

## 5 Successful SCHOOL YEARS & RUNNING

### Fort Washakie High School Re-Authorized for Five Additional Years

Over six years ago the Board of Trustees in Fort Washakie were looking for a way to provide a high school to their district students. After much research and planning the idea of combining a charter high school with an online high school was put in place. The school was initiated and funded by the school board based on the community's desire to provide a high school for their children. It is one of the few charter schools established in Wyoming. Fort Washakie High School opened its doors in August of 2003.

Fast forward five years. The Board of Trustees successfully renewed its charter with the Wyoming Board of Education, insuring an additional five

years of operation. Wyoming statute dictates that a charter school must renew its charter every five years with the issuing district and then with the Wyoming Board of Education. "We are committed to the education of students, at Fort Washakie and the reservation. That is the bottom line," charter school superintendent Gene Meier said.

Before the high school was established, students would have the option of attending school in one of the surrounding. Although that choice is still available, more students are continuing their education after eighth grade and attending the charter high school, according to school board

chairwoman, Carla Mann. "Some kids want to go to school in Lander or the other school districts and some of our kids want to go to school in their own district," she said.

The high school also has made Adequate Yearly Progress [AYP] in reading, writing, and mathematics, and has for all years it was measured. "I am really happy with the charter school," Mann said. "It has been so successful and we are very proud of the administrators, the teachers and the kids because they are doing so well."



### FWHS vs. WeAVE

Fort Washakie High School [FWHS] is a full-time charter high school. It serves students from the area with three buildings dedicated to 9-12 students. The high school utilized many of the facilities of the K-8 district including the lunch room, gym, library, shop, dark room and more. Students have many online classes but they also attend face to face classes on campus. Wyoming e Academy of Virtual Education [WeAVE] is the part-time supplemental program that Fort Washakie

High School offers to other Wyoming school districts. Schools that partner with WeAVE enroll their students in up to four online courses. These students are full time students of their home high school.

This unique partnership between FWHS and other districts gives students access to classes that may not be available in their home high school, and the ability to schedule classes around other commit-

ments. Both FWHS and WEAVE students are in the same online course section. This allows students from across the state to meet and collaborate with one another.

With WeAVE's unique rolling enrollment students are able to start classes whenever their schedules allow and they are not bound semester calendar dates providing even more flexibility.

#### Quick Facts

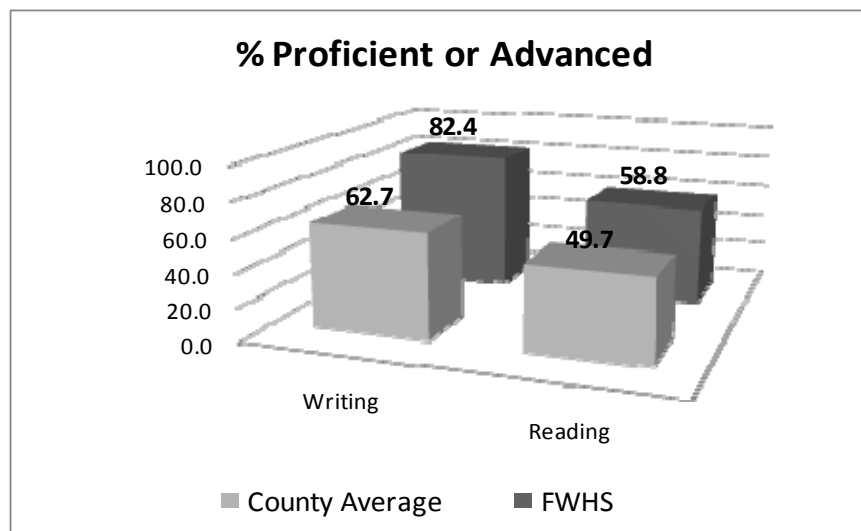
- 100% of FWHS teachers are highly qualified.
- FWHS has the highest scores on the PAWS writing test in Fremont County.
- FWHS has met AYP every year.
- FWHS is partnered with 38 Wyo school districts through its WeAVE program.
- WeAVE served 433 students from various Wyo districts in the 07-08 school year.
- WeAVE is the only online high school provider in Wyoming.
- 80% of seniors from the 07-08 school year were awarded Hathaway Scholarships and are attending college.

# Academics

## FWHS Students with County's Highest PAWS Writing Scores

The scores from the 2008 Proficiency Assessment of Wyoming Students [PAWS] have been released and Fort Washakie High School 11th graders have posted the highest writing scores within the county with 82.4% of students scoring proficient or advanced. Dubois juniors were the second highest with 71.4% proficient or advanced.

Reading scores were also above the county average. FWHS students had the third highest scores in the county following Dubois and Lander respectively.



FWHS students were entertaining themselves while waiting in the Denver airport, en route to the National JOM conference in Tulsa, OK.

