



# Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Newsletter



**In this issue -** Recognize and Celebrate SCSD #1, Community Curriculum Council update, Social Studies Resource selections, Perkins update, Teton Science School, Teacher Leaders and Quality Lesson Design, Validation Reminder, WY-TOPP Modular Assessments, WDE Systems of Support and Continuous School Improvement, School Improvement Plan Timeline and December Calendar and Upcoming Events



## **Sweetwater County School District #1 will create and foster academic success through partnerships with its schools, community and families.**

- Recognize and celebrate student, family, community and employee contributions.

### **Desert School**

Desert School is in the second year of implementing The Book Trust program. This program gives ownership of books into the hands of each student. Every student gets to order \$7 worth of books each month that they get to keep. The children enjoy opening their books and are excited that they get to keep their books too.



### **Desert School**

Desert School Coyotes were thrilled to have R.A.P. (Realize Anything's Possible) come to our school with their message of respect, self-discipline & reaching goals, discovering our potential, and persevering through obstacles. R.A.P. had students and staff out of the bleachers and dancing on the floor with their incredible messages, they even had a dance off between the students and the teachers!



### **Eastside Elementary**

We would like to extend a special thank you to our Veterans Day Committee, Mrs. Westbrook and our Eastside Choir, students, staff and community.

"On this Veteran's Day, let us remember the service of our veterans, and let us renew our national promise to fulfill our sacred obligations to our Veterans and their families who have sacrificed so much so that we can live free."





## Rock Spring High School



Fall 2018

Stephanie Cozzens  
Rock Springs HS  
1375 James Dr  
Rock Springs, WY 82901-1089

Dear Stephanie Cozzens:

I am proud to inform you the Rock Springs HS speech and debate team has earned significant recognition from the National Speech & Debate Association.

As you know, students earn points and degrees in our honor society based on competitive and service-related activities, ranging from the Degree of Merit with 25 or more points to the Degree of Premier Distinction with 1,500 or more points.

Because your chapter achieved a total of 200 or more degrees last year, it has ranked among the top **10%** of schools nationwide and earned membership in the Association's prestigious **200 Club**. This milestone is remarkable because it demonstrates outstanding commitment to teaching students essential life skills—including communication, research, listening, writing, and organization.

The hard work you have invested to achieve this distinction will pay dividends for years to come. I encourage you to build upon this momentum to ensure that even more students are empowered to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders in our global society.

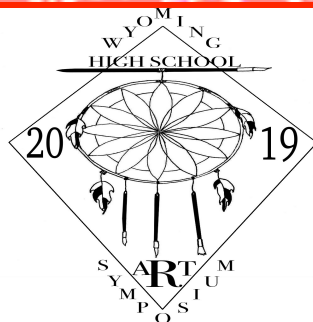
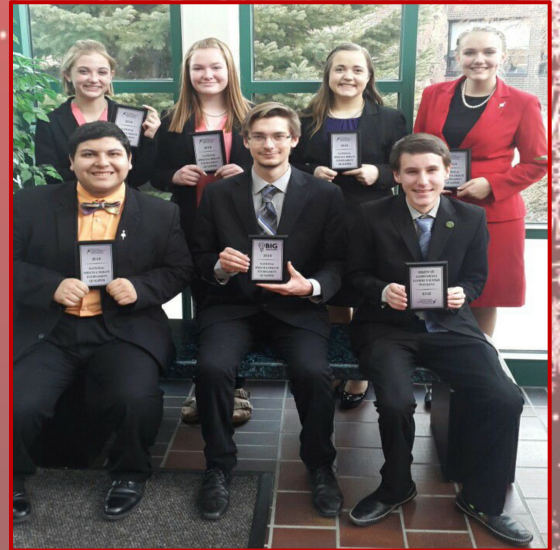
The National Speech & Debate Association commends your leadership of an active speech and debate program. Keep up the good work, and best wishes for another successful season!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Scott Wunn".

J. Scott Wunn  
Executive Director

Cc: Principal



## Black Butte High School

Black Butte High School students recently competed in a logo design contest for the Wyoming High School Art Symposium scheduled for Spring of 2019. The competition was held during Fall Conference for Wyoming Secondary Art Educators (WSAE) at the end of September. Art students from all around the state entered the contest. Black Butte High School earned the rare honor of placing 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the competition! The following students were the top designers: 3<sup>rd</sup> place Jezabel Walton with "Crow on Barbed Wire," 2<sup>nd</sup> place Blaise Boudra with "Dream Catcher," and 1<sup>st</sup> place Alison Kelsey with "Indian Paintbrush Paintbrush." Miss Kelsey's design will grace the cover of the 2019 Wyoming High School Art Symposium booklet and event T-shirts.



