

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN CAMPBELL COUNTY, WYOMING:

**FINAL REPORT ON THE
SCENARIO PLANNING PROCESS**

OCTOBER 2006 THROUGH OCTOBER 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many individuals who contributed to this initiative, most notably the participants on the scenario planning team who are named within this report. In addition, the authors would like to especially acknowledge the ongoing support provided by Linda Mohr of the Campbell County School District and Renée Regnier of McREL.

About McREL

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) is a nonprofit education and research organization based in Denver, Colorado. For more than 40 years, McREL has been dedicated to helping educators use research to improve student achievement. As a national leader in research, school improvement, standards-based education, balanced leadership, professional development, and scenario planning, our highly respected education researchers and experts have provided services to educators in all 50 states and 18 foreign countries. Our website (www.mcrel.org) offers hundreds of reports, tools, guides, and services designed to improve school and student performance. To learn more about how McREL can help your district use findings from this research to improve student achievement, contact us at 303.337.0990 or info@mcrel.org.

About this Report

This final report summarizes the scenario planning process that took place between October 2006 and July 2007 in Campbell County, Wyoming, describes the outcomes of the process, and offers a set of recommendations. The report is submitted to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

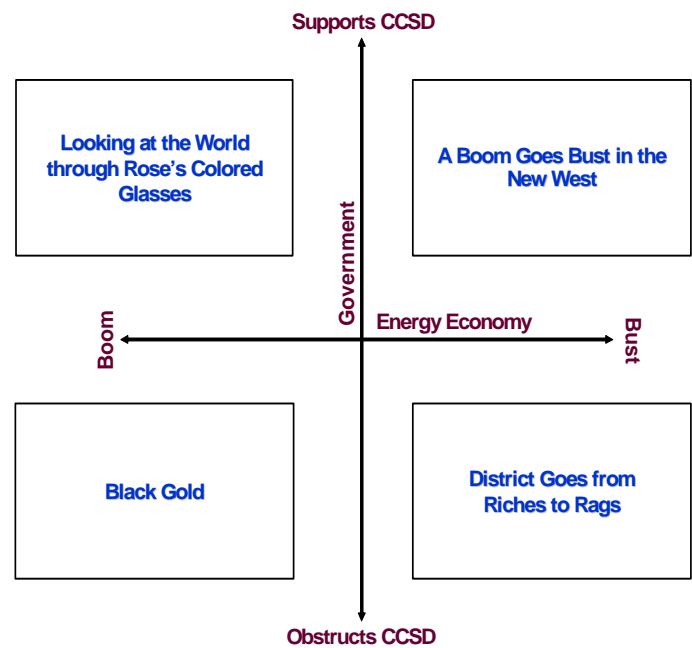
Introduction

As the state's third largest school district, Campbell County, Wyoming, has enjoyed both economic booms and economic busts throughout its history. Today, the county benefits from a prolonged boom, due to its critical contribution to the energy economy. When Dr. Richard Strahorn was appointed superintendent in 2004, an effective strategic planning process that would focus the district on planning for any possible future was sought. McREL was hired to facilitate a scenario planning process to help the Campbell County School District develop a vision and create an action plan that could be implemented, monitored over time, and adjusted as conditions change.

About Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is the process of creating stories about possible futures in order to anticipate and prepare for changes beyond one's control. Scenarios do not predict the future, but they do provide a way to identify and manage uncertainties. Scenario planning challenges the current mode of thinking, bringing new insights that drive transformation in organizations and institutions. The process involves eight steps: 1) select the issue of focus and timeframe, 2) explore the external world, 3) clarify uncertainties, 4) develop the scenario framework, 5) write the scenarios, 6) identify implications and options, 7) monitor trends, and 8) take action.

CCSD's Scenario Framework



Scenario Planning in Campbell County, Wyoming

The process began in October 2006, with an introductory presentation by Laura Lefkowitz, McREL's vice president for policy and planning services, on drivers of change and the scenario planning process. Through the discussion, the district identified its focal issue to be this question: *How will CCSD maximize its potential and meet evolving student and community needs in the global society of 2016?*

This was followed by a workshop to help clarify the critical uncertainties most relevant to Campbell County which then led to the development of the district's scenario framework, presented here. From there, four distinct scenarios outlining different possible futures were developed over the course of several months.

Scenario A: A Boom Goes Bust in the New West

In this scenario the economy is experiencing a bust and government is supportive of CCSD. The scenario depicts a story of how the economy goes from “boom” to “bust” prompting a state agency to step in to fund school construction. The story evolves over time and outlines the tough decisions Gov. Allison Riley will have to make in the year 2016 as the state finds itself broke and unable to invest in education.

Scenario B: Looking at the World through Rose’s Colored Glasses

This scenario discusses conditions associated with a continued boom economy and a supportive government. The story describes the experience of Rose Lopez, a new teacher in the Campbell County School District just beginning her first day at work in the year 2016.

Scenario C: Black Gold

This scenario assumes that the boom continues in Campbell County and demand for energy grows. However, with this boom, government restrictions increase within the educational arena. The scenario presents a Q & A with the long-time superintendent, Dr. Richard Strahorn, who is about to retire in the year 2016. In the interview, Dr. Strahorn reminisces about the past decade and the changes he has experienced in Campbell County.

Scenario D: District Goes from Riches to Rags

This scenario, written in the form of a newspaper story, reports on conditions associated with a local and state economy that has gone from boom to bust, and a government role in education that is obstructive to the educational needs of the district. The *Wyoming Press* covers the story in April 2016.

Once the scenarios were fully developed and reviewed, a third workshop took place to help participants articulate the implications and strategic options for action within each scenario. These strategic options are intended to form the basis of the district’s ongoing strategic planning as it continues to track the relevant trends and forces shaping the near-term and long-term future. In addition to strategies for each individual scenario, the group identified a set of robust options, or strategies and action steps that are useful and make sense in any scenario. These include: 1) Invest in CCSD’s people, 2) Prioritize needs across the entire district, 3) Expand facilities to meet anticipated growth, 4) Address the needs of diverse students, 5) Focus on reducing dropouts and increasing student engagement, and 6) Engage in political advocacy.

Recommendations

The strategies outlined during the scenario planning process are the first in an ongoing process of planning for the future. The following recommendations are offered as the district considers its next steps:

1. Present results of scenario planning process to and discuss final report with the Campbell County Board of Trustees.

2. Consider ways to engage the broader community in conversations about the future of education in Campbell County.
3. Establish ongoing mechanism to monitor trends, communicate them, and analyze their implications for the district.
4. Translate robust and strategic options into a concrete action plan that guides program implementation and operations.
5. As the district begins taking action on its robust options or other strategies, consider the following:
 - a. Engage in a process to prioritize the needs of the district.
 - b. Use the current time of abundance to invest resources in strategies that will prepare the district for the long haul, including the possibility of an economic downturn in the future.
 - c. Clarify the district's goals in state government relations.
 - d. Examine the current and proposed CCSD policies and practices in light of the scenarios and their implications. Focus on preparing students to compete and succeed in a global economy.
 - e. Considering trends in the external environment, continually monitor and adjust curriculum and instruction to provide needed knowledge and skills appropriate for the future.
 - f. Coordinate professional development throughout the district in order to improve its effectiveness and ensure its alignment with the district's goals, curriculum, and instruction.
 - g. Pay attention to the growing diversity of academic and social needs in the student population.

Conclusions

By considering four possible responses to the focal issue, the Campbell County School district has successfully begun to prepare for any possible future and position itself for ongoing success as time marches steadily toward 2016.

