

Superintendent emails parents, staff about public meetings

- [By KATHY BROWN News Record Senior Writer kbrown@gilletteneewsrecord.net](#)

Superintendent Boyd Brown sent an email to more than 9,000 parents and staff in the Campbell County School District on Monday.

The letter notes the four public hearings being conducted by education funding consultants in August and encourages them to attend and share their points of view.

The closest meeting to Gillette is in Buffalo from 5-7 p.m. Aug. 16 at Buffalo High School.

Brown notes that the Legislature is reassessing its funding model through recalibration.

“This winter, they (legislators) will make decisions that will impact students and Wyoming’s economy,” Brown says in his letter.

He writes that school budgets have been cut in Wyoming by about \$171 million over the last six years, \$71 million of that the last two years alone.

A survey conducted by the Wyoming Department of Education in May indicated that districts have lost at least 577 jobs over the last two years and 44 of 46 reported school districts also have had to cut educational programs.

“Further budget cuts will result in additional job and classroom programming losses,” Brown wrote.

At the same time, he noted it’s estimated 85 percent of the \$1.2 billion K-12 Wyoming block grant funding recirculates through Wyoming’s communities about twice annually. “The positive and essential economic impact of our school system cannot be denied,” he said.

Should we?

Brown’s letter also speaks about the basket of goods, activities and athletics, class sizes and proper school facilities, and job and economic stability when it comes to education funding.

“Should Wyoming preserve the quality of its currently required educational standards and programs for all students? Should today’s students get the same or a lesser education than previous graduates due to energy market fluctuations?” he wrote.

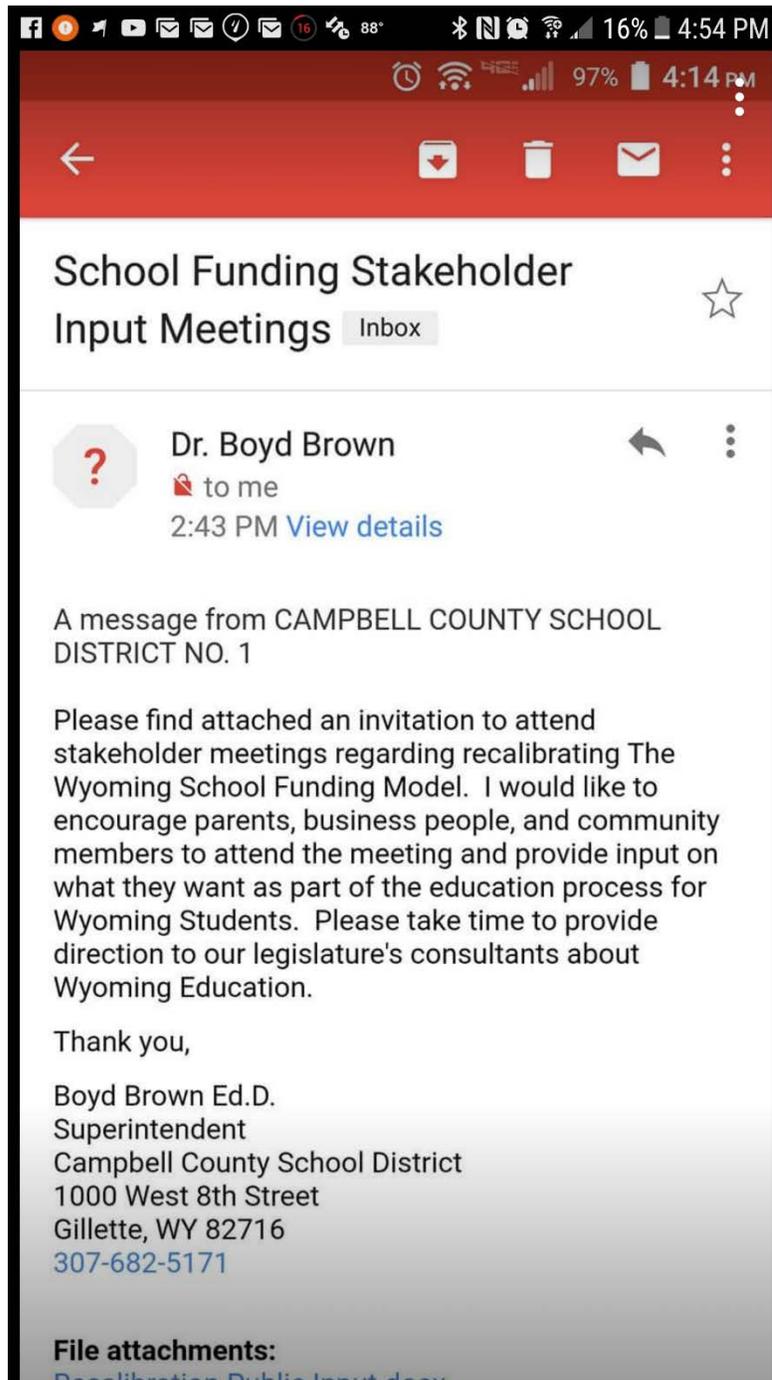
Brown noted that 50 percent of Wyoming school districts reported cutting athletics and/or activities because of budget cuts and asked if those should be protected and if extracurricular activities impact student success in school and in life.

