



WYOMING

Description of the Formula

The Wyoming School Foundation Program provides a guaranteed level of funding to every Wyoming public school district which is computed via the Wyoming Funding Model. The funding model calculates this "guarantee," which is essentially a block grant and is based on a number of factors – the most important of which is the number of students enrolled in the district in the prior year.

Other components having a significant impact on a district's guarantee include special education and pupil transportation costs incurred in the prior year, the number of full-time vocational education students and teachers, the amount of square footage each district building has, the experience and education of the district staff, and the size and location of certain statutory defined “small schools” operated by the district. Very small school districts meeting certain enrollment criteria may qualify for additional funding.

Once a district's guarantee is established, that funding level is compared to the district's available local revenue sources. If a district's local revenues turn out to be less than its guarantee, the state of Wyoming makes up the difference through a series of entitlement payments distributed to the district throughout the school year.

A few school districts, on the other hand, have access to local revenues in excess of their guarantees. These districts must rebate the excess to the state of Wyoming – a process known as recapture. All recaptured monies flow into a School Foundation Program fund and are eventually redistributed to those districts receiving entitlement payments from the state.

District-Based Components

Density/Sparsity of Small Schools

School adjustments:

Schools with 49 or fewer average daily membership (ADM) are resourced 1 assistant principal position plus 1 FTE teacher position for every 7 students for all staff;

All schools within a district comprised of less than 243 total K-12 ADM and notwithstanding all other teacher resources, are resourced a minimum of 1.0 core teacher at every grade with reported ADM, plus 20% of core teachers for elementary specialist teachers and 33% of core teachers for middle and high school specialist teachers;

Minimum of 6.0 teachers for elementary schools greater than 49 ADM;
Minimum of 8.0 teachers for middle schools with greater than 49 ADM;
Minimum of 10.0 teachers for high schools with greater than 49 ADM.

For K-6 school, resource as elementary school;
For a 5-8 or 6/7-9 school, resource as a middle school;
For a K-7, K-8 or K-9 school, resource K-5 teachers as elementary school and remaining teachers as middle school, and resource all other staff resources at the highest-grade prototype;
For K-12 school, resource K-5 teachers as elementary, 6-8 teachers as middle school, 9-12 as high school, and resource all other staff resources at the highest-grade prototype;
For 6/7-12 school, resource 6-8 teachers as middle school and 9-12 teachers as high school, and resource all other staff resources at the highest-grade prototype.

Grade Level Differences

Elementary schools are resourced core teachers at 1:16 (teachers to students), middle schools and high schools are resourced at 1:21 (teachers to students).

Elementary schools are resourced a minimum of 6 teachers, middle schools are resourced a minimum of 8 teachers, and high schools are resourced a minimum of 10 teachers.

Elementary schools are resourced 20% of their core teachers for specialist teachers; middle schools and high schools are resourced 33% of their core teachers for specialist teachers.

To view a detailed list, please review the final legislation and final recalibration report mentioned below.

Declining Enrollment or Growth

Declining enrollment schools use a 3-year average of their ADM and schools that are growing use their previous year's ADM.

Capital Outlay and/or Debt Service

The School Facilities Commission (SFC), a separate state agency, handles the construction of new schools as well as capital outlay for those buildings requiring remodeling or major maintenance. There are also some funds available through SFC for emergency funds needed for the schools. Districts can still pass bond issues with voter approval for enhancements in excess of the state building adequacy standards.

Transportation

The state reimburses 100% of a school district's pupil transportation costs.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are resourced in the same manner as traditional schools.

Student-Based Compensation

Special Education

The state reimburses 100% of a school district's approved special education costs.

Low Income / Comp Ed / At-Risk

Additional staffing resources are generated for students identified as at-risk represented by an unduplicated count of students identified as English Language Learners (ELL), Federal free and reduced lunch (FRL) or considered mobile grades 6-12. Students who are identified as ELL, FRL, or mobile are not necessarily the at-risk students to be served. Rather, the count of these students represents a proxy for the number of struggling or at-risk students in a school.

Additional at-risk resources are funded through other programs such as extended day, and Summer School programs. These programs are administered as state restricted grants.

English Language Learner/Bilingual Education

The funding model provides a 1.0 teacher FTE position for every 100 ELL students.

Gifted and Talented Education

The funding model provides \$29.41 per ADM for gifted and talented.

Career and Technical Education

An additional 29% weighting is applied to students enrolled in Wyoming Department of Education approved vocational education programs. The additional weighting provides additional CTE teacher FTE. School districts are also resourced an additional \$9,094.97 per CTE teacher for vocational education supplies and equipment.

Preschool Education

State law provides districts with the option to offer preschool programs. W.S. 21-4-302(c) states: "The board of trustees of a school district may permit the enrollment of pupils in a part-time preschool program with a curriculum based on developmentally appropriate practices funded by the district." However, the state does not fund these voluntary preschool programs through the funding model. Subsection (c) goes on to say, "A pupil who enrolls in such a preschool program shall not be included within the district's average daily membership (ADM) for purposes of receiving state funds or within any other school funding formula for purposes of receiving funds from the state..."

In short, WY does not allocate specific funding for preschool programs from state K-12 education dollars. However, districts have the discretion to use foundation dollars if they choose.

Other

The state's funding model was recalibrated during the 2006 and 2011 legislative sessions. To view the final recalibration report and final legislation, please use the following web address: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/LSOWeb/SchoolFinance/schoolfinance.aspx>.

Revenue and Expenditure Information

State Mandates Restricting Revenue or Expenditure Increases

School districts are only allowed to retain 15% of their guarantee amount in their general fund.

Property Assessment Ratios Used/Legal Standards For Property Assessment

Property is assessed at its fair market value. The *State Board of Equalization* prescribes the form of assessment and adopts procedures to ensure that all property in the state is assessed at fair market value. Legal standards for property assessment fall under the Revenue Department.

Please see this site:

<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/statutes/statutes.aspx?file=titles/Title39/Title39.htm> for legal definitions. Data contained in this statute covers Taxation and Revenue. Specific additional detail is contained in W.S. 39-11-101 through W. S. 39-11-104.

Measure of Local Ability To Support Schools

Local revenues, mainly 6 and 25 mill property taxes, compared to the guarantee. The federal report prepared shows maintenance of effort (MOE) maintained by the districts which might be a reflection of a district's ability to support schools. The amount of funding to the districts through the funding model might be an indicator of a district's inability to meet costs derived from local support.

School District Budget and Tax Rate Procedures/Sources of Local Revenue

The majority of local revenues for schools come from property taxes and school land income payments. School districts are required to levy a local district 25 mill levy and a countywide 6 mill. An additional 12 mills flow directly to the Wyoming School Foundation Program Account.

Budget increases are handled through local district boards; no voter approval necessary. Districts can still pass bond issues for capital construction with voter approval for enhancements in excess of the state building adequacy standards.

State Support for Nonpublic Schools

Does not apply.