



Since 1892 WEA has used our powerful, unified voice to advocate for public education on a local, statewide, and national level. Our political and legislative action prioritizes and protects education.

In 2021, our Association outspokenly advocated before the Wyoming legislature to fend off more than \$300 million in cuts to education. Wyoming's regressive tax structure means that Wyoming education faces a funding shortfall. Our work to secure a stable, sufficient source of funding for Wyoming schools is far from over, but here are a few noteworthy positive outcomes from the 2021 General Session:

2021 GENERAL SESSION

The 2021 Session ultimately ended in a bittersweet victory for public education in Wyoming. Because the House and Senate were unable to agree on terms for House Bill 173, thankfully, education did not incur sweeping, devastating cuts. However, no new revenue for education was mandated. The threat to the future of Wyoming public education remains.

A tax-averse legislature, unwilling to reform our state economy's dependence on the boom-bust cycle of volatile, self-limiting extraction industries all but guarantees that—without continued engagement from education advocates resulting in structural changes to our tax structure—future students will no longer enjoy the same high-quality education afforded to our students, today.

Our students need your help!

We fought hard just to maintain the status quo during the 2021 legislative session. Stable funding for public education is far from reality: getting there will take years of active engagement with state lawmakers. Please, join the movement!

Contact WEA Government Relations Director Tate Mullen at tmullen@wyoea.org or (307) 286-3096 to learn more.

MEMBER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

WEA delivered 18,000+ postcards to Wyoming lawmakers advocating for mandating new streams of revenue to fund public education in Wyoming. Overwhelming interest from the public and our membership reinforced what we know to be true: Wyoming voters prioritize education.

HB 173: IMPASSE

HB 173 was the culmination of both the House and Senate's attempts to address the shortfall facing education funding. What left the House as a thoughtful compromise, including revenue diversions, and a half-penny sales tax for public schools, was dismantled by the Senate. The Legislature stalled at an impasse, and this legislation did not pass.

HB 81: DEFEATED

HB 81 School Finance Litigation would have restricted districts from bringing lawsuits against the state by prohibiting them from using "funds intended for public instruction." This would have paved the way for the legislature to strip education funding, without consequence, by removing essentially the only recourse available to districts—suing the state if it fails to adequately fund a high-quality public education to all Wyoming students, as outlined in the *Campbell* decisions.

THREATS DEFATED

In addition to defeating HB 173 and HB 81, proposed bills eliminating or reducing funding for student activities, bills prioritizing saving to the LSRA over education spending, a bill proposing district consolidation, and a bill equivalent to Colorado's calamitous TABOR legislation died—many of them never seeing third reading in the Committee of the Whole.