“Legislatively imposed budget cuts are forcing increased class sizes, and diminished energy income is delaying the building of essential school facilities,” he wrote. “Should Wyoming’s class sizes be based of the fluctuations of energy markets?”

“Equally as important,” Brown continued, “should students in growing districts be taught in temporary trailers or have to change schools — within their own district — several times mainly due to the lack of coal lease bonuses?”

At a crossroads

Attachment 1





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Boyd Brown, Ed.D
Superintendent

Meldene Goehring CAP
Admin. Assist. to the
Superintendent and Board of Trustees

July 27, 2017

Dear Families,

Due to the projected education funding shortfall, the legislature is reassessing Wyoming's school funding model. This winter, they will make decisions that will impact students and Wyoming's economy.

Over the last six years, school budgets have been cut by approximately \$171 million, \$71 million of which has been lost in the last two years alone. According to a survey conducted in May by the Wyoming Department of Education, districts reported a loss of at least 577 jobs over the last two years, and 44 out of 46 reporting school districts have had to cut educational programs. Further budget cuts will result in additional job and classroom programming losses.

It is estimated that 85 percent of the approximately \$1.2 billion K-12 Wyoming block grant funding recirculates through our local communities about twice annually. The positive and essential economic impact of our school system cannot be denied.

From August 14-17, 2017, four public meetings will be held across Wyoming to discuss the impact of the state's educational basket of goods and the current funding model. Meetings will be split into two panels, both running from 5 – 7 p.m. Dates and locations are listed below. **It is crucial that state officials hear your voice. Please attend and share your point of view.**

Monday, Aug. 14 5 – 7 p.m.	Rock Springs Junior High Auditorium and Cafeteria 3500 Foothill Blvd. Rock Springs, WY
Tuesday, Aug. 15 5 – 7 p.m.	Cody High School Cafeteria and Band Room 1225 10 th Street Cody, WY
Wednesday, Aug. 16 5 – 7 p.m.	Buffalo High School 29891 Old Hwy 87 (rooms TBD) Buffalo, WY
Thursday, Aug. 17 5 – 7 p.m.	Laramie County School District #1 Board Room, Admin Building, 2810 House Training Center, Story Gym, 2811 House Cheyenne, WY

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To prepare for these meetings, consider what's on the line for Wyoming's students:

- **Basket of goods:**
Wyoming's current "basket of goods" includes reading/language arts, social studies, math, science, fine arts/performing arts, physical education, health and safety, humanities, career/vocational education, foreign cultures and languages, applied technology, and government and civics. Should Wyoming preserve the quality of its currently required educational standards and programs for all students? Should today's student get the same or a lesser education than previous graduates due to energy market fluctuations?
- **Activities and athletics:**
In the 2017-18 school year, approximately 50 percent of Wyoming's districts reported cutting athletics and/or activities. Should we protect activities and athletics? Do extracurricular activities impact student success in school and in life?
- **Class sizes and proper school facilities:**
Legislatively imposed budget cuts are forcing increased class sizes, and diminished energy income is delaying the building of essential school facilities. Should Wyoming's class sizes be based on the fluctuations of energy markets? Equally as important, should students in growing districts be taught in temporary trailers or have to change schools within their own district several times mainly due to the lack of coal lease bonuses?
- **Jobs and economic stability:**
Even though the school funding model was designed to protect students from the changing nature of the economy, recent budget cuts mean schools and students are now very much impacted by fluctuations in the energy marketplace. Should the legislature cut budgets further, resulting in more school programming and job losses, or take an approach that includes revenue generation?

Wyoming's school leaders have been working with elected and state officials for several years, advocating for children, jobs and the future of Wyoming's economy.

We're reaching out today to ask you to get more involved. Please talk to your legislators ([find your legislator's contact information here](http://legisweb.state.wy.us/lsoweb/LegInfo.aspx) <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/lsoweb/LegInfo.aspx>) and attend public input sessions. You may also want to consider joining the [Wyoming PTA](https://sites.google.com/view/wyomingstatepta/home) <https://sites.google.com/view/wyomingstatepta/home> to multiply the impact of your voice. To learn more, please contact Sheila McGuire at wyomingptaboard@gmail.com or 307-677-0122.

Your voice is important, and your legislators need to hear from you as they head into one of the most important budget sessions in Wyoming's history.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Boyd Brown, Ed.D

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