School Business Management/Finance

Electronic Anthology

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Jason Harmon

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Jason Harmon

EDAD 634

Dr. Linda Hunt Brown

Course Introduction

Hello All,

My name is Jason Harmon. I teach 2-12 art in Guernsey, Wyoming.  I just finished my second year of teaching, and it has been a wonderful experience.  I am also in charge of Art Club and Yearbook, and I have been serving on our schools Common Core team.  This next year I will also be the assistant high school boys basketball coach.  I started the Education Administration program at Chadron State last summer, and so far have completed 12 hours.  I am taking 2 classes this summer. 

I love learning about the changes and innovation that is taking place in education, and although it can be daunting to think about the task of transforming education, I look forward to the challenge of learning about the role I can play in helping our schools become the best they can be.  My goal in this class is to gain a great understanding of how schools are financed, the issues that are arising today, and what can be done to remedy them.  In general, my goal is to help students to be successful, by helping to give them effective schools. I remember that my experience in high school was that I wished I could take every class that was offered. I love to learn. I love the environment of learning that is created by good schools. I am passionate about giving our students the best education possible, but I want to be aware of the financial factors involved.

I have been married for 6 years, and I have a daughter Isa that turns 5 this summer and will be entering kindergarten this upcoming year.  We also have a son Parley, who is a one and a half.  My focus this summer  (other than classes) is gardening, house projects, working on paintings, and spending time with my family.  I look forward to getting to know you all better, and working with you in this class.



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CH 1-2: Forum Response

These chapters have been very intriguing to me. I never thought deeply about how critical education is to a nations economy. The societal benefits are huge. I was nice to contemplate the idea that elementary, middle school, and high school education primarily benefit society (Brimley, Verstegen, & Garfield, p. 17). That is where students learn basic skills that help citizens to be contributing members of society. It is later on in college that students start gaining skills that will directly benefit themselves, and make them marketable to society. The better one is educated, the more likely it is that their children will go to college, and start a “family education cycle”. Although one benefits from education by being able to provide better for themselves, and their family, education expenditures are quick to find their way back into the private sector ( Brimley, Verstegen, & Garfield, 17).

The question was posed if differences in per pupil expenditures among states should be considered when comparing high stakes test scores between those same states? It is obvious from our readings that equality of education from state to state, and school to school has not been attained. It can also be alarming to see how big the differences are in some states between per pupil expenditures. Although it could be tempting to say that states that spend more on education per pupil should be held to a higher standard of test scores than those states that spend less, I believe that isn’t the answer.

First, states spend more per pupil for varying reasons. Living in Wyoming I know that in order to participate in sports and academic competitions we have to travel far greater distances than many other states. Thus, transportation costs a lot here, especially with the rising gas prices. Wyoming also has a lot of places where many people wouldn’t choose to live. To attract good teachers they have chosen to compensate teachers more for their time and efforts. I went to college in Provo, Utah, and for reasons that I quite don’t understand; Utah has amazing school systems while spending the least per pupil in the nation. They have big class sizes, and many Hispanics are moving in, which are both challenging, but they are doing some things vary well. I believe that a big part of their ability to spend less per pupil is due to their large class sizes. Right now in Guernsey, Wyoming it is normal to have class sizes between 5 to 10 students. In Utah, average class sizes that I would see are between 30-35.

Second, each state and district has a lot of say as to how they finance education. In fact only about six percent of money to finance schools comes from the federal government in the form of grants. States have the “inherent power to tax and spend for education” (Imber & Geel, 345). It wouldn’t be fair for the nation to penalize a state that is providing adequate funds for education, while telling other states that, well, since you can’t raise the funds, you don’t have to educate your students to the same standards as the other states.

Although I believe that funding education is important, and that funding differences between states can most definitely affect high stakes test scores, I believe it wouldn’t be right to judge the scores based on per pupil expenditures. We need our education financing to be adequate, and equitable.

Brimley, V., Verstegen, D., Garfield, R. (2012). *Financing Education in a Climate of Change*.

The Allyn & Bacon Educational Leadership Series. Pearson Higher Education, Upper

 Saddle River, NJ.

Imber, M., Geel, T. V. (2010). *Education Law, 4th ed.* Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, New York, NY.

Questions:

Chapter 1: Using the Marginal Dollar Principle, how can we make sure that the funds we allocate to education are being used effectively, and how can we know when we are allocating sufficient funds?

Chapter 2: At the end of the Chapter it talks about adequate funding being a question of priorities. What ways can we improve our system of measuring education output compared to input, so we can inform the public of the continuing need to finance education?

Chapters 1 & 2 Reflection:

Why is our nation willing to spend nearly 25,000 per year to incarcerate one inmate, yet finds it difficult to spend on average of 10,000 each year to educate children?

That is a really good question that I have been thinking about too. Here are the answers that I have come up with. First of all, the inmates are living in prison, and must require a lot more supervision, even during the night a prison must be guarded. The government must pay for their food, housing, utilities, water, and garbage, basically everything. Although I realize these can make the cost much more than educating a child, I don’t agree with the system.

Here are some proposed ideas that I have come up with.

1. Create jobs for all inmates where they are contributing to our economy in such a way as to at least pay for their imprisonment expenses.
2. Cut costs – although this is something I don’t know a lot about, I know that some people want to go to prison, so there must be ways we can downsize cells, commodities, and personal conveniences, to make prison a place that people don’t want to be, and a place that doesn’t cost our government so much money.
3. This idea comes from the text, but by decreasing our dropout rates, and increasing the education of our citizens, we will dramatically decrease the amount of people in prison, and the burden will decrease.

Chapters 3 & 4 Forum Response

Describe an example of how teacher qualifications can have a positive and negative impact on school financing systems.

As we know, chapter 3 talks about equity in school finance. It describes equity as “fairness in expenditures per pupil and fairness in the treatment of taxpayers” (Brimley, Verstegen, & Garfield p. 79). I think we all would agree that equity or fairness is of greater importance in the case of school finance than evenness or sameness. Hence, it is vitally important that good qualified teachers are hired, to be fair to students. Students deserve teachers who are passionate, qualified, and care about them. This kind of teacher will have many great ideas, and in my opinion, ultimately cost the district more money. To avoid the pitfalls of this, states must weight the teacher qualifications in their finance systems.

To answer the question I will use my personal example. In my case, I am just finishing up my second year of teaching. I’m not even close to a perfect teacher yet, but I am highly qualified with a BFA in Illustration, and professional painting experience. I came into the district receiving base salary, but now I will cost the district more on the pay scale as my education goes up. I came in with a lot of ideas, and the district was willing to support our purchase of around $15,000 of art equipment my first year. The teacher before me would buy a lot of paper and basic supplies, but mostly had the students color and use stencils. Our district really encourages professional development, so they sent me to the National Art education conference my first year in New York, and have sent me other places to continue my learning. They have also been supportive in 2 trips with our art students to art museums in Denver, and overnight trips with my students to an Art Intensive that the University of Wyoming puts on, and the state Art Symposium in Casper. Thias summer I was approved to attend an AP art conference, and will be starting to teach other college outreach classes through Eastern Wyoming College. Our program is growing, and benefiting students greatly, but I am sure it is impacting the school finance system. I am grateful for a school board and administrators that value the arts, and can see that even though the financial costs of these activities might be high, the benefit for the students is higher.

