

# Wyoming Education Association Legislative Update



Coleen Haines - WEA Communications Director - [chains@wyoea.org](mailto:chains@wyoea.org)



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The [Senate Education Committee](#) plans to meet 8 AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

The [House Education Committee](#) plans to meet upon adjournment on Mondays and Wednesdays, and at 12 Noon on Fridays.

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[2016 WEA Legislative Update Archives](#)

[2015 WEA Legislative Update Archives](#)

**March 1, 2017**

## **Notable news of the day -**

House Bill 236 ([School finance-omnibus education funding](#)) passes third reading in the Senate, and will now move to the House for concurrence. With the new amendments, this bill now cuts \$37 million next year, which is a far deeper cut than the original bill. We urge you to [contact your Representative now](#), and ask them to VOTE NO ON CONCURRENCE OF HB236!

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## ***Addressing Education Funding Cuts and Tentative Recalibration -***

**With proposed cuts adopted in the current supplemental budget bill as sent to the Governor, education could see cuts upwards of \$46 million dollars.**

For decades, the Wyoming Legislature has set education spending policy, and the Legislature has then voted to appropriate such funds for education in Wyoming. The WEA is cognizant of budget shortfalls, especially those regarding our Wyoming students; however, the students of Wyoming don't deserve to lose valuable academic and activity opportunities. With another recalibration of education funding tentatively set for the summer of 2017 (*Recalibration was most recently completed in 2015*), the WEA is concerned that this committee will only institute cuts, and not fully investigate education funding.

## **Recalibration consists of three prongs, mandated by the Supreme Court of Wyoming -**

- What do we want in the educational system? (the basket of goods and services).
- What does it take to accomplish what we want? (what fills the basket).
- How much does that cost? (how much to fill that basket)

## **For example -**

- Class size ratios of 16:1 are mandated for K-3, so how many teachers does that take and how much will it cost?
- Three years of math are required for students to graduate, and there is a bill to increase that to four years. How many math teachers will that take, and how much will it cost?

Regarding past cuts to education in Wyoming: last year, a Joint Conference Committee (JCC) compromised on a Budget Bill by cutting approximately \$31 million from school districts over the two years from

2016-17 & 2017-18. Beyond those cuts, districts are already losing funding as students move away (out of state/other districts). Furthermore, between 2010 and 2015, *only ONE* External Cost Adjustment (ECA) was given to districts, whereas the current funding model asks for an ECA to be given to districts *every* year.

**Education has taken significant cuts over the past five years, and reporting otherwise is simply not true.**

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### **Budget Compromise**

#### **K-12 Funding**

Each house voted for concurrence on the House and Senate versions of the budget, which would tentatively cut \$25 million from education for the 2017-2018 school year. They also agreed to cut an additional \$20 million for the 2018-2019 school year.

**Although still a large cut, it is not as bad as the original Senate proposal of a \$91 million cut. Many Senators said they heard from YOU.**

**Please thank members of the Budget Compromise Committee: Senators [Bruce Burns](#), [Dan Dockstader](#), [Ogden Driskill](#), [John Hastert](#) and [Bill Landen](#); Representatives [Bob Nicholas](#), [Lloyd Larsen](#), [Andy Schwartz](#), [Albert Sommers](#) and [Tom Walters](#).**

**The budget proposal may be irrelevant if HB236 survives the session. Language in the budget amendment states that HB236 will override the budget amendment if it passes. SF165 died, due to lack of reading during last day of Committee of the Whole in the House.**

#### **Community Colleges**

The Committee split the difference by agreeing to add \$295,451 to Community College funding.

#### **Budget work is NOT OVER**

The Governor has the ability to line-item veto the budget, or veto the entire budget.

### ***Legislative action today -***

House Bills 190 ([Hathaway reserve account](#)), 126 ([Elementary school foreign language requirement](#)), and 238 ([Nude image of a minor disseminated or possessed by a minor](#)) all passed third reading. 190 and 238 will go to the House for concurrence, whereas 126 will go to the Governor's desk to be signed into law.

House Bill 189 ([Higher education-nonresident tuition](#)) failed to pass third reading.

House Bill 58 ([School facilities appropriations](#)) passed third reading, and will now go to the House for concurrence.

House Bill 76 ([American Indian education program](#)) passed third reading with an amendment, and will now go to the House for concurrence.

### ***Coming up this week -***

3/2

Concurrence on  
Amendments/Joint  
Conference Committee  
Reports

**IMPORTANT LINKS TO EDUCATION NEWS**

[Quality Counts 2017: State Report Cards Map](#)

[Wyoming Ranked 7th in National Education Quality](#)

[Winter 2016 WEA News Magazine](#)

[Wyoming Education Association Celebrates More Positive Education News](#)

[Wyoming Students Top National Average in Science](#)

[Wyoming K-12 Education Funding Deficit White Paper](#)

[School Finance: Constitutional Duties, Powers, and Approaches](#)

[2015 School Finance Recalibration Report](#)

[Legislative Service Office School Finance Information](#)



**115 East 22nd Street - Cheyenne - Wyoming**

Phone: 307-634-7991

web: [wyoea.org](http://wyoea.org)

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115 East 22nd Street, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001