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN CAMPBELL COUNTY, WYOMING

Introduction

Known as the “energy capital” of the nation, Campbell County, Wyoming, has both enjoyed economic booms and suffered economic busts. Today, the county benefits from a prolonged boom, producing approximately 30 percent of the nation’s coal and dominating the Coal Bed Methane industry. Recently listed by agricultural magazines as one of the top 100 places to live in rural America, the population is almost 39,000 and continues to grow rapidly, as more energy related work expands within the county. The unemployment rate is low and job opportunities are high.¹

The Campbell County School District is the third largest school district in Wyoming serving about 7,500 students. Located in northeast Wyoming, the district’s 20 schools are spread across all 5,000 square miles of Campbell County. The district has approximately 1,300 employees, including 630 certified teachers. The district motto, “Teaching effectively...learning successfully,” reflects its commitment to high quality teaching and learning for all students.²

In 2004, the Campbell County School District Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Richard Strahorn superintendent of the district. Sensing the critical importance of preparing for the future—any possible future—Dr. Strahorn sought an effective strategic planning approach that would engage multiple stakeholders in developing a forward thinking vision for the future of the district grounded in an understanding of the economic boom and bust cycle of the past. Familiar with McREL’s work in this area, Dr. Strahorn contacted the scenario planning team to facilitate a scenario planning process with the district.

The purpose of the project was to develop a vision and create an action plan that can be implemented, monitored over time, and adjusted as conditions change.

About Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is the process of creating stories about possible futures in order to anticipate and prepare for changes beyond one’s control. Scenarios do not predict the future, but provide a way to identify and manage uncertainties. Scenario planning reveals risks and opportunities. It is especially useful for examining current or proposed policies in light of what the future may hold.

Scenario planning is different from other kinds of planning. It explores combinations of uncertainties—especially uncertainties that are challenging. It is ongoing and collaborative and results in the ability to identify changes early and respond to them as they arise. It challenges

¹ To find out more about Campbell County, Wyoming, visit http://ccg.co.campbell.wy.us/about/about_the_county.html.

² To find out more about the Campbell County School District, visit <http://www.ccsd.k12.wy.us/>.

one's current mode of thinking, bringing new insights that drive transformation in organizations and institutions.

There are eight steps in the scenario planning process:

1. Select the issue of focus and timeframe.
2. Explore the external world.
3. Clarify uncertainties.
4. Develop the scenario framework.
5. Write the scenarios.
6. Identify implications and options.
7. Monitor trends.
8. Take action.

Once all steps have been completed, scenario planning illuminates the issues so that leaders and stakeholders can think strategically. The consequences of certain actions within different possible future contexts become more clear, and leaders are able to re-position an organization for greater success.

Scenario Planning in Campbell County

Although scenario planning is a well-developed tool that has been used by countless organizations to prepare strategic plans in response to foresight, each project is highly customized to its context. Thus, over the course of the year of activities in Campbell County, McREL and Campbell County School District (CCSD) worked together to shape the project to meet the specific needs of the school district. The eight-step process evolved over the course of several months (October 2006 through October 2007) and was facilitated by Laura Lefkowitz. This section describes the steps taken along the way.

Participants

The scenario planning process involved 25 stakeholders from CCSD. Participants included district leaders, teachers, principals, board members, parents, local business leaders, and others. A list of participants is below.

Alan Burke, Elementary School Principal

Ron Butler, High School Principal

Maggie Cosner, Elementary School Principal

Don Dihle, Supervisor of Information Systems/Fiscal Services

Kirby Eisenhauer, Junior-Senior High School Principal

Nicole Ely, Parent Involvement Coordinator

Dr. David Fall, Board Chairman

Dave Foreman, Junior High School Principal
Liz Frith, Business Woman
Megan Gebhart, Senior, Campbell County High School
Tyler Jackson, Senior, Wright Junior-Senior High School
Dr. Barry Jankord, Elementary School Principal
Tana Larsen, Junior High School Assistant Principal
Barb McNutt, Junior High School Teacher
Kelly Mock, Junior High Parent
Linda Mohr, Assistant to the Superintendent
Jay Mueller, Manager, Wal-Mart
Beth Norton, Assistant Superintendent, Special Programs
David Olsen, Elementary School Principal
Larry Reznicek, Human Resources Manager
Larry Steiger, High School Principal
Dr. Richard Strahorn, Superintendent
Mark Winland, High School Teacher
Patsy Wirth, Elementary School Teacher

Step 1: Selecting the issue of focus and timeframe

Interviews were conducted in May of 2006 with eight stakeholders representing the business community, the board of trustees, school district employees, and students from the Campbell County community in order to determine the current context of the district, as well as the hopes and aspirations for the future. Stakeholders were asked questions about the following:

- Information they wanted to know about the future
- Critical or strategic decisions on the immediate horizon
- Hopes for the future
- Fears and concerns about failure
- Sense of belonging and engagement
- Preferred elements to retain and those to let go when moving to the future
- Suggestions for involvement of others in envisioning the future
- Benchmarks for success

A brief summary of the interview results appears below.

About the Future

Stakeholders wanted to know slightly different things about the future, depending on their role within the district. Senior level administrators wanted to know the answers to future finances and enrollment trends. Educators and community members wanted to know how the challenges of preparing all students for success would be overcome. Students wanted to know about more concrete questions such as when the high school would split into two schools.

On the Horizon

Several strategic decisions appeared to be “on the horizon” for the district. Decisions about recruitment and retention of teachers, academic achievement, addressing the dropout rate and future building construction were prominent.

Hopes for the Future

Participants were asked to articulate the story of the district’s success, ten years from now. District leaders described a future in which the needs of all students are met, achievement gaps are reduced, and an atmosphere of health is pervasive. Innovation and high expectations are firmly a part of the school and community culture in the desired future. Community members and students described a future in which school is a welcoming and engaging experience for students, encouraging them to stay in school, and not drop out. Students, in particular, saw the future in terms of “electronic high schools.”

Fears and Concerns

When asked to articulate the possibility of failure in the future, participants mainly focused on the impact of an economic bust, declining enrollment, and the inability to engage students in school, thereby increasing the dropout rate. As one participant said, “We just never figured out how to make school significant to the kids.”

Pride in the District

Participants expressed pride in the district’s ongoing academic and athletic achievements. When asked what concerned them, dropout rates and student behavior at sporting events were cited.

Things to Let Go

The idea of resting on the district’s laurels, being too complacent about success, and perpetuating the “old boys’ network” were things several interviewees thought would be best left behind when moving to the future. In addition, certain funding mechanisms from the state to the district were also mentioned as among those items that it would benefit the district to change.

Things to Retain

Participants wanted to retain the “can-do” spirit of the district leadership and administration, transparency, focus on technology and whole child education in any future world they could imagine.

Suggestions

Participants hoped all stakeholders—board members, principals, directors, teachers, parents, students, business people, nurses, counselors, and others—would be involved in defining and implementing the vision of CCSD’s future.

Benchmarks for Success

Participants defined success of the scenario planning project in many ways. They felt the effort would be successful if

- Productive discussion and learning took place
- Scenarios were robust, deep, meaningful, and communicated a vision of the future
- Specific goals (3, 5, and 10 years) would be developed
- The dropout rate could be impacted

Additional Comments

Participants offered additional thoughts and comments. Some wondered about what the future of schools would really look like. Others suggested that teachers needed to be more involved in the process. The students offered several suggestions for improving high school.

Figure 1: CCSD's Focal Issue

How will CCSD maximize its potential and meet evolving student and community needs in the global society of 2016?

McREL summarized the interview results and used them to help frame the facilitator's efforts to direct the scenario planning process toward a focal issue most relevant to the district. Figure 1 outlines the focal issue selected by the Campbell County School District. The focal issue was

finalized by the scenario planning group at its workshop in December 2006 (see below).