As far as chapter 4 is concerned, I know that weighing teacher qualifications in state finance programs can be a wonderful and helpful thing. I don’t know the logistics, but I do know that in Wyoming our school district gets more money for teachers that have been here longer, and with more advanced degrees. I believe such a weighted program for teacher qualifications is necessary and important to encourage districts to find and hire very qualified teachers. Brimley, Verstegen, and Garfield state, “With teacher-qualifications weighting, the possibility of poor districts increasing the qualifications of their teachers becomes a reality.” I know that is true. It happens too often, that poorer districts can’t afford qualified teachers, so they cut their music or art programs, try and hire someone part time, or try to hire teachers that aren’t yet certified so they can pay them less. So in conclusion, we must make sure that states understand the importance of weighing teacher qualifications in their finance systems, and allow for increased budgets to make the hiring of qualified teachers a priority.

Questions:

Chapter 3: Do you agree with the general theme that the authors support states financing education equitably through state income taxes rather than property taxes? What benefits do you see with this system, or do you have any personal experiences with it?

Chapter 4: What experience do you have with density factors, and how do you feel states should deal with the issue of financing smaller schools?

Chapter 3 & 4 Reflection:

It will be important for me to remember the importance of Equity in school financing. As an administrator I know that I will need to not only treat everyone equally, but fairly. To me this involves funding programs for students that are behind and struggling, as well as programs for the gifted and talented. I am also excited to get involved in the discussions of determining the best finance plans in the states where I work, and in the nation. School finance is powerful, but must be effective, efficient, and sufficient.

Principal Interview

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I interviewed Troy Lake, the k-12 principle for Guernsey-Sunrise Schools. Before coming to Guernsey as a principal, he was an assistant principal in Douglas, Wyoming. In the interview he helped me to understand how the budget process works in our district, and how it can vary in larger school districts. It appears that the budget process in our school is much different that that of others schools.

In Guernsey, the teachers decide what they want and need for their classrooms. Mr. Lake said that up until this year the budget was never a concern, so teachers would get what they needed (within reason). He said that our focus for this upcoming school year will be on professional development to help our staff to prepare students that are college and career ready. It was obvious to me that Mr. Lake understands what it will take to reach our school goals and that we must focus the money we have on what is most important. He said that we have been spending $35,000 to $40,000 a year professional development to improve instruction, pedagogy, and curriculum, which isn’t too bad considering we spend about 80% of our budget on teacher, staff, and administrator salaries and benefits.

To secure financial resources Mr. Lake tells the superintendent what he needs, and if there is enough money it is approved. He helped me to understand that in bigger districts the principal is given a budget, and makes a lot of the decisions that the superintendent makes in our district. As long as the principal stays within the allotted budget, everyone is happy.

When asked about grants that aid our district financially, there are only a few we use regularly. Title I is a huge help to our special education program and students. We also extensively use Perkins grants to fund vocational programs and buy special equipment such as laser engravers, welding equipment, plasma cutters, and other expensive shop equipment. Although grants are amazing, Mr. Lake did mention that many grants just have too much red tape. Three years ago we received a grant to buy laptops for all of our junior high and high school students, and that helped us start the 1 to 1 initiative. It has been a great program, and since that time has been funded by our normal school budget. The other grant source that we know our school used this year were grants available through the Wyoming Arts Council. This year those grants helped us bring in a professional artist to work with our students, and brought in the Missoula Children’s Theater group for a week.

When we discussed what affects building level autonomy, Mr. Lake said, “our demographics, we are so small that you almost have to choose to not be involved.” With this comment he was referring to staff having many responsibilities and wearing multiple hats. He also talked about clicks among staff members creating some problems when certain teachers don’t want to work with others. On a community level he hasn’t seen any political issues impacting building level autonomy.

Our school is all white non-Latino. Being a small school we get extra money. Troy also discussed with me Wyoming’s formulas for funding schools, and how they equalize local money by taking excess away from wealthy districts, and then give out money to schools by calculating (ADM) Average Daily Membership.

In our school district the faculty and staff have no input in regards to the budget. The nice thing is that we can assess the needs in our classroom, in our building, and departments, and approach the superintendent with ideas for improvement. As mentioned at the beginning, he decides and ok’s what we can afford. In larger districts there are lengthy processes in approving extra expenditures. Troy told me about a lengthy process he had to go through when teaching in Douglas to approve a networking class and the purchase of needed supplies. He had to go through his department chair, the assistant principal, the principal, and 3 committees, before anything was approved.

Creating a school budget is a long process. In our school the budgeting process starts in February and goes through June. It all starts with a preliminary budget. Next, the business manager does a category-by-category comparison of what we got and spent this year, and the money we will be getting the next year. The board then approves each category of the new budget. Lastly, negotiations of salaries and benefits have to take place. Once the budget is finished it is handed down to Mr. Lake. He doesn’t really have a budget per se, but he works with whatever is approved to help our school reach its goals and purposes.

It was beneficial for me to talk to a school principal about school budgets and finances. It is amazing to me how few checks and balances Guernsey has in their budget system. I think it is working fine though, but will need to be revised during times of money shortages, like this year. I had a great experience with Mr. Lake, and hope I was able to clearly communicate what I learned in my interview with him.

Grants:

The National Art Education Foundation (NAEF) gives 10 to 12 grants each year. These grants are called the Ruth Halvorsen Professional Development Grants, Mary McMullan Grants, NAEF Research Grants, SHIP Grants, and Teacher Incentive Grants. Grants range from $500 to $10,000 depending on the grant category. They are for art educators, researchers, and other art professionals and meant to advance the study of art education. Next Due Date: October 1st, 2013.

Website: http://www.arteducators.org/grants/national-art-education-foundation

The Fulbright program awards 8,000 grants a year for people to undertake graduate study, advanced research, university lecturing, and classroom teaching abroad. It is open for students, scholars, teachers, professionals, scientists and artists. Those that apply for the grant apply for a certain country or region of the world, and if awarded the grant get & to cover round trip transportation, funding for room, board, and expenses, health benefits, and sometimes tuition and other expenses while abroad for a period of about a year. The next due date for this grant is October 15, 2013.

Website: <http://www.arteducators.org/grants/national-art-education-foundation>

Chapter 5 & 6 Questions:

Chapter 5: Explain the pros and cons of establishing a school-business partnership in your current educational setting.  
  