## Hathaway Scholarship, Body of Evidence and Success Curriculum

Hathaway scholarships are scholarships designed to provide an incentive for Wyoming students to prepare for and pursue postsecondary education within the State of Wyoming. The program consists of four separate merit scholarships, each with specific eligibility requirements, and a need-based scholarship for eligible students

which supplements the merit awards. FWHS courses meet the success curriculum standards and qualify students for the highest level of merit scholarship.

Rather than rely primarily on test scores, Wyoming bases graduation decisions on a student's "body of

evidence," a multiple-measures approach. FWHS uses its own body of evidence system that accounts for a student's performance on Wyoming content standards as well as other factors including test scores, graduation requirements and extra-curricular activities.



## Wind River Native Science Field Center

Fort Washakie Charter High School was awarded \$400,000 in federal funds to promote informal math and science learning. The funds, provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF), through subcontract with HOPA Mountain will be used to establish the Wind River Native Science Field Center. The Wind River Native Science Field Center is one of three Centers established under this initiative; the others are located at Black Feet Community College and Oglala Lakota College.

The funds, which will be spread out over three years, will be used to establish a center to integrate traditional knowledge, language, and

western science methods. The center is being designed to engage youth and adults in field experiences that build from basic survey skills to mapping, monitoring, and decision-making. This initiative is also designed to integrate indigenous and scientific ways of knowing about the environment with local language and culture preservation efforts. Promoting monitoring, management, and community-based ecological restoration are goals of the unique approach.

The Wind River Native Science Field Center recognizes that their role in the community goes beyond simply providing resources for science learning. The center will be reaching

out to members of The Wind River Reservation to help present science learning in an experiential, culturally effective and learner centered way. The Center will draw on the latest research in science learning and instruction, situate it in a Shoshone and Arapahoe cultural and community context and assist our learners in making critical and meaningful connections between science, their daily lives and the physical and cultural universe they move through.

The National Science Foundation is an independent federal agency that was created by Congress in 1950 to promote the progress of science.



Students picking chokecherries during a field trip in the early fall.

# Partner Districts

## Working with WeAVE

1. Please look at our course listings on our webpage and make sure we have courses you intend to offer your students.
2. Email or call to express interest in working with WeAVE.
3. Designate a teacher, counselor, or principal to be the on-site coordinator. That person(s) needs to schedule a training session in Fort Washakie to receive professional development with our system.
4. Finalize the required MOU between WeAVE and the partner district's superintendent.
5. Begin enrolling students via the online form with the required information. Required information includes:
  - Student Name
  - Wiser ID
  - Student Email Address
  - Course Name
6. Work with your students to ensure they are completing their courses and are receiving the necessary mentoring, tutoring, and technical support.

We AVE want to stress that students taking supplemental courses remain students of their home district and that the district is ultimately responsible for the success of their students.

## Tongue River High School Has Success with WeAVE

Tongue River High School (Sheridan Co. School District #1) has been partnering with WeAVE for more than two years. Approximately 45 students have taken over 60 courses in that time frame.

WeAVE coordinator, Pete Kilbride, explains that most Tongue River students take Weave courses “when they have failed a class in our building, as a way to receive credit and be able to move on. For example, taking Algebra 1B during the summer to make up for failing second semester Algebra. In the Fall they could take geometry and not be behind in math credits.”

English classes are the most popular WeAVE classes taken at Tongue River. Kilbride explains, “English has the highest level of failure at our school, and I’m not going to speculate on why that is. It is also the only content area we have that requires four years for

graduation. Failing even one semester of English means you have to make the credit up somewhere, so it becomes a popular alternative to look to WeAVE.

Tongue River students receive benefits in the following four areas:

- Being able to make up credit during the summer and not having to “double up” [i.e. An English 1 and English 2 class at the same time].
- A different learning style; some kids do better with the format of WeAVE rather than sitting in a classroom, and they can work at their own pace.
- Flexible attendance rather than a daily scheduled class time. If you’re out sick for two weeks, the “class” is right where you left off with WeAVE. In our classrooms, you may be two chapters behind.
- For special education, unless you’re [the school] highly qualified in a particular content area, you can’t offer

credit. With WeAVE, the student’s “teacher” is highly qualified and the special education teacher can supplement and help, but not be the one offering the credit.”

Kilbride’s role as the WeAVE coordinator in Tongue River HS has several facets. He determines what classes would be appropriate for a particular student as well as contacting the parents and explaining the requirements and financial obligations for the WeAVE class. He then registers the student on the WeAVE site and monitors progress within the course and communicates that progress with parents.

The school district is also receiving benefits from WeAVE. In the past, students needing credit recovery had to travel to Sheridan and work with that school district’s summer program. Now, Tongue River HS can offer those services right in their own building with minimal staff.

## Large School District Has Successful Partnership with WeAVE

One of the largest school districts in Wyoming, Natrona County, successfully partners with WeAVE and has served approximately 132 students over the past three years.

