for a responsibility mandated by the state. Educational programs that are legally required must have the funding necessary to provide them. I also oppose any legislation that aims to limit funding; particularly minority populations (students with disabilities, from low SES, racial minority groups, etc.) Many individuals misinterpret equitable to just mean the same; my interpretation, as it pertains to education, is an equitable education is one in which an individual's resources, interventions, and supports are based upon what is necessary for a child to access school learning. For example, an equitable education is not being provided the same textbook, instruction, and assignments. One student may benefit from traditional instructional practices and not require any additional support. A student with a learning disability in reading may require access to audiobooks, a human reader, pre-teaching of the vocabulary, access to a word bank during test in order to support spelling, etc. In order for that student to have an equitable education, they need additional resources and we have a moral and legal obligation to ensure every child has the best opportunity for learning possible and legislature must provide adequate funding to make this possible. With our current educational reality in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools are facing increased expenses in order to provide as close to equitable educationally experiences virtually as possible. This means schools need more funding for technology to ensure students have access to computers. More dramatically, this means the state needs to invest in high-speed internet access statewide and recognize this as a basic need; internet should be as close to free as possible in order for students to access and participate in their education without SES discrimination.

3. ***The WEA supports legislation that completely funds (please put your answer from the Likert scale in the space provided next to each circumstance):***

- 5 co-curricular activities (including, but not limited to, FFA, agricultural programs, art, music, theater, forensics, etc.) and the facilities needed to house them, as a part of the experience required for a modern education that meets the challenge of our times.
- 5 vocational (or career and technical) education at levels that recognize the additional expense of such programs, and the need of such programs for up-to-date equipment and appropriate staff training.
- 5 the continued commitment of the state to reimburse school districts for 100 percent of the actual costs of special education.
- 5 the actual costs of K-12 education and that the actual costs of K-12 education include competitive salaries and benefits for all education employees as the basis for a quality experience for every child in every school, and that the legislature must fund those components of the system appropriately.

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: The responsibility of the education system is to prepare people to succeed in life and to find opportunity in the work place. This opportunity manifests itself not only through college-based careers but also through vocational programs. I believe in a well-round educational model that includes cultural exposures and experiences that prepares the youth of Wyoming to be functional adults able to make decisions regarding their future and that ensures youth are ready to become contributing members of society. In addition, given the nature of work opportunities within the state of Wyoming, it would be negligent to only create a school environment focused on college as the only outcome of value. Wyoming is built on the backs of hard workers and we have an obligation to value all roles people fill within our state. Vocational training provide real-life opportunities for students to gain skills they can use as soon as they graduate. In order to provide this preparation, it is essential to recruit and retain the best trained professionals suited for providing essential skills to children. In order to accomplish this, the state must provide competitive and equitable salaries to professionals across the districts. The legislature and school districts must be held accountable for funding the necessary structures and programs that are needed to ensure the success of people. This is an investment in our future. This last legislative round came close to eliminating the cap spending on special education; a move that is vitally needed in order to ensure that we are addressing student needs in the best possible manner. In our current virtual reality, these areas are facing increased jeopardy through either eliminating programming options or, in the case of special education, risking the health and safety of students. Wyoming needs legislators who understand the complex federal mandates as well as how to prepare students to become contributing members of society to lead the way on legislative actions and budgeting; not those who use their personal childhood experiences as a basis for making decisions.

Education Policy

4. Educator Evaluation

The WEA supports educator evaluations that are valid, reliable, and defensible. They should include multiple measures, such as a variety of artifacts that demonstrate growth, professionalism and collegiality, and other research-proven indicators. When student achievement data is used for educator evaluation, it is critical that the student assessment be designed specifically for that purpose and applied equitably to all district leaders and all certified personnel. All parties to the evaluation must receive ongoing training. Evaluator inter-rater reliability must be ensured. The WEA supports legislation that prohibits any system of rewards and/or sanctions that are dependent on assessment results, as well as punitive forms of resource allocation based on assessment performance.