Chapter 6: Due to the fact that local control of our schools is not guaranteed, but deemed a state responsibility, what factors could influence a state decide to fully control school districts within the state boundaries?

As I read and re-read about school-business partnerships it is obvious to see the pros and cons. First off, business leaders feel that it is important to work with educators to help prepare a workforce that can “compete in a global marketplace” (Brimely, Verstegen, & Garfield, p. 135). Creating parnerships with businesses is usually a good idea. They often are willing to provide monetary support through fundraisers, workshops, and mentoring/shadowing opportunities for students. This past semester we had our students build benches for local businesses, and we worked on building an industrial park sign, and some signs for Guernsey state park to thank firefighters that helped fight a fire last summer. In our art department we had a professional artist come and give a workshop for our students, and an art college in Denver came and presented a bunch of information on art careers to our students. As long as these partnerships are monitored, and set up for the benefit of students I think they are great. Probably the only con that I can see is that big cities will have many more opportunities for such partnerships. “The uneven nature of support may increase inequities, suggesting that corporate support can best be provided through broad-based taxes that reach all students, in all schools across that state” (Brimely, Verstegen, & Garfield, p. 136). Each year I take my yearbook students to ask for donations from local businesses. We have found that larger companies often want to support the schools where they are predominately located. Although I agree that an uneven partnership in rural areas is a disadvantage, I believe that all local districts must take advantage of professionals that are willing to work with our students and partner with our schools to better the education for all.

We know that a good education is the responsibility of each state. We can’t just leave the financing of education to local communities and districts alone. (Brimely, Verstegen, & Garfield, p. 155). Although I believe some local control is important, I believe that there are several factors that could lead a state to decide to fully control (financially) the districts within the state boundaries. First, if a state and its legislatures got fed up with finance battles of equity and adequacy, they could amend their state constitutions, and take more or even complete control. Second, if we were to have another great depression, and money people couldn’t pay their property taxes, things could get thrown out of whack, causing states to take control. Lastly, I see this happening in a somewhat corrupt government that wants to usurp control, and put less, not more money into education.

Questions:

Chapter 5 – Do you have any new ideas or epiphanies on other funding sources for education? If not, what is your opinion on what can or should be done with E-Commerce and Internet Sales?

Chapter 6 - What is your vision a perfect system, where states and local units work in harmony to finance education?

Chapter 5 & 6 Reflection:

As an administrator I will fight for continued local control over important matters of school finance. Our legislatures and the national government need to understand that they can’t make all the decisions, because they don’t know our local circumstances. We need to continue to find new sources of revenue to fund public education, and make sure we are being fair in our taxing methods.

Chapters 7 & 8 Questions

Chapter 7: What would a program of district power equalization look like in your district?  
Chapter 8: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Department of Education at the federal level?

Living in the state of Wyoming it isn’t very hard to visualize district power equalization. Following several state Supreme Court cases starting in 1995 with “Campbell County School Dist. v. State”, the state of Wyoming has worked hard to create a power equalization-funding model. Money from richer districts is recaptured, and given to districts with less money. Many small communities in Wyoming have little property wealth in comparison to places like Jackson and Gillette. Property in Jackson is worth a fortune, and Gillette is similar, due to its oil, coal, and natural gas wealth. Because our state recaptures money from wealthy districts and redistributes it, we are able to afford programs and opportunities for our students that we wouldn’t otherwise have. We have a program where each student in grades 7-12 have their own laptop to use each school year until they graduate, and they can buy it for $50 upon graduation. Our community has many old homes, and students from families that are mostly lower class. It is exciting to see improvements to our school building each year, and our school grounds well maintained. Because of Wyoming’s state finance system, children in poorer districts like where I work, have opportunities that they otherwise wouldn’t. Brimely, Bertegen, and Garfield state (2012) that equalization means that the state and local districts begin “exercising a degree of partnership in establishing and paying for a basic program of education for every school-age child in the state.”

I believe that there are several advantages and disadvantages to the department of education.

Pro: They can consolidate the federal interest in education into one department

Con: The department can get really big and bureaucratic, with lots of red tape to climb through.

Pro: A national department of education can set appropriate national level policies regarding educational goals, standards, curricula, etc.  
  
Con: Enforcement of such national standards detracts from local control of education and reduces flexibility in devising programs to meet local needs.  
  
Pro: A national department of education can help provide funding for educational programs.  
  
Con: The federal government can use control of such funding to impose obligations, limits and restrictions that may not comport with the needs and desires of local schools.

Pro: Money can be set aside to help less advantaged groups of people

Con: Money can be squandered or used inappropriately

(Some ideas here came from Jim Riley)  
  
 I am sure there are other opinions of the pros and cons of the department of education. I believe it can be a great thing, but needs to be controlled, to assure it is running efficiently, and not getting their hands into places where local control is more effective and appropriate.

Brimley, V., Verstegen, D., Garfield, R. (2012). *Financing Education in a Climate of Change*. The Allyn & Bacon Educational Leadership Series. Pearson Higher Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Riley, J. <http://www.justanswer.com/general/2c2z5-advantage-disadvantage-department.html>

**Questions:**

Chapter 7: What do you know, or can you find out about how land grant funds are collected and used today to finance public education in your state?

Chapter 8: Do you believe that the federal government should take an active role in equalizing education funding from state to state?

Chapter 7 & 8 Reflection:

The more I am learning, I am coming to understand that the federal government does have a place in education. They must be careful not to overstep their bounds, but some things can come from the top down and help. Title 1 and special education programs are much better than the past thanks to the federal government. The complaints I have heard though are the headache all of the paper work is. My superintendent said that some of the documents they submit (from a small school) are over 100 pages.

As an administrator I will need to understand my states funding model. Especially when I become a Superintendent I will need to be wise with our budget, and prepare for look to the future. Later on in my career I hope to work for a department of education, or some other agency that helps education to succeed.

EDAD634

Jason Harmon

Grant Rating Assignment

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Adult Ed | Leap | Plants | Promote | Std Write | Walkers |
|
| 1. Title (0 – 5 points) | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
|
| 2. Proposal Concept (0 - 15 points) | 11 | 12 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 15 |
|
| 3. Problem/Need Statement (0 - 20 points) | 17 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 20 | 20 |
|
| 4. Goals, Objectives and Activities (0 - 15 points) | 14 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 15 | 15 |
|
| 5. Project Description (0 – 10 points) | 8 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
|
| 6. Timeline/Action Plan (0 - 10 points) | 6 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
|
| 7. Budget (0 - 15 points) | 10 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
|
| 8. Evaluation (0 - 10 points) | 7 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
|
| Total | 75 | 78 | 85 | 94 | 98 | 100 |
|

**Comments: note strengths and weaknesses of each proposal**

Adult Ed:

* Strengths – Good Ideas, some solid research on the needs of the project, good overall plan
* Weaknesses – Many typos, would like to see how many people this would benefit, would like to see effort made in the budget to see if Microsoft will allow educational prices on their software. This would save about $3,000.