Step 2: Exploring the external world

On October 25, 2006, Laura Lefkowitz from McREL presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Trends Shaping the Future to the workshop participants from CCSD.³ The presentation provided an overview of the *drivers of change* in broader society. Drivers of change are forces outside of an organization that shape the future in both predictable and unpredictable ways. The drivers of change discussed covered the areas of:

- Demographics
- Economics
- Globalization
- Technology
- Education

Figure 2: Top Drivers of Change for CCSD

After the presentation, participants engaged in a brainstorming process to identify the drivers of change most relevant to the district. The top drivers of change are identified in Figure 2. A complete list of all of the drivers of change identified by each group is provided in Appendix A.

- School safety
- Funding
- Lack of qualified workers
- Workforce demands
- Technology
- Drug issues
- Teacher turnover / replacement / retention
- Facilities Commission
- Accountability
- Price of oil, coal, and methane
- NCLB

³ A similar presentation on drivers of change was presented to a larger group on October 4, 2005. The information was re-presented to the workshop participants in October, as the workshop series began.

Step 3: Clarifying uncertainties

In the workshop on December 11, 2006, the group determined which drivers of change were *predetermined*, or highly likely to play out in the future (and therefore not uncertainties), and which were *most uncertain*. Critical uncertainties are the “big questions” that are *most critical* to the issue at hand. Predetermined elements are things participants believe will happen or will exist in the future and which must be accounted for in every scenario. They are outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Predetermined Elements

- 1. National, state, and local elections
- 2. Data –
 - CCSD enrollment (past, present, and projected)
 - Staff
 - Eligible retirees
 - Free and reduced lunch population
 - Mobility rate
 - Per pupil revenues
 - County birth rate

Once the list of critical uncertainties was generated, the group then prioritized that list, selecting their top choices. The top critical uncertainties for Campbell County are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Potential Critical Uncertainties

- Energy Economy
- Resources
- Government Role
- Culture

The group also identified possible “wild cards” that could have an impact on the future in CCSD. Wild cards are unexpected events that could “cause” the future to move toward a particular quadrant of the matrix. The potential wild cards identified for CCSD are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Possible Wild Cards

1. Natural disaster (including a Katrina-like event, e.g., a disaster that occurs somewhere else but has an impact on Campbell County)
2. Terrorist event that disrupts the energy economy
3. Dramatic increase in the “green” movement that disrupts the energy economy (e.g., signing of the Kyoto Treaty, new species added to endangered species list)
4. Middle East conflict causing oil disruption
5. Computer virus.

The group also spent some time discussing the possible ends of each axis, for each critical uncertainty. There were many choices developed (See Appendix B). Ultimately, after much discussion and deliberation, the group settled on two critical uncertainties considered most relevant to CCSD and its focal issue, described below.

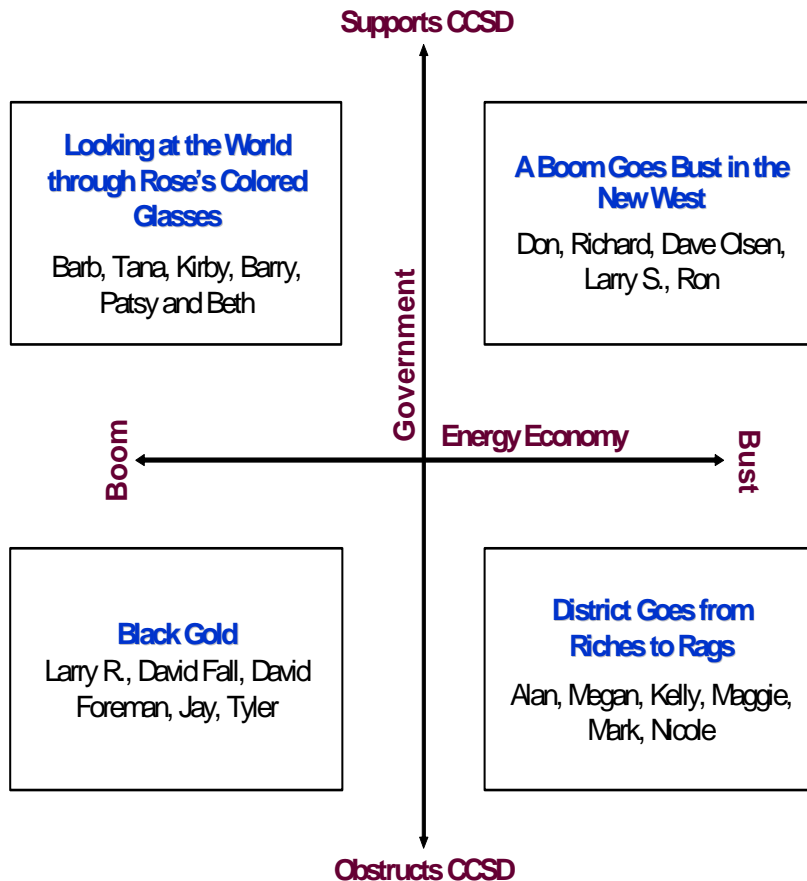
Step 4: Developing the scenario framework

This stage of the scenario development process is perhaps the most critical. Here, participants determine the scenario framework around which actual stories about the future will be written. These, ultimately, will become the scenarios shared with others to motivate action and strategic directions. To identify the scenario framework for CCSD, participants spent time deliberating on many possible uncertainties in combinations of two. They identified the two most critical uncertainties affecting the district and relevant to the focal issue. After much discussion, the group settled on these:

- 1) the Energy Economy (with axes entailing: boom/bust)
- 2) Government (with axes entailing: supports/obstructs CCSD)

Figure 6: Final Scenario Framework for Campbell School District

Work Product #2 – Scenario Framework:



These dimensions were plotted on a Cartesian plane to create the CCSD scenario framework. Figure 6 presents the final scenario framework selected for Campbell County, the selected titles, and scenario writing team members as one of several “work products” that were developed throughout the scenario planning process.

Once the scenario framework was determined, the group spent time in small groups identifying the deep causes taking place in each quadrant. Deep causes help develop the basis

