
WYOMING P-16 EDUCATION COUNCIL

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Wyoming P-16 Education Council seats two new members; elects a new vice president

CHEYENNE – At its mid-November meeting, the Council elected Autourina Mains, Director of Northwest College’s Child Care Center to fill its early childhood education position. Also, Joan Evans, Director of the Department of Workforce Services, assumed the appointed position to the Council from that agency. The Council also elected Karla Leach, President of Western Wyoming Community College as vice president.

Autourina Mains career in early childhood education has included several positions, beginning in 1997 with Head Start where she advanced in levels of responsibility as she returned to school to complete undergraduate and graduate degrees in child development. After taking a half-time faculty position at Northwest College in 2006, she developed online early childhood courses and was instrumental in implementing a one-year certificate program in early childhood as well as a nationally certified Child Development Associate (CDA) Program. She has held the Child Care Center director position since 2008 and continues to serve as Field Coordinator for the Northwest’s CDA program.

Governor Matt Mead appointed Joan Evans as Director of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) in January 2011, when he also named her as interim Director of the Wyoming Department of Employment. Subsequently, the two agencies were combined during the 2011 legislative session. Ms. Evans had served as DWS Director since her appointment by Governor Freudenthal in 2007. In her role as Wyoming’s Director of Workforce Services, Ms. Evans has twice testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Earlier this year, the Council of State Governments selected Ms. Evans for its prestigious Toll Fellowship Program, which brings together 40 of the nation’s top state government officials from all three branches for an intensive leadership development program.

Karla Leach, President of Western Wyoming Community College since 2008, was appointed to the Council by Governor Freudenthal. Currently, Dr. Leach serves as president of the Community Colleges’ Presidents’ Council and one of three Wyoming Commissioners on the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. She also sits on multiple state advisory boards, including the, Governor’s Task Force on Distance Education, Video Conferencing, and IP-Based Communications, and the Early Childhood State Advisory Council. Dr. Leach is a featured speaker at the December Wyoming Summit on Community Colleges and recently participated on the wrap-up panel at Governor Mead’s Business Forum.

At the same meeting, the Council President Michael Ceballos acknowledged the resignations of founding member Charles Ware, and vice president Rob Black. Ware, a former Chairman of the Wyoming Workforce Development Council who currently serves as a reviewer for Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Act reports, represented the private sector on the Council. Black, Grants Manager with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, had represented that agency on the Council. Ware's resignation leaves a private sector position open on the Council.

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