Leap:

* Strengths – some good research, specific goals, and pretty easy to understand.
* Weaknesses – sources of research not cited in the document, document vague on exact numbers, city, and local needs. No research on if the teachers in the local district need the training in power point. How would the school be able to give up their computer lab during the year if they only have one?

Plants:

* Strengths- Very specific and to the point, not a lot of useless information, good specific budget, and what they will buy.
* Weaknesses- the project proposal and problem need statements were a little weak. Why does that specific school or area need the plant program?

Promote:

* Strengths- Great project evaluation plan, specific budget, clear timeline, specific goals, and great overall plan.
* Weaknesses- some typos, question marks in weird places, outdated prices.

Student Writing:

* Strengths- The most well written grant proposal yet, very clear, specific, and goal oriented. Not too expensive for the amount of change it could bring about.
* Weaknesses- I would say the weakest part is the proposal concept. After reading it, I just didn’t understand the proposal good enough.

Walkers:

* Strengths- A big strength to this program is not only the amazing proposal, but the in depth research of need, and the grant writer putting into the grant the money that will be donated by the school, and mentioning the money already raised in the last six years that helped build two computer labs.
* Weaknesses- I really didn’t see any weaknesses in this proposal, except that some words were cut off.

**Essay Section: make a recommendation, with summary rationale, for funding.**

* Adult Ed: I would ask for those submitting this proposal to approach Microsoft for educational pricing on their software. If they are willing to take that initiative I would love to support the program in the amount of $2,000. I love the fact that volunteers run the program, and that they are using existing resources (their computers and church building) to host the project. Because of their clear purposes, goals, objectives, and past success with their youth programs, I would recommend funding for this project.
* Leap: As this grant stands, I wouldn’t give it funding. It is too broad, and too vague. I like the ideas it is going for, but I wonder why the teachers need 5 days of training, why they don’t have specific research on the city and area they will focus on, and why the laptop and projector are so expensive. This grant proposal needs to be revised and updated.
* Plant: This is a grant that I would recommend for funding. Not only is this project needed, but they have done their research, and know specifically who they will target, and how they will accomplish their goals. They have clear goals and objectives, and I would feel confident that my fifth grade son or daughter would benefit greatly from such a program.
* Promote: I would ask the grant writer to update the price info, and recommend the grant to be funded. The proposal is not only well written, but the project is rigorous, requiring hard skills that will be fun and challenging for students. Not to many high school students get to use dream weaver to create websites. Also, their presentations of learning will teach them a lot of skills that will benefit them for their lives.
* Student Writing: This is a grant proposal that I would definitely recommend. I can tell the writer understands personally the needs of her students, and has gone to a lot of effort to search out what her students need, and what she believes will help them achieve according to the state standards in writing. The project is a good one, and should be funded.
* Walkers: This is by far the best and comprehensive proposal out of the six that I read. This grant writer is already heavily involved in walking and physical education. They have great reasons for why and how the program will benefit the students, and the program outline is very specific and detailed. I would definitely recommend funding.

EDAD 634

School And Community Profile

Jason Harmon

School and Community Profile:

Guernsey, Wyoming is a town of about 1,147 people, located in Eastern Wyoming. Most of the students that attend school here live within the city limits. A few live outside of town and in the small town of Hartville, Wyoming. The average home cost is $114,600, with a big percentage of them being built before 1939. Demographically, the median age is 44.6%, and the average household size is 2.24. Guernsey is predominantly white, with Hispanics as the largest minority at 9.26%. The median household income is $45,609 with an unemployment rate of 5.7%. 13.6% have not graduated from high school, and 11% have received a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Guernsey has a lot of history. In the 1840’s pioneers from many nations crossed the plains and passed by Guernsey. Here they would stop to wash their clothes, water their stock, and take baths. In 1880, a New Yorker named Charles A. Guernsey bought land here, and founded Guernsey. He was a rancher, a minor, and helped to start the Guernsey Dam. Today, the Oregon Trail Ruts is a national monument that shows record of the thousands of pioneers that once passed by on the Oregon Trail. Today the Economy continues due to a power plant in Wheatland, WY, many railroad jobs due to a large switching station, and the many jobs of people that work at the Army base here in town. Guernsey is a friendly town with an old west look, and a great place to visit.

Platte County School District # 2 consists of one large k-12 building broken into three schools; the High School with about 77 students (9-12), the Junior High, with about 36 students (7-8), and the elementary school with about 98 students (k-6). The school has about 45% of the students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch. 83% of the students are Caucasian, with 14% being Hispanic, and 1% Asian. I can’t find any data on Annual Yearly Progress ratings, or test results, but I do know that our average ACT score is about 17.6. We have great programs for the junior high and high school students where they each get a laptop computer, and being a small school, each of the teachers gets to know students on a personal basis.

References

http://www.townofguernseywy.us/

http://www.city-data.com/city/Guernsey-Wyoming.html

<http://www.bestplaces.net/city/wyoming/guernsey>

http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/school\_detail.asp?Search=1&InstName=Guernsey%2C+High+School&SchoolType=1&SchoolType=2&SchoolType=3&SchoolType=4&SpecificSchlTypes=all&IncGrade=-1&LoGrade=-1&HiGrade=-1&ID=560318000379

EDAD 634

First Article Review

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**Revisiting the Age-Old Question: Does Money Matter in Education?**

This was an intriguing article by Bruce Baker, a professor in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University, commissioned by the Albert Shanker Institute. The main focus of the article is helping people in the United States to understand that money matters in education. A lot of research is reviewed in an attempt to combat rhetoric that is continually believed regarding money and its importance in improving education. The problem stems from unsound research by Coleman in 1964 and Eric Hanushek in 1986. Hanushek concluded, “There appears to be no strong or systematic relationship between school expenditures and student performance” (Baker, p.4). Baker takes to time to review more recent research, and what has been found in regards to three important issues in school finance.

**Does money matter?**

Baker mentions many researchers that went back and found evidence that the research done by Coleman and Hanushek wasn’t accurate, and the statistical methods they used weren’t valid. Recent researchers have concluded that resource variables such as per-pupil expenditures “show strong and consistent relations with achievement (Baker, p. 5).” It has been found that increasing spending for education is associated with significant increases in achievement. Baker states at the end of this section of his article, “The uncertainty has been replaced with an empirically-grounded confidence that funding does matter” (Baker, p. 7).