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: Quality improvement programs must measure outcomes in order to succeed. But the outcomes measures must have scientific evidence tying them to specific processes or structures in order to be considered a “quality” measure. The reason is that you can then link the poor performance to a deficiency in either a “process” or a “structure” that can be improved. Quality improvement involves addressing the deficiency and coming up with better processes or improved structures that lead to better outcomes. That is the purpose of quality improvement – to get better outcomes. Rarely is a single quality measure an adequate indicator of quality for complex systems. An example would be looking at teacher effectiveness based on standardized statewide assessment measures such as Wy-Topp. If the measure was only used to determine the proficiency of a student to meet grade-level norms while ignoring the rate of improvement of the student as a direct result of the teacher’s instruction, there could be many high-quality educators that could be deemed ineffective despite data demonstrating significant student improvement during the year. This is often the case when examining the data of students with disabilities. People involved in quality improvement have to be trained and there is a whole science behind it. They need to be trained and calibrated in not only how to perform the assessment, but how to develop and implement quality improvement plans. While the plans may involve “stick and carrot” incentives, positive approaches to change usually achieve more positive results. We must also fundamentally shift how we see teacher evaluations (and other professionals in education), from one where a teacher is ranked and rated to one in which encourages a continued growth model to advance all educational professionals skillsets, not just arbitrarily score them based on a series of skills each district deems necessary. Also, we have frank discussions about what upcoming evaluations will look like in a virtual world. There are educators who have a long track record of being excellent educators who are struggling to teacher in a virtual format as they are being asked to acquire new skills at the same time of completely redesign their curriculum. Districts in the upcoming year need guidance on how to handle evaluations to ensure a fair and unbiased evaluation occurs on all educators.

5. **Compulsory Attendance Requirements**

The WEA believes that it is in the best interest of the citizens of Wyoming to provide children with an appropriate public school education. We therefore support legislation to provide for compulsory attendance for children from Kindergarten to age 18 or completion of 12th grade or high school equivalency certificate.

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: This question seems to be focused on the sensitive issue of home-schooling. It also pits the “independent, self-sufficient” ethos of the American West against the “mentality of big government” and one of the policy issues that often separates Republicans and Democrats. I believe the state and our communities have a vested interest in the education of each child. We need them to grow to be productive contributors to our society and we want to minimize the burden of social safety net programs on our resources. I believe the best way of consistently achieving that is through public education or certified alternative education that meets specific standards and is regularly measured for success. Any system that fails to meet the standards or fails to achieve appropriate measures of success should not be exempt from the requirement of public school attendance. While I don’t favor home-schooling, if it meets the standards and measurement outcome requirements then I don’t feel comfortable forcing compulsory public school attendance on parents. However, failure to meet standards or outcomes should result in a quick response and remedy before harm is done to the child. There is also an

unenforced mandate occurring when it comes to compulsory education. Students with persistent attendance concerns and their families often do not receive more than stern letters encouraging attendance; this seems to have little impact on attendance rates but creates a battle between schools and families. There needs to be increased cooperation and collaboration occurring between education, the department of family services, and the justice system about what is realistic in terms of enforcing attendance mandates; if they are unenforced, then why are we creating a fight for schools? Who is responsible for the gaps in learning that cannot easily be made up with persistent attendance issues? Best intention legislation needs a reality check from those who know what the implementation from unfunded and unsupported mandates will mean for public educators.

Non Traditional School Options

6. ***The WEA supports innovation in public education, but believes that any plan such as charter schools must (please put your answer from the Likert scale in the space provided next to each circumstance):***

- 5 include adequate safeguards for all employees and students regarding health, safety, contract and employment provisions, non-discrimination, and equal educational opportunity;
- 5 be staffed by licensed professionals;
- 5 fully comply with all statutes and regulations required of other K-12 public schools;
- 5 be adequately funded and not divert current funds from the regular public school programs; and,
- 5 periodically be appropriately assessed and evaluated.

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: This is wise advice from the WEA to ensure that any education system has the appropriate structures in place that have proven successful at producing quality education. I support “structure” criteria for charter schools but believe the recommendation for assessment/measurement should be stronger. Charter schools should be held accountable to the same academic rigor as public education schools and their performance should be closely monitored. While the charter schools I have worked with in Wyoming have demonstrated a commitment to high standards and inclusive practices, I have seen many charter schools that do not. I also believe there should be more specific language regarding being “appropriately assessed and evaluated” as “periodically” is too vague and not stringent enough to monitor the performance of charter schools. While innovation and non-traditional methods of education are valuable, without sufficient regular monitoring, children may miss necessary educational opportunities if their charter school strays from meeting state standards. In addition, in the face of looming budget cuts, funding first needs to be applied to public education needs; this may mean larger cuts to charter schools in order to save neighborhood schools that are vital to our economy and state.