## Rock Springs Junior High School

The Rock Springs Junior High celebrated the spooky season with a Halloween Dance on October 26<sup>th</sup>. The dance was a huge success due to the organization of the PTSO who decorated and chaperoned the event; the staff of the junior high who assisted in chaperoning; FFLA students from the high school who ran the concession stand and assisted with the cleanup; the Fire Department judged the costume contests; and the Rock Springs Police Department whose presence made everyone feel very safe in spite of the "ghouls" that were roaming the building.



## Rock Springs High School

RSHS Counseling Department held a Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) Night at the high school in the ALC room. Amber Taylor and her assistants from the WWCC Financial Aid office were able to assist 9 families with their Free Application for Student Aid forms.



## Community Curriculum Council Update



Last year the CCC did a book study on Ken 'Connor's "[\*A Repair Kit for Grading\*](#)" which discusses 15 fixes for broken grades. Upon completion of the book study, the committee decided to proceed forward with investigating how Sweetwater#1 might implement standards-based grading into secondary schools. After much discussion about grading, Sweetwater #1 invited Mr. Brad Neuendorf, the principal from Lander Valley High School (LVHS), to share his perspective on the journey of becoming a secondary school with standards-based grading. LVHS has experienced success by increasing the graduation rate by more than 10%, changing the meaning and the quality of the high school diploma, providing focused intervention and enrichment time during the school day, and most importantly instilling hope in students who have made poor choices in the past and are now back

on track to graduate. To help smooth the transition from traditional grading to standards-based grading, Mr. Neuendorf shared key components they have in place such as a strong PLC process, the use of Kagan Cooperative learning structures, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) and stakeholder involvement and communication. The CCC will continue the conversation about standards-based grading at the meeting in January.

Another topic discussed was the Social Studies Resource Adoption recommendation. The CCC reviewed processes and decisions made by the Social Studies committee. The CCC was impressed because the committee chose resources based on alignment to the curriculum map, the engagement/interest level of the resource for students, the online components and the group was fiscally responsible in their choice. The recommendation will proceed forward to the board of trustees on December 10, 2018.





## **Social Studies Resource Selected**

On November 27, 2018 the Social Studies Adoption Committee met to analyze data and decide on a new Social Studies resource. Data collected and analyzed included:

- Vendor Presentations (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Teachers Curriculum Institute and McGraw Hill)
- Features, Benefits, Concerns/Questions
- Teacher Survey Responses
- Resource Cost Breakdown
- Additional information requested by committee from vendors

Committee members considered each resource individually and dialogued about the effectiveness, the efficiency and the feasibility of the resources. The groups also reflected on the following questions for each of their resources:

- Which resource has the ability to obtain the highest student achievement?
- Will the selected resource support the test of time?
- What evidence do we have to support the resource is research-based?
- Which resource best supports the implementation of our curriculum maps?

After much dialogue and discussion, the recommendation of the committee is as follows:

- The recommendation made by the Resource Adoption Committee for grades K – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> is HMH.
- The recommendation made by the Resource Adoption Committee for grade 4<sup>th</sup> is to use the current Wyoming Crossroads resource, a Wyoming floor map and IXL for Social Studies.
- The recommendation made by the Resource Adoption Committee for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> is TCI.
- The recommendation made by the Resource Adoption Committee for 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> is McGraw Hill.

The committee also reviewed the district policy for Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption. The teams agreed that each of the resources supported the policy. The final surveys and the “Fist of 5” results demonstrated consensus at all grade levels. These resource recommendations will be shared with the Sweetwater #1 School Board at the December meeting.

## **Social Studies Committee Feedback**

### **Social Studies Committee K – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>**

As a Social Studies Resource Adoption Committee, we have come to a consensus to adopt HMH: Kids Discover. Of the resources reviewed we found this resource most closely aligned to the district’s curriculum maps. After diligent consideration of the resource being efficient, effective and feasible, HMH: Kids Discover will meet the needs required.

HMH includes a broad range of learning opportunities including the following: consumable magazines, google expeditions, cross curricular activities, technology integration, suggestions for differentiation, and a user-friendly teachers’ guide.

We are looking forward to implementing a new and valuable resource for Social Studies pending further approval.