**Do schooling resources that cost money matter?**

Because this could be such a broad topic Baker realizes that it isn’t just important how much money is spent on education, but how it is spent. He chooses to focus on two main funding sources in this section of his research article. They are teacher salaries, and pupil to teacher ratios. The research has found that not only does teacher pay effect the quality of those entering the teaching profession, but they effect how long good teachers remain as teachers. It is concluded, “higher salaries are associated with more qualified teachers (Baker, p. 8).” With regards to class size and teacher quantity, the evidence is strong, that students from all kinds of backgrounds get better grades, and learn more in small classes in their early years. Baker mentions that although reducing class sizes will cost more, it has proven to help students achieve more, and is a good place to increase resources to better education.

**Do state school finance reforms matter?**

The biggest thing that has been found with regards to this issue is the equalizing effect school finance reforms can have on helping to narrow the gap between students from all kinds of backgrounds, cultures, and families. Deke (Baker, p. 13) found that a 20 percent increase in spending is associated with a 5 percent increase in the likelihood that students will go on to postsecondary education. Others have found great success in states that have implemented finance reform to help fund poverty districts. They have found that this reform has been successful in raising student achievement in these areas. Towards the end of this section Baker concludes, “It is safe to say that a sizeable and growing body of rigorous empirical literature validates that state and school finance reforms can have substantial positive effects on student outcomes, including reductions in both the levels and disparities in these outcomes (Baker, p. 14).”

I will now take a look at the article in relation to the five metavalues of liberty, equality/equity, fraternity, efficiency, and economic growth.

* **Liberty** – Although many would say that taxes’ increasingly being used in education takes away their freedom to use their money as they would like, this article helps everyone to see how important education is. We must continue to use our money to educate our children. It is so important. It helps our children to become good citizens, and contribute to our country economically.
* **Equality/equity** – I believe that this issue came up the most in the section of the article on school finance reform. As states have improved their finance systems, students are receiving an education that is more equal across districts, and less biased towards communities and schools in poor districts and areas.
* **Fraternity** – Fraternity is the common theme of this article. At the beginning several politician are quoted as they were fighting to reduce spending in their states on education. For example, in 2011 New York Governor Andrew Cuomo declared, “Not only do we spend too much, but we get too little in return. We spend more money on education than any sate in the nation and we are number 34 in terms of results (Baker, p. 1).” Baker helps us understand where these politicians are getting their information, and why it isn’t correct. His agenda in writing the article seems to be getting rid of the misinformation that spending more on education won’t make a difference, and helping unite our country in the cause of bettering our education system for all of our children.
* **Efficiency** – The big thing I noted in regards to efficiency in this article, is that Baker mentioned that research in regards to where money should be spent is lacking. The research is costly and time consuming. The answer that seemed to ring clear is that increasing funding in our schools has never lead to harm, and that as we strive to spend our resources wisely, we will see increased achievement.
* **Economic growth** – Baker states (p. 3), “The saga over whether money matters in American public education can be traced back to the broader question of whether schools matter.” Here Baker is making the point that we know that schools matter. How educated our children are directly effects the economy, their future earnings, and quality of life.

In conclusion, this article really helped me to see how issues of education finance are being discussed, researched, and used today. It was nice to see how passionate Baker is about education, and to see how closely he sticks to the research, and how much he believes in it. I know that it will be important to read the research when I am an administrator. It will help me to understand how to better guide my school.

Baker, B.D. (2012). *Revisiting the Age-Old Question: Does Money Matter in Education?* The Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved from http://www.shankerinstitute.org/images/doesmoneymatter\_final.pdf

Chapter 9 & 10 Reflection:

As an administrator these chapters will really come in handy. I don’t expect to remember all of the court cases, but I must stay informed of current litigation, and how it is affecting the funding of our schools. Depending on where I life, I will also be involved with charter and private schools. I will need to know the implications of having other schools within my district, and what would happen if one or more of them were to stop operation. Would we have room for the sudden influx of students? It is also important in finance to understand how the construction of a charter school would effect a public school in a city that isn’t growing very quickly.

EDAD 634 Chapter 11 & 12

Chapter 11 Question: What do you think is the best way to provide funding for school construction?

Chapter 12 Question: Should site principals be included in district budgeting issues?

As I read and thought about how I would decide to best provide funding for school construction, only one real good answer has come to mind. If I were completely in charge of the process I would use ideas from the Building reserve system of funding. Bonds are too costly to schools and taxpayers in my opinion. If I started out in a district with fairly new buildings that were paid off I would put aside money each year (as long as it was legal in the state I was working in) for the future building needs of the school and district. The current students and taxpayers children have used the school, and the school could be depreciated in value just as a vehicle would be for accounting purposes. If districts put aside money to cover the wear and tear each year, they could somewhat accurately predict how long the school would last, and how much money should be saved each year to prepare for future building needs, or new schools. Say a school is predicted to last 30 years. Lets say that currently a new school is costing around 10 million. Using an amortization calculator, and adjusting for inflation and interest you would earn on the money you set aside, lets say that the school needs to save $300,000 a year for future building needs. It would be preferable to raise taxes this little bit each year, and invest the money wisely, instead of asking the school to pay a similar amount each year in interest on bonds alone. Why pay money on interest, when the school could be making money on interest. Lets say the school ends up lasting 40 years instead of 30. If they have saved the 10 million, and are making 10% interest on that money, by year 40 they would have well over 27 million. This is way better than being in debt through bonds.

I would say that there is no question as to whether the school principle should be included in district budgeting issues, but how much should they be involved? Our text book does a good job of stating that a principal must be able to administer the budget by separating the expenditures from the revenues (Brimley V., Verstegen D, & Garfield R., p. 287). A building principle should have a budget, but have a lot of leeway as to how to spend it. The building principles should have teachers not only suggest in requisition forms what they need, but also should be asked what they could use “for an optimal or superior program” (p. 282). Other than this, the principle is responsible to establish budget and ledger sheets, and helps to administer the budget in their specific buildings. All funds need to be recorded and deposited where they belong. Principals should also be involved in budget discussions, attend board and public meetings where the budget is discussed, and work to create fairness and equity in budgets within their district. The budget process is an important part of “sound financial management” in any school, and requires the help and guidance of active school leaders (p. 299).

Brimley, V., Verstegen, D., Garfield, R. (2012). *Financing Education in a Climate of Change*. The Allyn & Bacon Educational Leadership Series. Pearson Higher Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Question Chapter 11: What would you do as an administrator in a poor district to raise money for new building construction?

Question Chapter 12: What district and budgetary approach do you prefer, and plan on using as a future administrator?

Chapter 11 & 12 Reflection:

These chapters really spoke to me as a future administrator. Not only do I now better understand my duties, but I have a greater understanding of the duties of others who will support me in my role. As a principle I will need to be clear in our accounting practices, and make sure our records are up to date and accurate.

EDAD 634

Building Needs

Jason Harmon

School Building Needs and Funds Available

I started this project by talking to our building and grounds manager to get accurate information. As of this school year, our maintenance budget decreased 11% to $190,000. They project our needs and future projects as far into the future as they can, to enable them to save money from their budget for big projects. Some years they have left over money, but other years all of it is spent. I also got a broad overview of our buildings history, and the years additions were built. Talking with and interviewing our school maintenance manager has helped me gain an appreciation of what he does.