K-12 Revenue Issues

7. ***The WEA supports the continued commitment of appropriate and equitable revenue streams to the School Foundation Program as the source of funding for K-12 education. The WEA also supports the constitutional requirement that the legislature supplement the School Foundation Program from the general fund in the event of any shortfall.***

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 **My choice 5**

Comments: I fully support this and am an advocate of ensuring a steady funding source for this program. I also firmly believe we need to establish more consistent revenue funds in order to stabilize education funding. Boom and bust economies should not put educational opportunities in jeopardy. With our extraction industries facing bankruptcy, it is time Wyoming acts on protecting revenue streams for education; this means establishing new revenue streams that can stabilize funding and are not subject to ever-changing economic realities. States that have done this well rely upon multiple revenue streams so in the event that one revenue stream is down, budget shortfalls will not result in significant cuts to education.

8. *The WEA supports the constitutional requirement that the state must manage school trust lands for the benefit of Wyoming's school children, including competitive bidding of sales, leases, and other disposition of school trust lands, to ensure the greatest return to the trust.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 **My choice 5**

Comments: As the *Center on Education* noted in the background paper "*Public Schools and the Original Federal Land Grant Program*":

"From the late 18th century through the middle of the 20th century, the federal government granted control of millions of acres of federal land to each state as it entered the Union. These lands were given in trust, with the stipulation that proceeds from their sale or lease be used to support various public institutions—most notably, public elementary and secondary schools and universities. These state land grants have played an important role in the development of the American system of public education and continue to provide revenues to maintain that system today."

Our state constitution requires that the trust lands be managed properly, that the state be held accountable. To achieve this, it must provide the transparency necessary to ensure that they are. I strongly support managing this important legacy in a manner that achieves the best results.

Public School Capital Construction

9. *The WEA supports state funded, voluntary half-day pre-school for all four year-olds.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 **My choice 5**

Comments: The research is very clear on this, the earlier children have the benefit of: exposure to highly stimulating and enriching environments; exposure to reading to increase interest and language development; direct instruction in teaching student's school readiness behaviors; and in developing social-emotional skills for regulating their emotions and building interpersonal skills necessary to be successful in life, the better the outcomes students have in all k-12 performance areas. Cost is a prohibitive factor for many families accessing early education opportunities. Often times the families whose children need this education the most cannot afford to send their children. It also is detrimental to only offer this as a paid option for children who have disabilities as children with disabilities benefit immensely from exposure and collaboration with typically functioning peers. In addition, as the demands of kindergarten have increased over the years, preschool has become an essential educational experience in order for children to be ready for the rigor of kindergarten. We are seeing pretty consistently significant gaps in

learning between students with pre-school experience prior to attending kindergarten and those who have not. The result has been a significant increase in the number of special-education evaluation in young children who have not had adequate instruction time to achieve the same standards. In addition, funding preschool efforts will address one of the largest reasons young families leave the state: cost of early childhood education. By investing in ECE, we are not only doing what is best for kids, we are playing our part in bolstering the economy by providing a robust workforce population in parents.

10. *The WEA believes that decisions about physical facilities for schools and school capital construction should always be driven by research based educational programming for student needs. WEA supports legislation that completely funds the best facilities and classroom technology to deliver the highest quality academic and co-curricular experience for every student.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 4

Comments: I support that educational facilities and construction should be driven by research regarding educational programming needs but would also add that the design and recommended facilities should also meet school safety standards in order to address the increase in school violence. While many designs look visually stunning, they are not always practical for safety. School violence has been increasing over the years and there is some belief that Wyoming is immune from an incident occurring within our state. It is to the detriment of students, staff, and families to not prepare our staff and buildings to increase student safety. While creating a safe school isn't as impressive as a school the latest science labs, it is an essential component in learning; safe school create inclusive environments where students are able to focus on education and not on their own safety. I did not list this as a strong support because I do not believe we are currently addressing school safety to a degree that is currently recommended and would like to see this concept embraced as a standard practice when considering facility designs.

11. *The WEA supports a school funding model that actually funds major and routine maintenance needs of all school district facilities.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: Again, you cannot produce a quality service with the desired outcome if adequate structures are not in place. This includes not only building them but maintaining them to at least minimum standards. This is essential for any school's success. My mother was a school psychologist in Detroit Public Schools. Having a building is not enough. A building must meet all safety and health codes in order to ensure a safe learning environment. It is also essential to maintain buildings in order to increase their longevity and maximize use of educational buildings. This is the most cost-effective model we can embrace as we face educational funding cuts.

