



Profile of a Graduate Phase I Design Team Recommendations

December 2021

Introduction

The Wyoming State Board of Education has four main areas of responsibility. These include student content and performance standards - including graduation standards, accountability, assessment, and accreditation. As part of its responsibilities for identifying Wyoming graduation standards, the state board has embarked on the development of a Profile of a Graduate. The intent of the board is to produce a profile that honors the most important needs of students and stakeholders by preparing students to be ready for life after high school. In doing so, the board aspires to provide a more cohesive education system that allows flexibility for additional student opportunities and innovation in Wyoming's educational programs. The board is approaching the development of the Profile of a Graduate in three phases.

Phase I - Finding the Foundation

Phase II - Developing the Profile

Phase III - Setting the Standards

The board assembled a Profile of a Graduate Design Team to oversee Phase I. Through the work of the Design Team, 46 listening sessions were held involving the general public as well as educational associations/groups, business/industry, community service providers, post-secondary institutions, parents, and students. In addition, 496 surveys were submitted from stakeholders across Wyoming. The listening sessions and survey provided the Design Team with input from about 800 Wyoming citizens who weighed in on what they value and would want to see a Wyoming graduate know, be able to do, and experience in preparation for life after high school graduation.

The Profile of a Graduate Design Team reviewed the input collected during Phase I and identified key findings. The findings cluster around four main areas: Academics, Career, Community, and Life. **Academics** is defined as the content knowledge, skills, and behaviors included in the Wyoming K-12 student Content and Performance Standards. **Career** is defined as the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to be successful in the world of work. **Community** is defined as the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for contributing to society. **Life** is defined as the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to thrive as an adult.

This document is provided as a summary of the Design Team recommendations drawn from stakeholder input and is intended to provide a transition from Phase I to Phase II of the Profile of a Graduate process.

Academics

Academic rigor is viewed as an important aspect of Wyoming's educational system. The transferability and application of knowledge across content areas and novel situations, including the use of basic academic skills in life beyond graduation, is important to stakeholders. There is a perception college attendance is valued over career readiness as evidenced within the structure of high schools, district and state policies, as well as messaging within communities.

Design Team Recommendations for Profile of a Graduate: Academics

A Wyoming graduate will . . .

- demonstrate foundational knowledge and competencies in math, history and civics, science, reading, and writing, including technical reading and writing.
- apply knowledge and competencies to life's challenges and opportunities using problem solving and critical thinking.
- transfer knowledge and competencies across content areas and later in career and college performance.
- possess strong communication skills, both verbal and written, appropriate to various audiences, purposes and mediums.
- have the ability to identify and access credible resources.

To accomplish this, students must possess . . .

- a growth mindset where failure is recognized as part of the life-long learning process.
- a curiosity that leads to discovery.
- the ability to apply knowledge to create opportunities and solve problems.

Career

Career preparation is a valued component of education in Wyoming. As a state made up of many small businesses, there is a desire that graduates be able to successfully step into a career field. Wyoming values career preparation as an integral element of student learning. There is a perception that career education is viewed as separate from other academic preparation and that attending a college or university is the primary focus in schools. It is vital that K-12 courses and experiences be of high quality and that they have applicability to the future careers of students. Students indicated confidence in knowing the area of study they were interested in pursuing but admitted to being less knowledgeable about career options in those areas. Additionally, business and industry representatives expressed specific concerns about student misperceptions of how the workplace functions and the process of growing in one's own career.

Design Team Recommendations for Profile of a Graduate: Career

A Wyoming Graduate will . . .

- explore a full breadth of career options and work environments with an understanding of entry requirements and varied paths to achieve their choices and desired lifestyle.
- develop workplace communication skills (written and verbal) including giving and receiving constructive criticism, advocating for assistance, and communicating professionally.

- have opportunities to experience planning and managing multi-step projects, including establishing timelines with strategic checkpoints.
- develop basic leadership skills, including the identification of personal strengths and weaknesses.
- collaborate and work with a variety of people including peers, mentors and stakeholders to accomplish a variety of tasks.
- successfully complete multiple employment application components (digital and print) including: applications, cover letters, resumes, and a traditional interview experience as well as virtual.
- have knowledge of compensation as it relates to career entry and career advancement.

To accomplish this, students must . . .