### **Social Studies Committee 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The fourth-grade teachers on the Social Studies Resource Adoption Committee have chosen to keep the current resource, Wyoming Crossroads of a Continent. We chose to keep this resource because it aligns with the Wyoming Social Studies standards and the Sweetwater School District #1 Social Studies Curriculum Map. In addition to keeping this resource we have requested the following supplemental resources:

- Additional copies of the Wyoming Student Atlas that addresses map skills and Wyoming geographic information.
- The Wyoming Floor map which addresses and enhances student understanding and engagement of map skills and geographic knowledge.
- Native American Studies new to the Wyoming State Social Studies Content Standards which are located on the Wyoming Department of Education website under the Native American Education tab.
- Lastly government and civics information that can be accessed through the IXL Social Studies program as we are looking at purchasing licenses for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### **Social Studies Committee 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>**

The Social Studies Resource Adoption Committee for grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> have chosen TCI (Teacher Curriculum Institute) History Alive! - The Ancient World/ The United States Through Industrialism/Geography Alive, for its multimedia materials and activities. TCI provides engaging, real-world curriculum that is centered around the seven multiple intelligences. The curriculum moves past the typical “sit and get” and provides teachers with modifiable lessons that include engagement strategies, activities, and interactive games. As a committee we also looked at the ease of use when it came to the text and online accessibility for the teacher as well as the student. Another benefit is that there is EL and Special Ed components that provide scaffolding for students that are struggling to understand the content. We were impressed that the resource includes engaging enrichments for our advanced learners as well.

### **Social Studies Committee 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>**

The Resource Adoption Committee at the secondary level has chosen to adopt the McGraw Hill curriculum and resources. After evaluating the effectiveness, efficiency, and feasibility of the available options, we found that McGraw Hill was able to meet most of our needs and addressed the concerns that we felt were missing from our current classroom curriculum. The textbooks from this collection aligned with our current curriculum maps and offered ample supplementary assessments to enhance student engagement and understanding.

This resource also offered several online components that will provide opportunities for students to have access to relevant news and events. A few examples of these are, BTW Current Events Blog and You Decide-Election Central sites that allow students to follow the most up-to-date information about the midterm elections. These sites are updated with stories that are happening now so that students can make a connection with the content. We felt that McGraw Hill offered the best resources for rigor and relevance for our students.

Another component of the McGraw Hill materials that we found beneficial was the ability to translate assessments and reading levels for our ELL students. It also offers the ability to support struggling readers with the Learn Smart Program which allows for differentiation of reading levels based on the students’ needs. Overall, we really felt that McGraw Hill offered the best framework to help support our staff and our students with the tools needed to learn about the world we live in.



## **Perkins: National Career Academy Coalition's (NCAC) Conference in Houston**

With the federal emphasis on economic and workforce development, career academies are continuing to spread around the country. Just recently, the federal government released a paper outlining Next Generation High Schools. This document aligns almost perfectly with the Ten National Standards of Practice. Community and elected leaders are recognizing the value of the collective impact approach on student achievement, daily attendance, graduation rates, and the economic impact of prepared students. These leaders clearly understand the importance of career academies and the impact they are having in preparing our students for the real world.

Career Academies provide the opportunity for educators to fully engage students as never before. The academy model empowers our youth to make informed choices about their future college and career. As educators, it is our responsibility to design stimulating and interactive learning environments where students collaborate, critically think, communicate, and demonstrate their creativity.

Below are a few comments from our teachers that attended the November Conference:

### **Heidi Rubich**

-The encouragement to work in cross-curricular groups for planning and implementation of cross-curricular lessons was so powerful and I am hopeful that we can continue to do this and, frankly, am hopeful that we can do much more of this at RSHS.

- One of my favorite quotes from one of the speakers was "It's amazing what students are capable of when the word "no" stops coming out of our (teacher's) mouths." It was a powerful testimony about allowing students to drive learning.

### **Lyndsey James**

-I was inspired by the community partnerships that other schools had cultivated. It really helped clarify the roles of the academy and the community. Business partners can have a very different perspective on what students should know and be able to do and I want to work toward closing that gap.

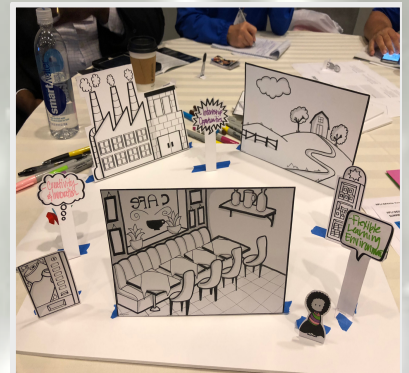
### **Anna Crawford**

-I received some very useful technology tools to try out in my classroom to shake things up and keep students engaged. One program, PechaKucha, is something I had never heard of before this conference, but looks like it could solve some snags I'm hitting with my quarterly book projects. I am excited to try it out and see what my students come up with!