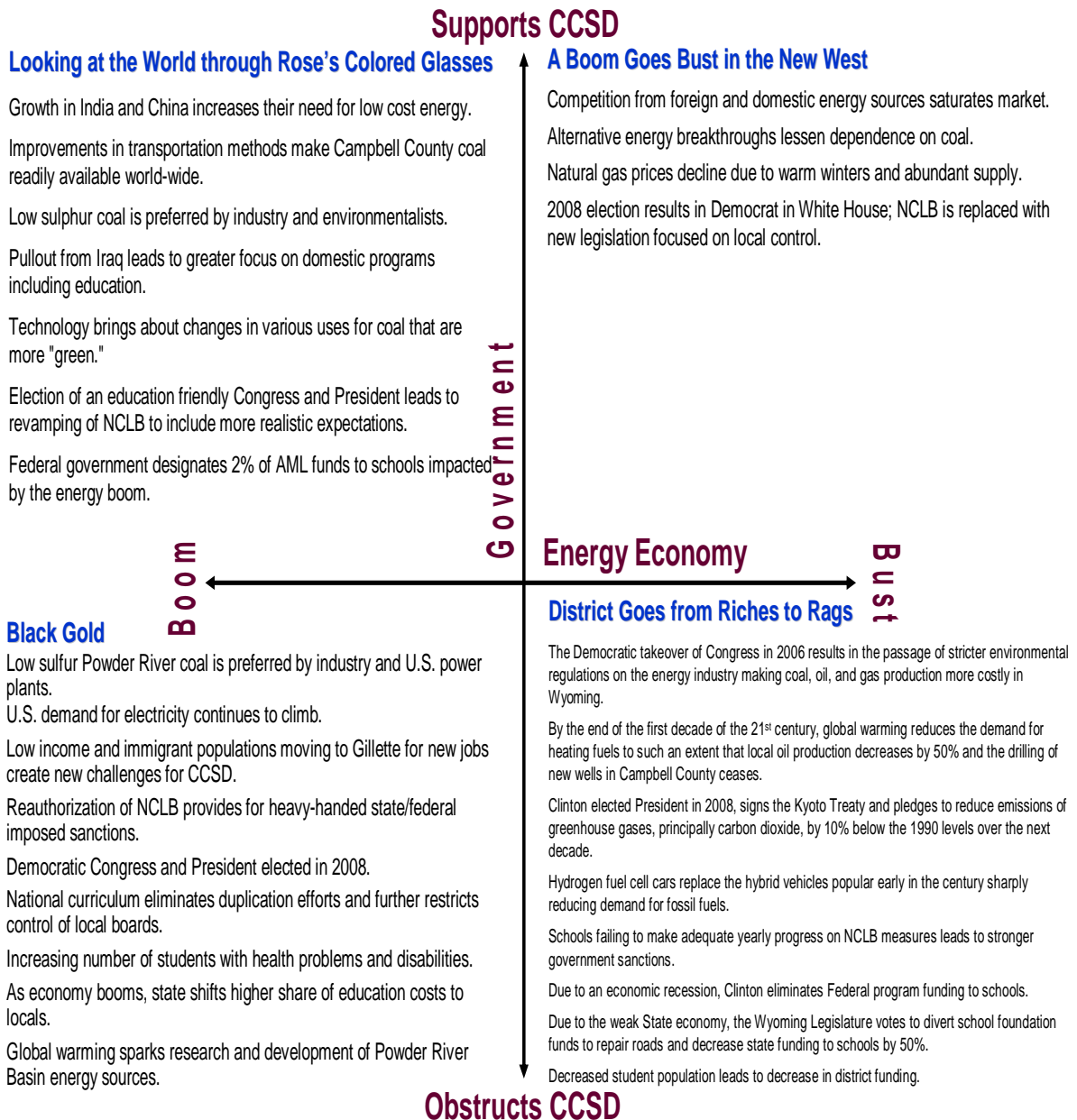
for the stories, or scenarios, that will be written about what’s going on in each of the four worlds. Participants discussed the story within each, completing the statement, “This is a world in which...” Participants further developed deep causes by answering the following questions:

- What does it look like in this world?
- What motivates the people?
- What is the economy like?
- What is technology like?
- Who has power?

Ultimately, the groups identified several deep causes for each quadrant, along with suitable titles. Figure 7, below presents these deep causes.

Figure 7: Deep Causes of the CCSD Scenarios

Work Product #3 – Deep Causes: *What events could lead to this scenario? What would have to happen between now and 2016 for the world described here to be possible?*



Further discussion ensued to ensure that the scenario framework was as rigorous as possible. This entailed consideration of the following questions:

- Is each quadrant different from the others?
- Do they challenge your thinking?
- Are they plausible?
- Are they relevant to the focal issue?
- Do they pass the “Deep Causes” test?

Step 5: Writing the scenarios

A few months after the workshop, volunteer writers from the scenario planning team met via a telephone conference call on March 1, 2007, to discuss their approaches to drafting each of the four scenarios. The group considered the deep causes and timelines involved in the evolution of a “story” for each scenario, following the notion of possible events that could create such a world between today and 2016. They further fleshed out some of the deep causes during the discussion.

“Scenarios are stories. They are works of art, rather than scientific analyses. The reliability of (their content) is less important than the types of conversations and decisions they spark.”

--Arie de Geus, The Living Company

Figure 8: Six Elements of Scenarios

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Plausible—it could happen2. Logical—it makes sense3. Challenging—it challenges our thinking about the future4. Important and Relevant—it motivates action5. Engaging—it sustains the interest of readers6. Great Title—it sums it up |
|--|

Writers were asked to consider each of the deep causes, the key questions raised in the interviews, and the focal issue in developing the scenario drafts. Writers were also given many choices in how to approach the format for each scenario—a story, a newspaper article, a blog, etc. The most critical aspect of scenario writing is to

effectively capture the main ideas, deep causes, and story evolution within each possible world. Writers were further aided by criteria that helped guide their writing and assessment of each other’s work (see Figure 8).

The scenario writing team developed several drafts and revisions with the support of each other and consultants from McREL. McREL provided guidance on the writing process, supported revisions, and made several editorial adjustments to the scenarios. Ultimately, the final scenarios should accurately depict a plausible future, flow logically from one event to the next, engage and challenge readers’ thinking and motivate readers toward action on the district’s focal issue. A brief synopsis of each scenario appears below. The complete scenarios, followed by an analysis of their implications, appear at the end of this document.

Scenario A: A Boom Goes Bust in the New West

In this scenario the economy is experiencing a bust and government is supportive of CCSD. The scenario depicts a story of how the economy goes from “boom” to “bust” prompting a state agency to step in to fund school construction. The story evolves over time and outlines the tough decisions Gov. Allison Riley will have to make in the year 2016 as the state finds itself broke and unable to invest in education.

Scenario B: Looking at the World through Rose’s Colored Glasses

This scenario discusses conditions associated with a continued boom economy and a supportive government. The story describes the experience of Rose Lopez, a new teacher in the Campbell County School District just beginning her first day at work in the year 2016.

Scenario C: Black Gold

This scenario assumes that the boom continues in Campbell County and demand for energy grows. However, with this boom, government restrictions increase within the educational arena. The scenario presents a Q & A with Superintendent Richard Strahorn, who is about to retire in the year 2016. In the interview, Dr. Strahorn reminisces about the past decade and the changes he has experienced in Campbell County.

Scenario D: District Goes from Riches to Rags

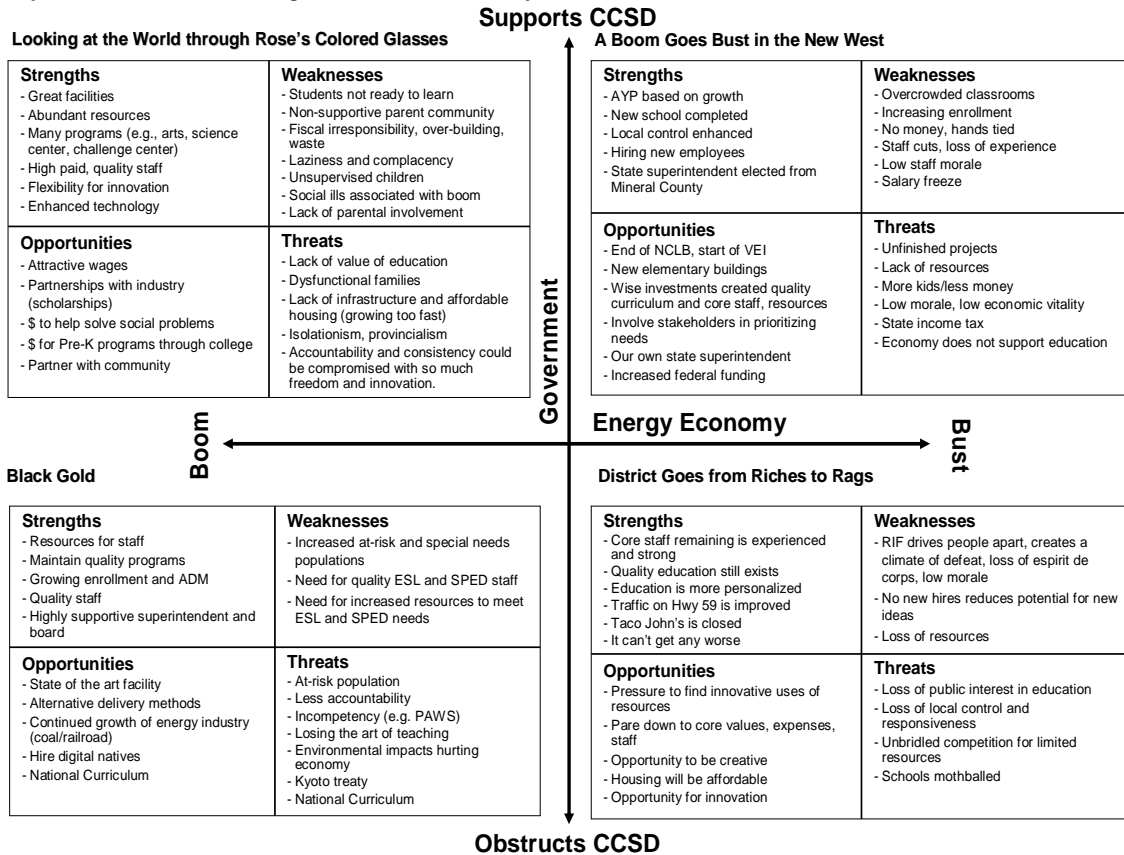
This scenario, written in the form of a newspaper story, reports on conditions associated with a local and state economy that has gone from boom to bust, and a government role in education that is obstructive to the educational needs of the district. The *Wyoming Press* covers the story in April 2016.