- be persistent and resilient.
- have strong interpersonal relationships.
- be able to access resources and supports.
- work to a quality standard.
- show initiative.
- be adaptable and adjust to novel situations and workplace demands.

Community

Wyoming values its citizens being engaged and connected to their communities. While there is recognition that achieving the vision of a profile of a graduate is a shared responsibility between communities, schools, and families, there is a belief that schools need to focus additional attention preparing students to be civically-minded and engaged. Providing students with opportunities to develop relationships, participate in events, and support issues of relevance in their community is an important aspect of schooling that must be balanced with time for academic, life, and career learning.

Design Team Recommendations for Profile of a Graduate: Community

A Wyoming Graduate will . . .

- know how governing structures operate in a democracy and how to be involved in the governing process.
- know how to access community resources both private and public.
- engage appropriately in civil discourse.
- discern the credibility of information and content from a variety of sources to become a knowledgeable and engaged citizen.
- seek opportunities to authentically contribute to their school community and the greater community, state, and nation.

To accomplish this, students must be . . .

- able to collaborate with others.
- open to service and volunteerism.
- aware of other cultures.
- respectful of the perspectives and rights of others.

Life

Preparing students for independent living, including physical and mental health, is a collective responsibility of families, communities and the school system. If students are not prepared and capable of managing their personal lives, other endeavors will suffer. Student voice was strongest in this area, and it was often cited as the area of greatest concern regarding their preparation for leaving high school. Overwhelmingly, students who had quality, comprehensive life skills or training in daily adult living before graduating viewed those experiences as crucial to their future success. Another identified issue was students' knowledge of and access to health supports including those associated with mental health. Recognizing that adolescence and young adulthood is a time when mental health, relationship, and social stress issues may emerge, students should have the skills and confidence to seek support when needed.

Design Team Recommendations for Profile of a Graduate: Life

A Wyoming Graduate will . . .

- demonstrate basic living skills.
- possess skills in personal finance including understanding of compensation, cost of living, budgets, credit/loans, taxes, housing costs, savings, insurance.
- understand core strategies of self care including physical and mental well being and access to medical/mental health services.
- build and maintain healthy relationships.

To accomplish this, students must be . . .

- dedicated to personal growth.
- self aware and able to self-advocate.
- able to identify and solve life problems.
- able to think from different perspectives - independently, globally, collaboratively, and critically.

Stakeholder Ideas for Profile Supports

The state system should consider . . .

- developing integrated/interdisciplinary state standards, particularly interdisciplinary literacy and technical reading/writing.
- reducing the number of standards, with clarity on core competencies to allow flexibility for local innovation and opportunities.
- implementing competency-based equivalency exams for earning graduation credit.
- removing barriers between career preparation and content area instruction.
- encouraging a career perspective within and across content areas to support successful application of knowledge and student engagement.
- revising the accountability system in order to reflect the experiences required of a graduate.
- redesigning state assessments to allow for additional time for integrated learning and application of knowledge in real-life situations.

- developing guidelines and definitions for a high-quality internship or work-based learning experience.
- providing statutory framework for personalized learning systems that allow flexibility in the methods, demonstration, and timelines for completing graduation requirements.
- developing an intentional process for associating the skills with the content standards.

The local system should consider . . .

- shifting the mind-sets to view education as career preparation with every student on a path to a career that may, or may not, include postsecondary education.
- creating flexible opportunities for students to learn through project-based and outside-the-classroom experiences (structured internships, capstones, networking with professionals outside the classroom/school, work-based learning opportunities).
- designing instruction and schedules to meet core competencies while providing integrated relevant experiences and opportunity for students to pursue areas of passions.
- continuing to offer high engagement and advanced-course offerings.
- allowing opportunities for students to learn core curriculum from multiple perspectives/fields (i.e. engineering, health industry, etc.).
- providing experiences to interact with adults in the community or workplace setting.
- providing progressively complex projects for students to manage and complete.
- expanding opportunities for career credentialing or industry certifications.
- expanding opportunities for all students to be engaged in community services that are aligned with student interests.
- providing opportunities for students to participate in the democratic process through activities like voting, attending meetings of elected officials, etc.
- creating internship experiences that build from year to year.
- creating learning experiences that have recurring and meaningful connections to the real world and are integrated across the curriculum.