-I attended one very inspiring session in particular where students presented, sharing their stories of how their academy has helped them grow not only as students but as innovators, making tangible, real-world contributions to their school's success. The students were able to take an idea they had – to start up a unified school store which organizations could use to fundraise – and run it as part of their E-Commerce Academy. It was an amazing example of students taking charge of their own learning in useful, real-world ways, while still developing mastery over their state standards.

### **Liz Sedey**

-I think this conference just confirmed with me the importance of involving students in their own education to help them understand relevancy. Just as our district recently developed the District Strategic Plan that is focused on fostering partnerships with our community and helping students to develop employability skills. The idea of career academies achieves that. I believe that it is important that education evolve and help students ready themselves for the 21st century that we live in.





## Teton Science School Place-Based Workshop

On November 8, 2018, teachers from Northpark Elementary travelled to the Kelly, Wyoming for 4 days to the campus of Teton Science Schools (TSS), Trista McMartin, Megan Harrell and Bailey Heide were also in attendance.

While at TSS, these teachers learned the importance of Place-Based Education (PBE), the new Wyoming Science Standards (WySS) and the importance of how they overlap and work together to best benefit students. One day was spent in the field studying 'The Gap Lakes Phenomenon'. To summarize this phenomenon, two lakes were seen in the Snowy Range Mountains outside Laramie, Wyoming. One lake was frozen while the other was not. The teacher's task was to figure out why. Collaboratively, teachers were put into the role of students and had to ask questions, work collaboratively, study nature and problem solve. The next day, the teachers were given planning time to create a lesson/mini-unit using this PBE, WySS and phenomenon-based approach. They were asked to team up with another grade-level teacher to find a science standard from their grade in which they could create a phenomenon-based project.

After much reflection, it was unanimously agreed that students gain more problem-solving skills, deeper level understanding, knowledge, inquisitive questions, curiosity and excitement from this type of learning. It truly puts the work on the students instead of simply reading it from a textbook or memorizing it and writing answers on an assessment. With this style of learning, students need to understand the concept fully in order to solve the phenomenon they were presented with. These same three teachers will return to TSS in Kelly, Wyoming in March to share the results of their project with the other teams from across the state.

Then in April or May a team of TSS instructors will visit our campus and take students on a Place-Based lesson in the field as well as inside the classroom.



## Teacher Leaders and Quality Lesson Design

Teacher Leaders have been creating Instructional Planning Resources (IPRs) in the content areas of English Language Arts, EL instruction, Social Studies, Math, Science, Art, Foods & Consumer Arts and Music which are aligned to standards on the curriculum map. These lessons are designed to provide teachers with supplemental instructional resources. All IPRs are stored in Sharepoint within each content area and can be downloaded to your desktop. See the links below for access to check out these lessons:

### [Sharepoint Link](#)

The following staff have been selected to serve as Teacher Leaders in the role of designing quality IPRs: Rhonda Gamble, Deborah Jen sen, Brad Cox, Christine Pettibone, Katie Nash, Nathan Wonnacott, Joann Stevens, Erin Worthington, Joanna Hostetter, Crystal Ric hardson, and Barbara Twomey.



## WDE Systems of Support and Continuous School Improvement

Wyoming Department of Education(WDE) will be hosting a Data Retreat in Sweetwater #1 on December 4 and 5 for schools in Sweetwater#1 who are designated as "Not Meeting" or "Partially Meeting" expectations. During these two days the focus will be on analyzing data including Root Cause Analysis and School Improvement Plan Development. This program is designed to support improved teaching and learning (Pillar #2), and the development and establishment of effective structures and processes (Pillar #4). Schools will write action plans with research-based strategies to support the urgent facts identified through this process. This training is required of all schools not meeting expectations.

The WDE System of Support (SSOS) Model designates pillars of support, based on current literature around the elements of effective schools. The five pillars of the Wyoming SSOS are:

1. Cultivating exceptional leadership
2. Improving teaching and learning
3. Developing a high-performance culture
4. Establishing effective structures & processes
5. Engaging families and the community