In the past few years since I have been here, many improvements have been made to our k-12 school building. My first year, they replaced the flooring in all of the hallways, redesigned and recreated our commons area, and refinished our gym floors. The next year they painted the main gym, and the hallways with our school colors, and totally refinished an old gym floor that we have. This summer, they repainted the old gym. They asked for bids, and most of the companies said they would do it for 12 to 15 thousand dollars. The maintenance crew just decided to do it themselves to save money. Now they are ordering new curtain systems for our stage in the old gym, and that will cost around $25,000.

Our school has been built in sections. An old 3-story high school building was taken down, and replaced in 1959. This section of the building now has the most plumbing and electrical problems, and causes continual headaches. Recently, they had to shut down some electrical outlets because they kept shorting, and couldn’t replace the wire, because it ran through the cement. They are also going through classrooms one by one in the older building, and updating cupboards and flooring. My room is in the old section of the building, and is pretty fancy. In 1971 the old Elementary school was torn down, and replaced. We also have a new middle section of the building that was built in 1972, including our big gymnasium. The only part of the building that is original (I don’t know the year of construction) is the old west gym. The foundation is sound, and with all of the new updates it is a nice gym.

As stated at the beginning, we currently have about $190,000 available for school maintenance. The curtains are coming soon, and there are a lot of needs in our bus barn. The new 40’ buses don’t fit in the bus barn, and this is causing problems. The buses left out doors have a hard time starting and require more maintenance. The bus barn looks nice on the outside, but also has a lot of electrical problems that must be addressed. The other project projected for this year, is that they want to build some storage space outside of the band room for teachers to store things that they don’t currently need in their classrooms. Our classrooms aren’t huge, and space is a concern, so we need more storage space. The maintenance crew plans on extending that portion of the building 12’ to build storage units.

It has been beneficial to talk to our building maintenance manager, and learn from him first hand the needs of our building and the funds available. I know that his job is an important one, and it must be stressful at times to not only work with a tight budget, but to have such short windows of space with which to work, when students aren’t in school. I really appreciate what he and his crew do much more now.

EDAD 634

Chapter 13 & 14

Jason Harmon

Chapter 13: How has the change in accounting environment influenced accounting and auditing over the years?

Chapter 14: Why is it more important today to carry quality insurance within a school-district? What are our biggest risks?

The Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) was founded in 1973. The United States realized the importance of creating generally accepted accounting principles, so that differences in accounting practices could be reduced, and business could be understood, regulated, and controlled. Since 1984 the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has been the “official source of generally accepted accounting principles for state and local governments” (Brimley V., Verstegen D, & Garfield R., p. 307). In 2001, the International Accounting Standards Board was created to help business accounting to be similar and understandable across the world. As these accounting standards are created, regulated, and changed, accounting and auditing practices evolve. In 1999 the environment of government accounting was changing. The GASB identified what they believed to be the “most important objectives of financial reporting by government.” They issued a statement that established new “financial reporting requirements for state and local governments throughout the United States. School business managers and administrators must be aware of the changing environment of accounting, and new regulations, so they can be sure to meet the requirements for their audits. Every change in GAAP (the generally accepted accounting principles) requires a change in accounting and auditing.

Today schools assume a lot of risk. These main risks involve student safety concerns. Are playgrounds, hallways, classrooms, gymnasiums, and pools safe? Even when a school has policies for teaching safety in classes such as chemistry, and shop, risks are prevalent, and a school must take precautions against injury and being sued by parents. Brimley, Verstegen, and Garfield (p. 331) mention 4 ways to manage these risks. First you must avoid all the risks that you can by eliminating them. Then you must instruct teachers on how to control risks by giving proper safety instructions to students in their classrooms. The third suggestion is to transfer the risk to a third party. This is so important, and involves the school purchasing insurance. Lastly, the school should evaluate where insurance is really needed, so as to not pay for insurance where it isn’t needed, or where the cost outweighs the benefit.

Schools need to protect public funds. Insurance is necessary to take away the risk of financial loss in the event of unfortunate incidents. The types of insurance that should be considered are fire, extended coverage, glass, boiler, gloater, crime, liability, workers compensation, surety bonds, and accident insurance (Brimley V., Verstegen D, & Garfield R., p. 334). Another type of insurance that some schools provide for their teachers is liability insurance. It is the duty of school administrators along with the school board, to analyze the costs and benefits of insurance, and make sure their schools, teachers, public money, and students are protected.

Brimley, V., Verstegen, D., Garfield, R. (2012). *Financing Education in a Climate of Change*. The Allyn & Bacon Educational Leadership Series. Pearson Higher Education, Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Questions:

Chapter 13: If your superintendent were to approach you for advice on the auditing process in your district, what would you recommend?

Chapter 14: As an administrator, how would you make sure that maximum benefit s are provided by the expenditure of each dollar in every aspect of the school program? Especially with respect to the looming budget cuts, how will you prioritize spending?

Chapter 13 & 14 Reflection:

These chapter helped me to understand more of the specifics of the accounting practices used in schools. I wasn’t aware of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, and it was good to know that accounting practices vary within governmental agencies as opposed to business. It was also good to understand the importance of overseeing supplies, purchasing, insurance, transportation, and food service. Just the other day I saw a bid in our local paper for our schools milk contract for this upcoming school year, and it made me think about this class, and all that I am learning.

EDAD 634

Superintendent Interview

Jason Harmon

Superintendent Interview

In order to get a broader view I interviewed my superintendent Dave Barker in Guernsey, Wyoming and the superintendent in Uintah County School District #4 in Mountain View, Wyoming, Jeff Newton. Both of them provided me with their budgets for the upcoming year, and taught me a lot of good things. Although their perspectives were a little different, I will focus on my interview with Jeff Newton, and conclude with additional things I learned from Dave Barker.

Mountain View is in the process of building a new k-8 building. With regards to school finance, Jeff Newton taught me a lot about the school construction model used in Wyoming. Each year the school buildings around the state are rated according to facility condition, capacity, and safety. Schools that are at the top of the list in regards to need, receive about 95% of the money they need to build their new buildings from Wyoming’s School Capitol Construction Fund. Land is purchased by the state, and the state pays to have old buildings demolished. Mountain Views k-3 and middle school buildings have been deemed seismically inadequate, and they were towards the top of the list to receive a new school. They were allotted 23 million dollars to build their new school, but decided they wanted to increase the classroom size a little bit, make the gym bigger, and add two extra rooms. They petitioned for a 2 million dollar bond, and lost by 12 votes. So, to raise the needed money and to get the best school possible, they have been saving around half a million dollars a year the past few years, and putting it into the school.

