



Wyoming Education Association  
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## **Wyoming Education Association Urges the Legislature to Prevent Funding Cuts to Public Education**

(Cheyenne, WY)—March 9, 2018—After a brutal legislative session, the joint budget conference committee unanimously approved HB 0001, the state budget bill. But the battle for public education is far from over, as anything is possible in the coming days as bills head to the House and the Senate later today, and then to the Governor’s desk. The Governor will have three days to consider the budget and any line-item vetoes.

The Wyoming Education Association is both grateful and disappointed in the pending results of the legislative session. Kathy Vetter, WEA President, said, “We are grateful for the work of many legislators, particularly in the House, who have steadfastly fought for public schools. We are disappointed with the rigid approach of some, particularly in the Senate, who refuse to fund education over the next biennium without making drastic and harmful cuts.”

As education advocates await the final news of cuts to public education, the heat is on constituents to speak up for students. If cuts are made in final decisions, public schools will suffer not only the cuts of this budget, but also the cuts made in two previous sessions, as well as the legislature’s failure to adjust the funding model for increased real-world costs over the past several years.

President Vetter explains, “We have seen some school closures, some reductions in force, and some curtailing of programs, and we fear those trends will now escalate. The legislature needs to get past any illusion that we can somehow cut our way out of the problem.”

In a session when Governor Mead wisely noted that quality education is at the core of the ENDOW initiative and other efforts to diversify and build Wyoming’s economy, cuts to public education would devastate Wyoming’s students and the future economy.

Vetter concluded, “The real problem here is not education, it is structural management. After three different comprehensive studies by experts on behalf of the state, we know that what we are doing in education is right, and we know what it costs. The problem is not the educational component. It is that we have a seriously flawed structural management of state funds. Everyone knew that there would be another energy bust, but there was no financial back-up plan. The House did attempt to take several beginning smart steps to modernize finances, but it appears the Senate was not interested in listening.”

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