Tanya Sisneros, Natrona County Virtual Specialist, explains the partnership: “We at Natrona County use WeAVE for students who need to recover credits, homebound students, students who are short ½ to 1 credit of graduating and students who are advanced and trying to get all required classes so they can go on to college classes.”

Classes from the core area; math, English, social studies, health, and so on, are the most popular courses that

Natrona County students take with an occasional elective thrown in.

Natrona County students receive many of the same benefits as other WeAVE students. Sisneros explains, “They are able to work at any hour of the day and at their own pace. Many are able to get a diploma with that credit or two they earn with WeAVE. Some, if were required to attend a public school, may choose to forgo the diploma.”

Sisneros’s role as the WeAVE coordinator is very similar to Kilbride’s in Tongue River, although expanded due to the district’s size, both geographically and in student enrollment. She keeps track of students’ progress in the various

courses, updates local counselors and offers technical and non-technical assistance. Matching students with tutors is also another service that Sisneros and Natrona County offer; as well as acting as a tutor if a match isn’t readily available.

Sisneros explains that the biggest benefit the school district receives from its WeAVE partnership is student engagement. “WeAVE gives options that make it possible to recover credits or graduate students that may have otherwise dropped out. Some students are too sick to come to school and WeAVE allows the district another option to keep these students engaged.”

## Meet Our Teachers & Staff

### Charter High School Board

Carla Mann, Clint Wagon, Kay Ferris, Kelly Headley, Robyn Rofkar, Richard Ferris Sr., and Dr. William Lone Fight

### Administration

**Gene Meier: Superintendent of FWHS/WeAVE.** Gene enjoys mountain biking, fly fishing and enjoys the outdoors with his family. He maintains two homes one in Fort Washakie, with the other in the Black Hills near South Dakota. Gene has a B. S. in Biology, a M. A. in Education, and is currently engaged in a PhD program.

**Shad Hamilton: Principal of FWHS/WeAVE.** Shad's entire professional career has been spent educating at-risk or Native American students. He believes it is a very rewarding experience to help develop and establish a quality high school in Fort Washakie. Shad has a B.A. in Art Ed, and M.Ed.

### Administrative Staff

**Beverly Hurtado: High School Secretary**

**Katie Logan: Technology Director**

**Lisa Lone Fight: Native Science Field Center Director**

**Rory Tendore: Administrative Assistant**

### English Department

**Mike Read: Department Head, Teacher**

**Amanda Tinker: English & Social Studies Teacher**

**Barney Lacock: English Teacher**

**Brad Stanton: English Teacher**

**Christine Rogers: English Teacher**

### Foreign Language Department

**Connie Cottrell Moore, Foreign Language Teacher**

### Health & PE Department

**Brandi Hamilton: PE & Weight Training Teacher**

**Melissa Sprain: Health and PE Teacher**

### Math Department

**Heather Buchanan: Department Head, Teacher**

**David Trembly: Math Teacher**

**Mary Montgomery: Math Teacher**

**Riki Kremers: Math Teacher**

### Science Department

**Mark Roy: Department Head, Teacher**

**Bertha Tracy: Science Teacher**

### Social Studies Department

**David Herrick, Department Head, Teacher**

**Adria Trembly, Social Studies Teacher**

**Amanda Tinker: English & Social Studies Teacher**

### Electives

**Burt Oakley: Fire Science Teacher**

**Kristen Burnett: Interior Design Teacher**

**Wade Lupher: Shop Teacher**



Science teacher Mark Roy playing a traditional Wheel Game as directed by a leader of the

## WeAVE is a member of the Wyoming Assoc. of Public Charter Schools

The Wyoming Association Public Charter Schools [WAPCS] is a statewide non-profit organization committed to advancing the charter school movement in Wyoming. Our purpose is to increase the number of high performing, independent, public charter schools available to meet the educational choice needs of Wyoming's families.

### WAPCS' Vision is to...

**Promote Choice** by creating a positive public perception and support for public charter schools.

**Provide Leadership** by initiating expanded charter opportunities through public policy changes and provide stability by offering supportive services to currently and new charter

schools.

**Promote Excellence** by initiating a program that highlights a strong commitment to school quality and high student achievement by establishing rigorous quality standards for each of our members.

### What is a Charter School?

Charter schools are publicly funded elementary or secondary schools in the United States that have been freed from some of the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to other public schools in exchange for some type of accountability for producing certain results, which are set forth in each school's charter. Their founders are often teachers, parents, or activists who feel restricted by traditional public schools. They are attended by choice.

### Charter Schools in Wyoming

Currently there are three charter schools in the state of Wyoming. The charter law was enacted in 1995. The WAPCS is working on changing legislation to make it easier to bring charter schools to Wyoming. Currently our law ranks as the 8th weakest law in the nation of the forty one states that have a charter law.

### Charter Schools Nationwide

The charter school movement is a grassroots organization to bring educational reform and choices for parents in their child's education. Currently there are 4,000+ charter schools in the nation. There are forty one states that have a charter law that allows these schools to be formed.