Wyoming allows a school to save up to 15% of their total revenue each year for future needs. This money can be invested conservatively in bonds, cd’s or other safe investments. Currently Mountain view has 1.75 million dollars saved in a cash reserve, which is about the max that they can keep.

The funding model in Wyoming funds each district similarly. Property rich districts’ money is recaptured, and dispersed to property poor districts. Mountain View only receives about 2 million dollars a year from local property taxes, so they receive about 10 million from the state of Wyoming. Schools are given money based on ADM, teacher experience, small school status, and other factors. Jeff Newton does a really good job of projecting needs, and budgeting accordingly. For example, school maintenance money is given according to need, so a new school receives practically no maintenance money its first 7 years. To prepare for that, Jeff has been saving money for the past few years in their maintenance budget to prepare for unexpected expenses. In actuality, saving for maintenance costs, and saving for the new school have been the major parts of the districts strategic plans as they relate to finances.

Jeff described to me that in his district the principles are given a budget based on previous year needs, and they administer the budget as they see fit. Teachers are normally given similar amounts of money to work with each year. If they have a big need, they approach their principal, who then can approach the superintendent and board with specific requests.

The state of Wyoming provides the money for food service, transportation, summer school, and instructional facilitators. School boards on the other hand are to make decisions on how to fund recreation programs like open gym, and community learning centers. These programs can be supported by local tax dollars, and in Mountain View it amounts to 1.5 mills. Jeff said that 1 mil amounts to around $12 per household.

With regards to auditing, the state audits certain programs each year, but the districts brings in an independent auditor beforehand to make sure all is well. Jeff said that there are hardly ever problems with people being dishonest with school money in Wyoming, but that the audits do catch spreadsheet errors and accounting errors.

I learned a lot of the same things from Dave Barker, but the difference is that his district is much smaller, and this allows him to get a lot more input from teachers on what supplies they need for their classrooms. Basically, the teachers get whatever they needs, as long as they can justify it. For example, as an art teacher, when I came to the district I was allowed to requisition whatever I wanted for my room. The last two years though, the state allotment of money to schools has slightly decreased, so we have just been asked to justify our purchases, and what we are requisitioning, and align them with our school and district goals. This district seems to be much more focused on a school improvement process, and aligning their main goals with students learning.

It was a wonderful experience to interview two superintendents and get their perspectives on school finance. They seem to really enjoy their jobs, and if is neat seeing how involved they are in making their schools the best they can be. I can tell that they care a lot, and have their priorities straight. School finance and budgeting is a large portion of their jobs, and it was fun to see firsthand how they administer that responsibility.

Chapter 15 & 16 Review:

It was interesting to see the trend of schools hiring human resource managers, and recently I heard of a friend of my families who was a former principal, and now serves as his districts human resource manager. It will be interesting as a principal and superintendent to be involved with the decisions for teacher salary and benefits, but the critical thing to understand is how important it is to hire good teachers, and take care of them. I must help new teachers develop, and find satisfaction within the community and school.

Chapter 16 gave me a lot to think about, and I am excited to take part in education during this time of change. The future looks bright, and I must serve with all of my heart.

EDAD 634

Grant Proposal

Jason Harmon

Arts in Education Grant Proposal

Wyoming Arts Council

&

The National Foundation of the Arts

BSC (**B**ringing **S**tudents to **C**ulture)

**Concept Statement:**

The purpose of this project is to partially fund a cultural arts trip for students from poorer families and neighborhoods in the rural town of Guernsey, Wyoming. This trip will take place in the summer of 2014, and give students a great experience back East where they will experience art, music, and dance, as they never have before. This Learning experience will enable students to understand art history and contemporary art and find motivation in it. They will set goals, and spend the next school year using what they learned and experienced to inform their future artistic creations.

**Need Statement:**

Students in rural Wyoming have very few opportunities to visit real are museums and galleries due to the fact that they are so far away, and rarely get into the city. Most of the art and music students in Guernsey, Wyoming are unfamiliar with the great masters, popular Broadway musicals, and contemporary art. I have found this out as I have talked to my students and asked them about their life experiences. One of the best things I ever experienced in school was a trip that my choir teacher planned for us to go and see the Broadway musical “Into the Woods”. Not only did we make the trip, but also we benefited from the experience of learning and performing the music beforehand and taking time to celebrate at restaurants and cultural events in the city that we visited. I know that the arts have impacted my life immensely. Participation in the arts is important, but we must connect it back to history, pop culture, and contemporary society. Students need the opportunities to broaden their horizons, to see the world, and to experience the limitless possibilities of their creative genius. Art brings joy to our lives, and our students need to experience its power in their lives.

Nobody will argue with the importance of cultural outreach programs and study abroad trips at colleges and universities. The problem we are facing in Guernsey is that far too many students set their sights too low. Although it good to enjoy where one lives, our students need to understand the world in a broader sense, and face it without fear. All the old masters of the past had great artists they looked to for inspiration and guidance. It is far too common for students to get blinded by their own talent and ability, and they must experience great art and music. This will be the motivating factor that drives them to work hard, and accomplish great things in their lives.

**Goals:**

1. Students will gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the arts, and how it affects them, and the world around them.
   * Activity 1– Preparatory work and preparation in class to plan and prepare for trip.
   * Activity 2 – students will be taught and tested on art appreciation techniques, and practice those skills, including searching for meaning, and art critiques.
   * Activity 3 – Students will travel back east to New York and experience the Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum, the art students league of New York, the New York Academy of Art, and several Broadway musicals and shows.
   * Activity 4 – students will reflect on the things they experience each day, and the trip as a whole.
2. Students will take what they learn and the inspiration they receive from artists they saw, and use that to set goals to progress their personal artwork.
   * Activity 1 – Students will write a paper on what they learned, what it means to them, and how it informs them of the direction they want to take in their personal work.
   * Activity 2 – students will set goals on what they will do specifically in the classroom the following year to improve their work.
   * Activity 3 – students will create artwork in accordance with their goals, and passions, inspired by what they saw and experienced in New York.

**Description:**

Guernsey High School is a rural Town in Eastern Wyoming located an hour and a half from the nearest Wal-Mart. We have about 70 high school students. Most students come from less affluent families that work for the railroad or local restaurants and businesses. About 50% of our students receive free or reduced price lunch. They are great kids who are in need of cultural experiences to enrich their lives.

Throughout the school year the Art and Choir students in Guernsey-Sunrise High School will be preparing for this cultural experience through rigorous study, research, fundraising, and planning efforts. Those that are willing and desire the experience will be included in this process. We are estimating that 12 students will come with us on the trip. In art we will study both contemporary artists, and artists of the past. We will study pop-culture and its effect on art, and how art is effecting our culture today. After Our study we will research the museums we will visit, and their collections. Each student will come up with a preliminary plan of what they will learn, study, sketch, and do at each museum. The students will help decide how we spend the 3 days we spend looking at art. The choir kids on the other hand, will study music, composers, dance, opera, and musicals. They will delve into the culture and history of New York. They will plan their learning experience, itinerary, and learning outcomes. We will go to 2 Broadway shows, and several other venues and concerts that give them a taste of the broad expanse of music, performance, and dance.