Step 6: Identify implications and options

Once the scenarios were written and read by all participants, a final workshop was convened on May 2–3, 2007, to identify the implications of each scenario for CCSD as well as options, or strategic directions the district might take to be successful in any future world. The participants first conducted a SWOT analysis for each scenario, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results of the SWOT analysis for each scenario are presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9: SWOT Analysis for CCSD Scenarios

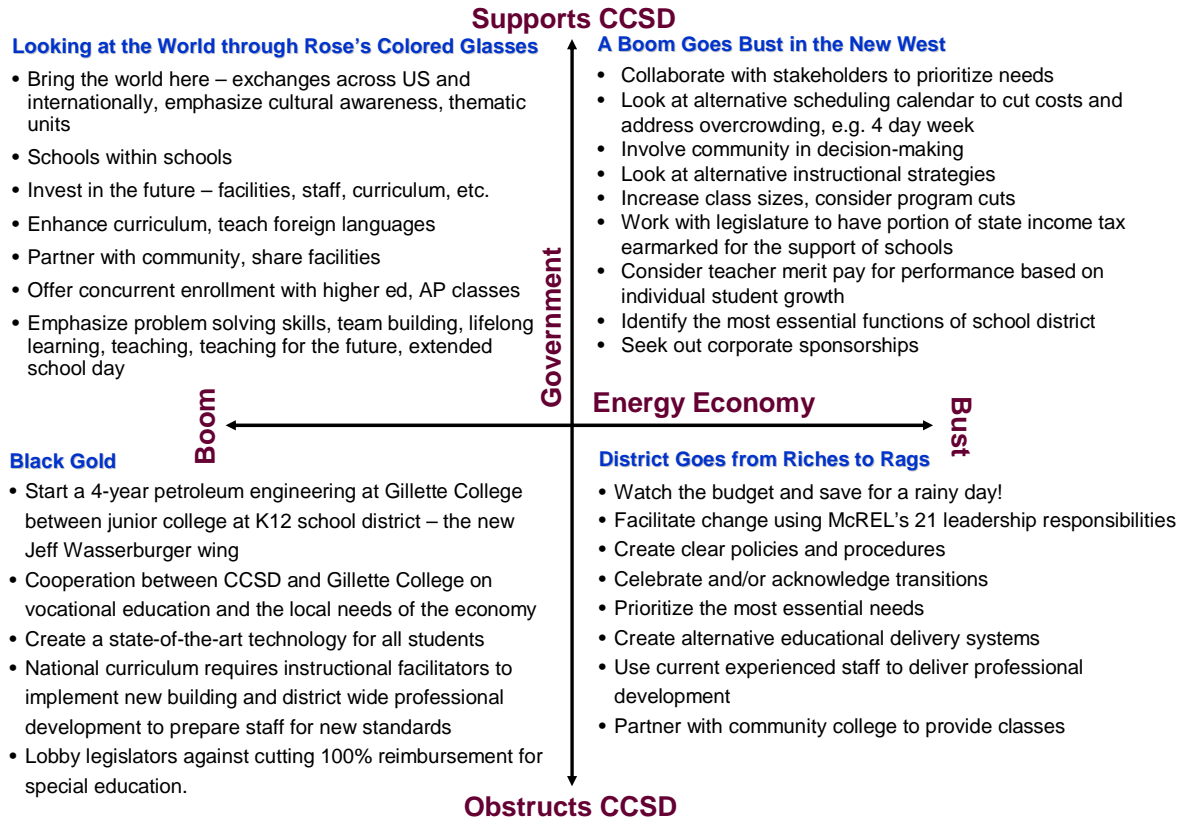
Work Product # 5 - Implications: *Imagine it is 2016 and this is your world. What strengths and weaknesses does this world reveal about CCSD? What threats and opportunities exist in this world as CCSD attempts to ...“maximize its potential and meet evolving student and community needs?”*



Once this was developed for each scenario, the group then discussed the strategic options for each scenario, answering the question: *What strategies could support CCSD's mission in this world?* CCSD's strategic options are depicted in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Strategic Options for CCSD

Work Product #7 – Options: Assume it is 2016 and this is your world. What are some actions CCSD could take to maximize its potential and meet evolving student and community needs in the global society of 2016?