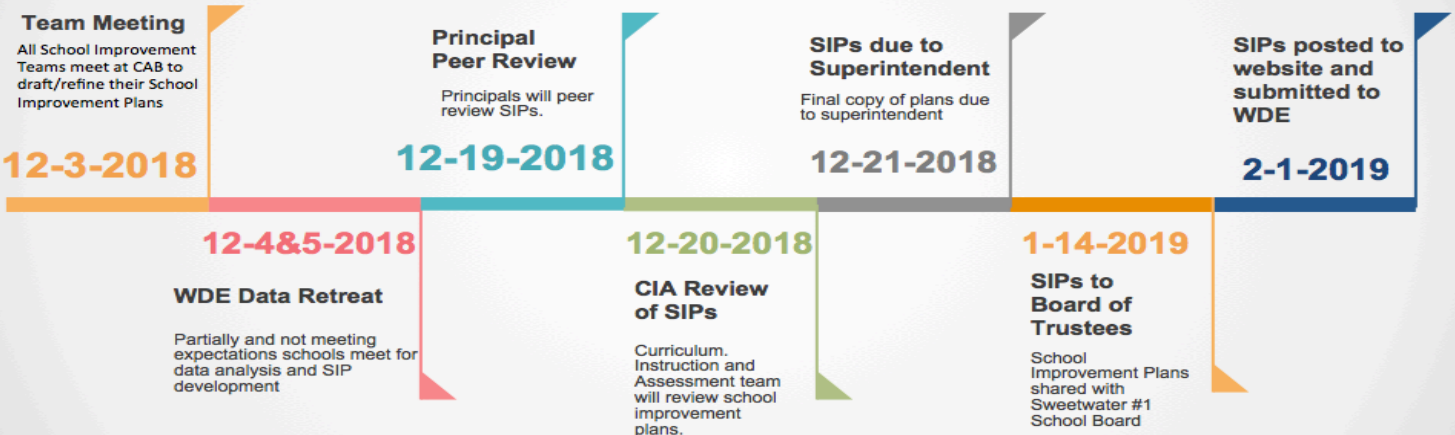
Programs and technical assistance will be offered at all levels (Tier I (low-level support) Tier II (targeted services) and Tier III (high level support needs). For those schools with the most intense support needs, the department will collaborate with school leadership teams to identify specific needs. All programming will be aligned to assist school improvement within the areas defined by the five pillars of support.

Historically, the WDE's Statewide System of Support has operated four core programs targeted to different schools across tiers of need.

- Assessment Literacy and Formative Assessment Resource Development
- Data Retreats including Root Cause Analysis and School Improvement Plan Development
- Professional Learning Community Process Understanding and Implementation
- District and School Leadership Topic Presentation and Networking

The WDE SSOS Team will continue to offer these successful programs and make them broadly available. Priority access and support will be given to schools in Tier II and Tier III.

## Sweetwater County School District #1 School Improvement Planning Timeline







### **Validation Surveys**

Validations Surveys are Open for Teacher Input on Curriculum Maps and District Common Assessments

In January, the English Language Arts and Foreign Language Subject Area Committees will be meeting to review the validation surveys for district common assessments. Teacher input is welcome and necessary to make revisions.

Science and Career Vocational Education Subject Area Committees will also be convening in January to review curriculum maps. Validation surveys are utilized to make changes on the curriculum maps based on teacher input during the academic year.

Access the validation surveys through this link: [Validation Survey Link](#)

### **WY-TOPP Modular Assessments**

Reflections from successful schools, teachers and students say that giving the practice modular assessments in a meaningful, purposeful way helps students demonstrate their knowledge on the WY-TOPP summative in the spring. These practice assessments inform instruction and help students and teachers gain familiarity with the online test platform and tools. As of November 20, 2018, schools in the district have given 2629 WY-TOPP modular assessments. Continue to administer these on-demand formative assessments as you see fit with your students. The assessments can be given several times and results are available immediately after students complete the assessment. Please remember the modular assessments are semi-secure which means that items can't be sent home, emailed, screen-shot, or printed. Additional security information can be found by [clicking here](#).



# December 2018

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

						1
2 Hanukkah Begins 🕯️	3 School Improvement Plan Meeting 4:00pm-6:00pm	4 WDE Data Retreat 8:30am-4:00pm  Science Training at WWCC 8:00am-4:00pm	5 WDE Data Retreat 8:30am-4:00pm  Science Training at WWCC 8:00am-4:00pm	6 STEM Meeting 4:00pm-5:30pm	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 🇺🇸	8
9	10 Board Meeting 6:00pm	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Professional Development 8:00am-11:30am  Grades 12:30pm-4:00pm	22
23	24 Christmas Eve 🎄	25 Christmas Day 🎅	26 Kwanzaa 🍷	27	28	29
30	31 New Year's Eve 🎉					

## Important Upcoming Events/Dates

Universal Screening Testing begins: January 7<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Young Author Competition entries due: January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019