After the planning and preparation stage we will actually take the trip in mid June. The trip will last 5 days and 4 nights. Parents will be involved, and we will do half of our activities as a group, and the other half in smaller groups with adult chaperones. Besides the art museums and musical and dance concerts, we will experience the culture of New York through the Subway system, visit to the statue of Liberty, tour the city, walk through Central Park and talking to people we meet.

The Last part of the project will be the daily reflections of the students, their goal setting, and art projects created in relation to what they saw and experienced on the trip. A lot of time will be spent putting their goals into action, and creating project that will be displayed for our community to enjoy. Our art show will include a question and answer session, a slideshow of our experience, and art projects and musical selections inspired by our cultural experience.

**Timeline/Action Plan**

September 2013

* Announce the project/opportunity (teachers)
* Parent student meeting (teachers)

October 2013

* Plan Fundraisers (teachers and students)
* Start Research (students)

November 2013

* Start 1st fundraiser (students)
* Continue research (students)

December 2013

* Start Building Itinerary for Trip (students and teachers)

January 2013

* Finish Itinerary (students and teachers)
* Buy plane Tickets (teachers
* 2nd Fundraiser (students)

March

* 2nd parent meeting to coordinate and finalize trip plans (students and teachers)
* goals, and personal objectives of the trip (students)

April

* Learn about artists and music that they will experience (students)
* Finalize personal goals and expectations. (students)

June

* Take the trip (students and teachers)
* Reflect and Set Goals (students and teachers)

Following School Year:

* Write paper on the experience (students)
* Revise Goals (Students)
* Create artwork inspired by what was experienced. (students)
* Art Show and community forum (students and teachers)

**Budget Sheet:** (This included figures for 12 students and 2 teacher)

* Plane Tickets - $300 x 14 = $4,200
* Transportation to Denver Airport - provided by the school
* Hotel – 5 rooms x 4 nights x $100 = $2000
* Subway transportation in New York - $22 x 14 people = $308
* Museum Entry Fees - $20 x 14 = $240
* Broadway Musical Show Tickets = $50 each x 2 shows x 14 people = $1400
* Food, other shows, and other expenses will be paid for out of the fundraiser money.

Total = $8,148

**Evaluation:**

To evaluate the success of this project we will ask for feedback from the students who participated, parent that were involved, and from the community at the final art show. As we look at the comments and suggestions, the student growth throughout the year, and other outcomes, we will be able to determine how much of a success the program was. If it turns out to be as beneficial as we hope, we would like to offer a similar program every 3 or 4 years in our high school.

Appendix

School and Community Profile:

Guernsey, Wyoming is a town of about 1,147 people, located in Eastern Wyoming. Most of the students that attend school here live within the city limits. A few live outside of town and in the small town of Hartville, Wyoming. The average home cost is $114,600, with a big percentage of them being built before 1939. Demographically, the median age is 44.6%, and the average household size is 2.24. Guernsey is predominantly white, with Hispanics as the largest minority at 9.26%. The median household income is $45,609 with an unemployment rate of 5.7%. 13.6% have not graduated from high school, and 11% have received a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Guernsey has a lot of history. In the 1840’s pioneers from many nations crossed the plains and passed by Guernsey. Here they would stop to wash their clothes, water their stock, and take baths. In 1880, a New Yorker named Charles A. Guernsey bought land here, and founded Guernsey. He was a rancher, a minor, and helped to start the Guernsey Dam. Today, the Oregon Trail Ruts is a national monument that shows record of the thousands of pioneers that once passed by on the Oregon Trail. Today the Economy continues due to a power plant in Wheatland, WY, many railroad jobs due to a large switching station, and the many jobs of people that work at the Army base here in town. Guernsey is a friendly town with an old west look, and a great place to visit.

Platte County School District # 2 consists of one large k-12 building broken into three schools; the High School with about 77 students (9-12), the Junior High, with about 36 students (7-8), and the elementary school with about 98 students (k-6). The school has about 45% of the students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch. 83% of the students are Caucasian, with 14% being Hispanic, and 1% Asian. I can’t find any data on Annual Yearly Progress ratings, or test results, but I do know that our average ACT score is about 17.6. We have great programs for the junior high and high school students where they each get a laptop computer, and being a small school, each of the teachers gets to know students on a personal basis.

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Troy Lake

Principal Guernsey-Sunrise Schools

1-307-836-2735

To whom it may concern:

Jason Harmon has been an outstanding art teacher at our school for the past few years. He takes every opportunity he can to get our students involved and excited in art. He has taken our students to art camps, state art symposium, and the Denver Museum of Art. We back him 100%. We are excited about his project proposal, and will support it in any way that we can. We appreciate your consideration of funding this project.

I attest to the needs our students have of getting out and seeing the culture of the world. I know that this trip to New York will be a special one. Any help you can give us will be greatly appreciated, and benefit our students greatly. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions.

Sincerely,

Troy Lake

Evaluation Document (Draft)

Student Evaluation Form

Please fill out completely. This information will help us know how to improve similar projects like this in the future!

What did you learn from this trip?

What could have been better about the trip?

How has this trip affected your personal artwork?

In what ways have you grown as a person from this trip and the things you experienced on it?

What value was the planning process to you?

Do you believe the trip was more beneficial to you personally because of the choices you got to make in the planning process?

What would you change about the trip for future groups so the experience can be even better?

What are your favorite things we did?

Which museum and Broadway show was your favorite.

What do you find yourself telling others when you talk about the trip.

Any Last comments?

**Final Class Reflection:**

I started out my undergraduate degree studying business, finance, and accounting, and ended up getting a minor in business. I was really looking forward to this class, and haven’t been disappointed. I have learned so much, and gained a greater understanding of the all around funding of schools, the implications on our society today, and where I will fit in with the school finance process in my future jobs as an educational administrator.

Several times during this class I have wondered, is there a doctoral degree in educational finance? I am really interested in the dynamics of school finance. Although the questions and concerns for the future are many, there is a lot of hope. Most government officials want to support schools. I think one of the greatest needs is more equality from state to state, but solving that issue isn’t easy. I just talked a few days ago with a gal starting her first year of teaching. She went to college in South Dakota but will be teaching in Wyoming. The teacher she student taught with has been teaching for 35 years, and when this young girl accepted the job, the teacher asked her how much she would be making. She was flabbergasted and angry to find out that the new teacher would be making about $7,000 more a year then she is. The funding inadequacies in some states not only affect the teachers, but the students, as fewer resources are available. Hopefully in the future I will be able to sit on a committee that discusses important issues in school finance, and helps make laws that effect our schools for the better.