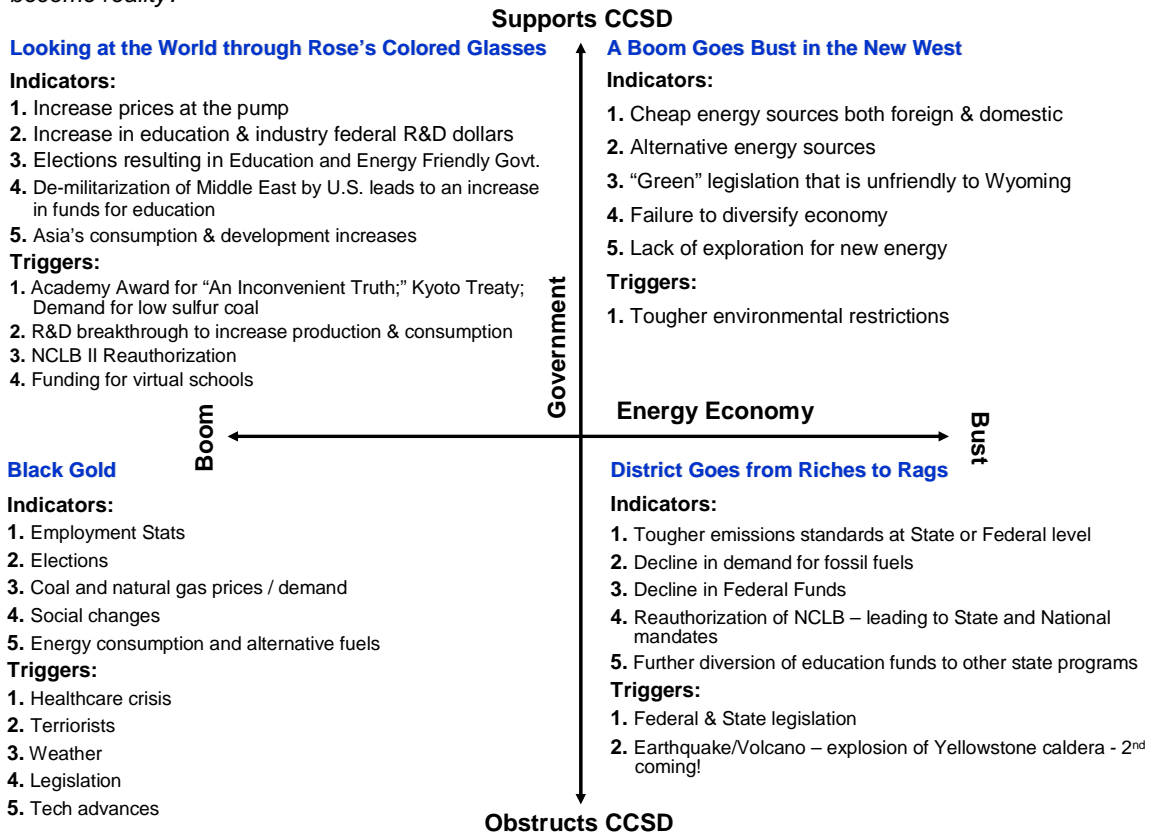


Step 7: Monitoring trends

As time evolves and events unfold, having a clear method to monitor developments toward a particular future is key to inform district leaders when to act, and which strategies to employ. The group spent time discussing this and identified the various trends or other indicators that should be monitored for each scenario. Specifically, they discussed events or indicators that would trigger the implementation of one or more options and possible ways to accomplish the necessary monitoring. Trends for CCSD to monitor appear in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Trends for CCSD to Monitor over Time

Work Product #6 - Indicators: *What trends should we monitor as indicators that the scenario could become reality?*

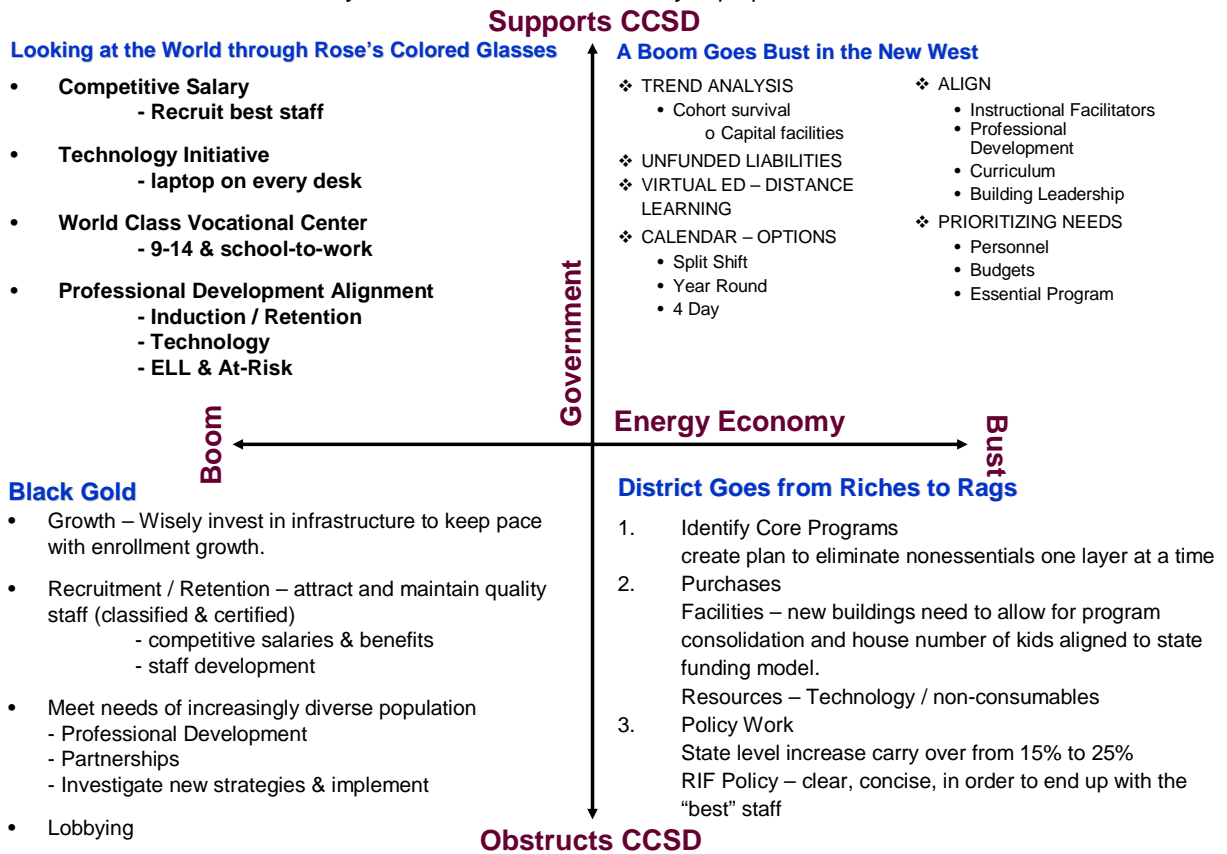


Step 8: Taking action

Once the possibilities of the future are revealed, several action steps to help prepare the district for the future become clear. To help CCSD prepare, participants identified concrete action steps that the district could take today, for each possible world. Participants then considered what steps they might take today, to help CCSD prepare for tomorrow. For each scenario, they identified at least three strategies the district could pursue in the short term to maximize its potential and meet evolving student and community needs in the global society of 2016. Action steps are outlined in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Action Steps for CCSD

Work Product #8 – Taking Action Today: *Imagine that we knew with certainty, that the world described in this scenario will become reality in 2016. What can we do today to prepare?*



Finally, the group acknowledged that some strategies and action steps are useful and make sense within any possible future. These are called “robust options.” Based on this cumulative work, Figure 13 outlines those strategies that would contribute to CCSD’s success in any possible future.

Figure 13: Robust Options for CCSD

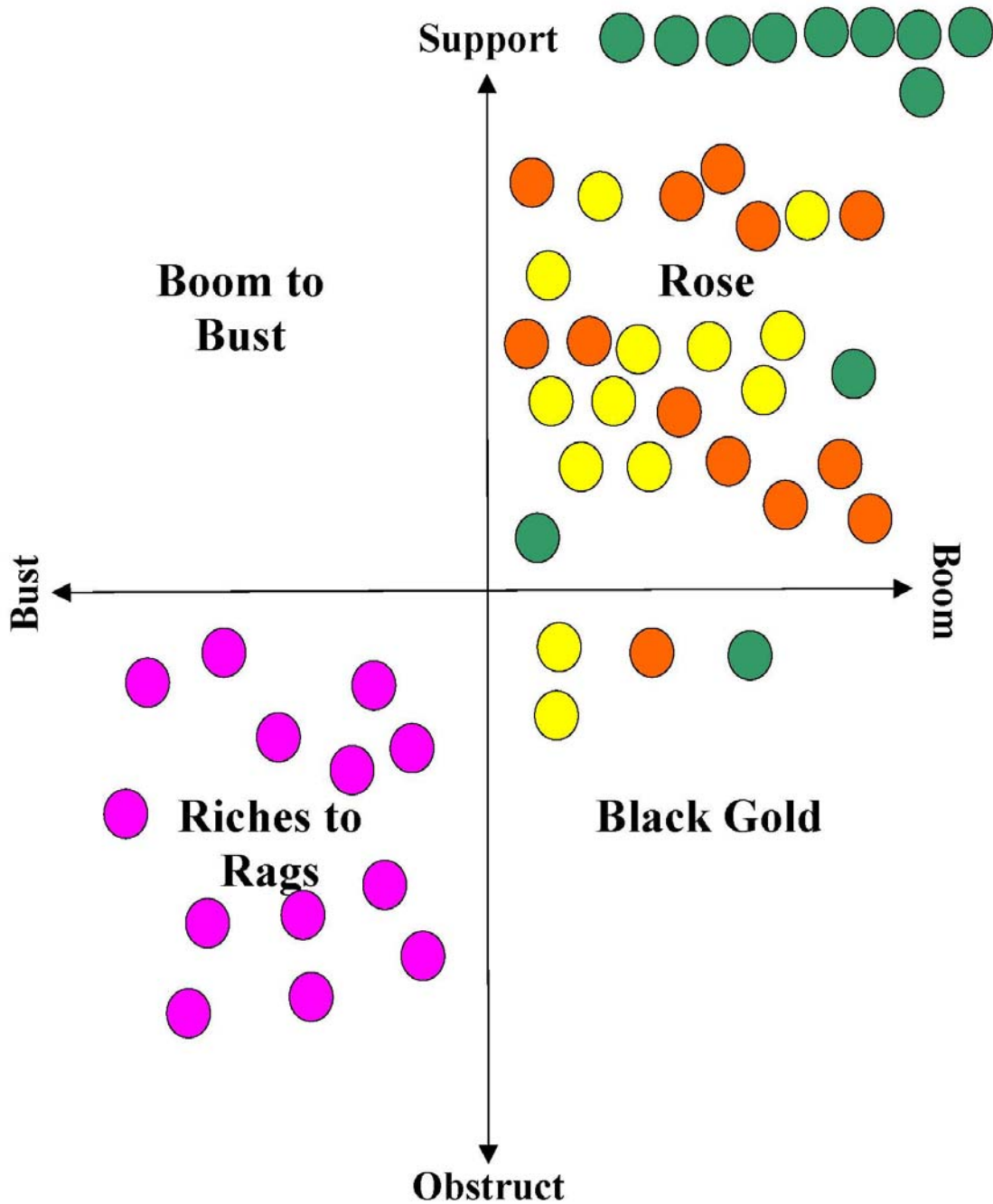
Work Product #9 - Emerging Themes/Robust Options:

Are there some options that make sense in any scenario?

1. Invest in our people
 - a. keep salaries competitive
 - b. provide professional development
 - c. clarify policies (RIF)
 - d. reduce unfunded liabilities
 - e. prioritize needs
2. Prioritize needs across entire district
3. Facilities - plan in progress
4. Meet needs of diverse kids
 - a. poverty
 - b. immigrants (ELL)
 - c. SPED
 - d. health-impaired
5. Focus on dropouts, student engagement
6. Engage in political lobbying

Where are We Now? Where are We Headed?

As the workshop drew to a close, participants were asked to identify the current reality (yellow), where CCSD is heading (orange), the least preferred future (purple), and the most preferred future (green). Results are below.



Recommendations for CCSD

The scenario planning process helped representatives from the Campbell County School District to imagine four possible and plausible futures within which the district might exist and operate. Scenarios describing what life is like in these four worlds were developed to provide a backdrop for future planning. Strategies have been outlined to steer the district toward success in any possible future. These steps are the first in an ongoing process of planning for what lies ahead and staying ahead of the curve. The following recommendations are offered as the district considers its next steps:

- 1. Present results of scenario planning process to and discuss final report with the Campbell County Board of Trustees.** Engaging the full board of trustees in conversations about the future and relevant strategies to survive and thrive in any future is an important next step. The scenarios provide a unique way to convey an image of the future to any audience. Consider scheduling a formal time for the trustees to review the scenarios and their implications and options and to contribute their ideas on potential strategies for success within any scenario. Document the insights of the board members and incorporate their ideas into the district's final strategic plan.
- 2. Consider ways to engage the broader community in conversations about the future of education in Campbell County.** While district leaders bear the bulk of responsibility for the district, the broader community will play an important role in all four scenarios. Scenarios—as stories about the future—offer a unique way to convey an image of the future to any audience. Consider publishing the scenarios in a community newspaper, posting them on a Web site, and other vehicles for disseminating the scenarios to the public at large. Board members and district leaders also might want to present the information to Chamber of Commerce meetings, parent organizations, and other important community organizations. Consider scheduling a series of community conversations across the entire community focused on the scenarios, their implications for the district, and seek out community members' recommended actions for the future. Document the insights of the community and incorporate key ideas into the district's final strategic plan.
- 3. Establish ongoing mechanism to monitor trends, communicate them, and analyze their implications for the district.** Once a sense of the possible futures is articulated through the scenarios, the district will need a way to monitor which direction seems likely. Charge the current scenario building team membership with responsibility for monitoring trends and reporting on them over time. This group would meet regularly (at least twice a year) to discuss the trends related to each scenario (following the indicators outlined in Figure 11) to determine which scenario appears prominent at certain points in time. The Council would also review the recommended strategies, revising as needed, and sharing their recommendations with district leaders. Such a mechanism offers the district a way to remain constantly focused on the evolving future, maintain a proactive stance and strategic edge relative to the emerging future, and anticipate the necessary changes along the way. A Futures Council would also help, over time, to build and strengthen the district's "future-

focused” culture and help ensure that the appropriate capacity exists to manage the future as it unfolds. Council membership may vary over time.

4. Translate robust and strategic options into a concrete action plan that guides program implementation and operations. While the robust and strategic options developed during the scenario planning workshop are a good first step, they do not, by themselves, represent a comprehensive strategic plan. District leaders may want to formulate a more concrete action plan, based on those steps outlined here, incorporating feedback from the board and community, and positioned within the specific scenario and time-bound context identified through trend tracking (e.g., a 1, 3, or 5 year timeframe and plan, as identified by the Futures Council). Taking this step also gives the district the opportunity to revise any strategic steps as needed. This step also provides an opportunity to align the strategies with its short- and long-term investments.

5. As the district begins taking action on its robust or other strategies, consider the following:

a. Engage in a process to prioritize the needs of the district. Prioritizing the district’s needs is an important step that can help the district weather any storm. If the district knows what is most essential, efficiencies and implementation plans become clearer. Doing this also prepares the district for a possible shift in the economy, triggering one of the undesirable scenarios.

b. Use the current time of abundance to invest resources in strategies that will prepare the district for the long haul. Based on the “Where are We Now?” results, there is clear agreement on where the group prefers to be and where it does not want to be. When economic boom times are good and resources abundant, it can be very difficult to imagine the possible bust outlined in other scenarios and plan accordingly. Complacency may set in and stakeholders may become increasingly unprepared for possible changes ahead. It is, however, the district’s responsibility to plan for both boom and bust times. The robust options outlined in Figure 13 provide a good first step.

c. Clarify the district’s goals in state government relations. If the district considers the opportunity to influence state or federal education policy, it should spend time clarifying its goals and strategies in this arena.

d. Examine the current and proposed CCSD policies and practices in light of the scenarios and their implications. As the strategies specific to any future world come to light, CCSD may want to analyze its current policies and practices to determine their relevance for the future. This important process could shed light on outdated approaches that burden the district instead of positioning it for the likely future ahead. Scenario planning, when done well and with diligent follow through can both initiate and sustain transformation within any organization. CCSD has a unique opportunity to re-tool itself for optimal success in the year 2016.

6. **Focus on preparing students to compete and succeed in a global economy.**

a. Considering trends in the external environment, continually monitor and adjust curriculum and instruction to provide needed knowledge and skills appropriate for the 21st century.

b. Coordinate professional development throughout the district in order to improve its effectiveness and ensure its alignment with the district's goals, curriculum, and instruction.

c. Pay attention to the growing diversity of needs in the student population.

Strategies designed to address the growing population of English-language learners, special education students, drop-outs, highly mobile students, as well as the academic, social, physical, emotional, and developmental needs of all students will be necessary in all four scenarios. Investments toward success in this area will likely pay off in any given future.

Conclusion

The scenario planning process that unfolded over the last several months has helped participants anticipate four possible futures, identify relevant strategies to ensure the district's success in any future, and position the district to become prepared for the future. By considering four possible responses to the focal issue— *How will CCSD maximize its potential and meet evolving student and community needs in the global society of 2016?*—the Campbell County School District has successfully begun to take the long view⁴ in its strategic decision making. Careful implementation of robust and strategic options and monitoring of ongoing trends to ensure that options are well-aligned with the future context as it unfolds, will contribute to the district's ongoing success as time marches steadily toward 2016.