Employee Rights for K-12

12. *The WEA supports the Wyoming's Teacher Employment Act, (Continuing Contract Law).*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: Continuing Contract Law, also known as tenure, is about the rights of workers. Over a century ago, Republicans, led by people like Theodore Roosevelt, recognized the inability of individual workers to be treated

fairly by the “robber barons” of the time. Through the ensuing decades protections were given to workers to ensure they shared in the wealth that was created by their labor. However, in more modern times corporations and wealthy individuals have invested heavily in the Republican Party. In return, the Republican Party has opposed increases in minimum wages and social programs and has passed legislation, such as a “right-to-work” laws that favor corporations over workers (right-to-work is a false framing of the issue). Ronald Reagan attacked the Air Traffic Controllers, Scott Walker of Wisconsin is attacking teachers and public employee unions. Republican legislatures everywhere are passing right-to-work laws and attacking tenure provisions of teachers. As employee rights have decreased so has the size and wealth of the middle class. It is important that these trends be stopped and that workers’ rights be supported. Republicans are using flaws in a system to justify throwing the baby out with the bathwater. What we need to do is address the flaws with tenure while continuing to protect workers’ rights. It is important that both sides come to the table with the goal of creating the highest quality education system for the people of Wyoming. That includes a stable teaching workforce that is held accountable for their results but that is also afforded appropriate protections for their jobs and incomes. In addition, continuing contract is important given the role of an educator is to be a child advocate first; this means, there are times in which educators need to take positions and advocate for children in ways that administration may not like. Educators need to be able to advocate for children without fear of retaliation and termination.

13. ***ESP Due Process - The WEA supports legislation to provide all non-certified support staff in school districts with due process rights similar to those other employee groups paid by state funds have, including state employees and certified teachers. Such Legislation must also require districts to comply with their own policies, procedures and statutory requirements.***

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 *My choice 5*

Comments: Double standards are rarely a good thing to have. If other employee groups are entitled to due process, then the state must justify treating non-certified support staff as second class citizens. There is no justification. The districts must also justify their failure to comply with their own policies, procedures and statutory requirements. Failure to do so creates an implicit set of double standards that treats non-certified support staff as second-class citizens.

14. ***The WEA supports the right of education employees to participate in a process of collaboration for salaries, benefits, working conditions, and other professional concerns. We support legislation to establish guidelines to facilitate such practices between school boards and local employee organizations.***

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 *My choice 5*

Comments: I fully agree. Employees should be a part of the decision making process regarding areas that impact their ability to perform their job duties. This question deals with the bigger issue of how do you create a quality education system.

This is a “structure” question. The institution needs the right people, with the right training in order to produce the quality education that is the goal. Creating processes to involve employees in decisions regarding salaries, benefits, work conditions, and other concerns sends a message to the education profession and others that this is an institution that is serious about ensuring that a solid structure is in place to help their students achieve the success they strive for. It attracts a more qualified workforce, which improves the reputation of the institution, which makes it more desirable for students and attracts families to that community. Guidelines to facilitate such practices is a positive step towards improving the quality of our education system.

15. *The WEA supports the continuation of a defined benefit structure as well as the actuarial protection of the Wyoming Retirement System.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: Comments: Many corporations have shifted from a defined-benefit to a defined contribution retire program as a result of the 401(k) provisions from the 1980s. What this is doing is shifting the burden of saving and investing wisely to a population that is totally unprepared to do it leaving a huge percentage of the American population unprepared for retirement. Rather than thousands of employees each trying to figure out how to invest for retirement, it is far more beneficial and effective to continue the current system. The current system has problems that need to be fixed but the employees should not bear the burden of the mistakes of past administrations. It is important that all stakeholders are at the table when solving this problem and that any financial burdens not be disproportional to one party. Actuarial protection should be part of the fiduciary responsibilities of those overseeing the system.

16. *The WEA recognizes that the state retirement plan for school employees must be re-examined constantly in light of changing social and economic conditions. We, therefore, support periodic cost-of-living (COLA) increases to retain the purchasing power for retirees.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: Social security has long recognized the importance of cost-of-living provisions to enable retirees to keep up with the cost of inflation. Retired school employees deserve no less. These measures are provided by the federal government and used by many retirement plans.

Teaching Licensure and Professional Standards for K-12

17. *The WEA supports the maintenance of high standards for the teaching profession as established by Wyoming's Professional Teaching Standards Board, and believes that all students are entitled to fully certified teachers and administrators in all areas.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

18. *The WEA supports legislation to enhance the professional expertise of all employees in each school district by fully funding the costs of instructional facilitators as well as peer mentoring and support programs.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 3

Comments: The most expensive employee is the new employee. Educational institutions provide general education in specific areas. It can't possible provide each student with the unique knowledge that is needed for every business in America. New employees often have a significant learning curve before their real value to the organization is achieved and they become their most productive. It is a better investment to take an employee that has already gone through the learning curve and further enhance their skills to add more value. It leads to a more knowledgeable and productive workforce as well as greater employee satisfaction with their job – which leads to lower employee turnover with the high cost of repeating the learning curve.

In my opinion, in order to continue funding the role of an Instructional Facilitator, job requirements and qualifications need more uniformity across the state. In theory, they could be extremely valuable in professional growth for teachers (I have not met or seen training of a single instructional facilitator who is able to address professional growth for another role). In order for Instructional Facilitators to be of full use, there needs to be training and standardization of what IFs job role and responsibilities are statewide as well as what they will bring to Professional Learning Communities (or other professional teams). I have worked with some IFs that are essential members of a learning team and others who clearly do not understand enough to be able to guide classroom functioning and curriculum. Many do not know how to determine if a curriculum or program is genuinely evidence-based and often make recommendations based on sales calls. They are not able to advise on intervention planning, using data to make decisions, how to use curriculum-based measurements, how to appropriately use progress monitoring tools, or the implementation of teaching practices within the classroom that would allow for remediation to occur within a class period. I would like to see more support and structures put around this role in order for it to be fully functional and consistent across the state. I have also seen the misuse of instructional facilitators who have taken on a significant number of job duties that should more appropriately fall to the building administrator. This has put IFs in uncomfortable situations. They have also been burdened with so many job demands in some districts that their ability to truly be effective has been compromised.

Community College Priorities

19. *The WEA supports legislation that provides transparent, appropriate and equitable funding for the community colleges based on the wealth of the entire state, including provisions for the impact of inflation.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 *My choice 5*

Comments: Transparency and accountability are two measures that are sweeping the corporate world, particularly with respect to improving the quality and affordability of health care. Equitability is also an important measure to ensure all residents of the state have equal opportunity. The state is not the land within its borders – it is the people who comprise it. Investing in education is investing in the people and the amount of the investment should be tied to the wealth of the entire state. Today’s world is a mobile one. People move around the state and into and out of the state. We want an education system that attracts people and keeps them in Wyoming. And we want a workforce that is able to move around the state based on the needs of the communities. Inflation must be considered otherwise the real dollar investment in education would decline while the state was receiving inflated tax dollar revenues.

20. *The WEA supports the right of college employees to participate in a process of collaboration for salaries, benefits, working conditions, and other professional concerns. We support legislation to establish guidelines to facilitate such practices between boards of trustees and local college employee organizations.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 *My choice 5*

Comments: Like question 14, this is a “structure” question. The institution needs the right people, with the right training in order to produce the quality education that is the goal. Creating processes to involve employees in decisions regarding salaries, benefits, work conditions, and other concerns sends a message to the education profession and others that this is an institution that is serious about ensuring that a solid structure is in place to

help their students achieve the success they are striving for. It attracts a more qualified workforce, which improves the reputation of the institution, which makes it more desirable for students. The current board of trustees operates under an antiquated management style that has been largely abandoned by more successful corporations.

21. *The WEA supports an official role for democratically elected representatives of college employees on the Community College Commission, including membership on key governance councils, committees, working groups and task forces.*

Strongly Oppose=1 Oppose=2 Mildly Support=3 Support =4 Strongly Support =5 My choice 5

Comments: Nobody has more at stake in the success of Community Colleges and nobody has more insight into the problems, or the day-to-day challenges, or the potential solutions than front-line employees. The committees and groups mentioned above probably work towards consensus of their members, and employees would not have the majority vote, so excluding employees removes a very valuable source of information and perspective that the other members and the institution could benefit from. They should participate in these committees and other groups. I would expand this viewpoint to also apply to the University of Wyoming. Recent years have shown an absolute mismanagement of appointed Board of Trustees members who have cause significantly public relations issues and instability in our only 4-year university system.

I want to also include some concerns I have with our current reality. I am concerns about the rights of educational employees as schools begin to attempt to open back up and identifying which staff are required to expose themselves and which are not; and if those that are required will be compensated for hazard pay for assuming the risk. I am also concerned the mental health and well-being of both staff and students during this time. Lastly, I believe to alleviate the burden of virtual education on students and their families, legislature should be looking to collaborate with the Wyoming Department of Education in order to consider removing some diploma requirements for students who would graduate in the years 2021, 2022, and 2023 in order to reduce the demands on students and families now, as well as the demand to play "catch-up." This could be a temporary exemption specific to the pandemic.

Thanks again for participating in this process.