⁴ Schwartz, P. (1991). *The art of the long view: Preparing for an uncertain future*. New York, NY: Doubleday, Currency.

**THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN CAMPBELL COUNTY:
FOUR SCENARIOS FOR 2016**

SCENARIO A: A BOOM GOES BUST IN THE NEW WEST

A Boom Goes Bust in the New West

Preface

This scenario describes a supportive government in a bust economy, and how this situation might affect our school district ten years in the future. Here in Campbell County, Wyoming, we are extremely aware of the many ways that the ups and downs of the local economy can affect our lives.

This is a story of a mythical place with real-world problems. The energy economy of this mythical state goes from a boom in 2006 to a bust in 2016. Federal government regulation is supportive of the school system in this scenario. A state agency steps in to fund school construction, and the local district Board and administration are confronted with a difficult dilemma. In addition, a natural resource provides the state government with a sizable excess in funding, and ten years later collapses in value, causing the bust.

As you read, ask yourself these questions: Can a supportive government have a stronger influence on the future of our school district than a bust economy? Could this be our school district in ten years? Is it possible our world might look like this in 2016?

Introduction

The date: January 10, 2016.

The place: State Capitol Building, Emerald City, state of Bonanza, U.S.A.

Allison Riley was the first Mineral County resident ever elected governor of the state of Bonanza. In a few minutes, she would become extremely unpopular in her home county. Her address to the Legislature on the opening day of its session would not be well received. Bonanza was broke, plain and simple. The state had ridden the wave of one commodity to vast wealth, and suddenly the price of this natural resource diminished to a low not seen for a dozen years.

Governor Riley would recommend later this morning to cut or postpone every pending state-funded project for the biennium, including badly needed schools in her home county. In addition to reinstating the tax on groceries, raising the gasoline tax, and increasing vehicle license fees, she would also recommend raising the tax on coal production, of which 90 percent originates in Mineral County. She would recommend increasing the sales tax and instituting a state income tax. She knew the state income tax would be universally unpopular, and many people would have to feel the pain of this bust economy before that measure would be seriously considered. The governor had little choice; there was simply no money. All the forces

that reduced the price of cryogen came together at once: foreign imports, new pipelines, weather; it seemed like a conspiracy to create Bonanza's "big bust."

Looking Back on a Century of Change in Mineral County

Mineral County saw many boom and bust cycles since the railroad came through in the 1890s. First it was cattle and sheep, driven to the rail head at Mineral City. Homesteaders laid claim to the free land on the windblown prairie, but few prospered due to the difficulty in growing crops in the dry soil. Except for the town and a few remote outposts where residents could get their mail and buy basic supplies, the vast expanse of the county was inhabited by scattered cattle and sheep ranches. Not much changed until the 1950s, when oil was discovered and spurred a boom that changed the county from 2,000 residents to 10,000 twenty years later. In the next twenty years, the population doubled to 20,000. By the mid 90s, there were over 30,000 residents in the county.

Mineral County had coal, lots of coal; early residents found it easy to mine near the surface of the ground. Beginning in the early 1970s, several companies constructed coal mines in the county. Along with the coal came electrical power generation and power plants that burned coal as it was dug from the ground. It wasn't long before Mineral County had a new town. Big Copper & Coal Corporation built Windy Ridge to house mine workers, and within several years, the town had schools, churches, and a golf course and became incorporated. Windy Ridge had a population of 2,000 by the late 1990s.

From 1960–2000, Mineral County had several periods of rapid growth, followed by downturns in the economy, usually attributed to depressed prices for oil and coal. During growth periods, like the 1970's schools burst at the seams, and there was frantic building and hiring. As soon as a new school went up, it was completely occupied. Then a bust occurred, and people fled Mineral County leaving houses to be repossessed by mortgage companies. Schools and businesses closed because of the layoffs, and jobs were hard to find. Eventually, conditions improved. Commodity prices slowly increased, abandoned houses were reoccupied, and the economy stabilized once more.

A new face on an old problem

Mineral County was always known as a rowdy place, with its share of outlaws, gunfights, saloon brawls, horse thieves, bootleggers, and clashes between shepherders and cattlemen. Later, when the oilfields drew workers from near and far, Mineral City developed a reputation as a tough, blue-collar town full of hard drinking men and lawless behavior. During the boom of the 1970s, there was rampant drug use, teen pregnancy, widespread abuse of alcohol, and a high rate of suicide. Teachers tried to keep students in school, but too many young people, who just didn't see the need for more education, dropped out to take jobs in the energy industry or wherever they could.

A buzz was in the air as the 21st century dawned on Mineral County in the western state of Bonanza. A new word was on the lips of those in the business of extracting minerals, and the word was “cryagen” [pronounced cry-uh-*gin*]. A plentiful supply of this combustible gas was trapped in pockets beneath the ground in the region. Although it was produced in many areas of the world, the cryagen discovery in Mineral County, and other areas in the state, came at a time when U.S. domestic supply was limited and demand was great.

By this time, the long-time residents of the county were getting older, and the young folks who didn’t want to work in the coal, oil, or cryagen businesses moved away for different opportunities in larger cities. Yes, the technology age arrived, but there were few technology jobs to keep the young people in Mineral County. Any new jobs that were created required college degrees in specialized areas of engineering. Despite the initial buzz, the 21st century recorded a low birth rate and fewer students enrolling in Mineral County schools each year.

2006: A Year Like None Other

Politics in 2006 made this a pivotal year for schools in Bonanza. In 2006, the federal government announced it was spending \$21 billion on NCLB programs in the 2006–2007 school year and that in the five previous years, it had appropriated \$102 billion.⁵ At the state level, there were two influential events. First, was a string of lawsuits filed by groups of school districts resulting in a push from the State Supreme Court to hire consultants to review the existing funding formula. These consultants recommended an increase of funding to schools by about 30 percent. The second issue was about fully equalizing funding. This was addressed through an amendment to the state constitution, which repealed a provision allowing the wealthiest districts to keep a portion of their local revenue once a maximum had been reached.

The Bonanza Legislature approved the new funding formula for schools, and voters in a statewide election approved by a 55–45 percent margin an amendment supporting fully equalized school funding. This was the last of a string of measures going back 25 years which now struck down any option for a district to retain more local tax revenue than the state funding program allowed. After the votes were counted, the state was required to provide equal opportunity to all students, and to build and maintain all schools in the state. From that point on, regardless of local wealth, all students would receive equal access to education. For Mineral County School District #1, additional funds to deal with impact were no longer available. Instead, this meant that Mineral County had to relinquish funding above the maximum and could no longer maintain a reserve to absorb the impact of local growth or declines, caused by the constant boom and bust. The district was now totally dependent on the state legislature for all funding.

In 2006, Mineral County folks were starting to see some changes of their own. Most realized that the coveted wealth once contained within the county borders and derived from coal mining and cryagen, was spreading to other regions of the state, but the local economy was on a roll,

⁵ NCLB’s 5th anniversary spurs debate on reauthorization. (2007, January 17). *Education Week* (26) 19.

for sure. Things were booming; there were more jobs than people, more people than houses, and many were flocking to the area to take the high-paying jobs created by the coal and cryagen industries. New power plants were constructed, and housing developments sprung up. New residents were bringing their families. The mineral extraction industries now used technology to open and close valves on remote cryagen wells using satellite telemetry. There were good paying jobs for the young people of the region, and many were starting families. Petroleum engineers and coal miners, power plant construction workers and railroad engineers were in great demand. Wages started at \$25 per hour in many positions. Babies were being born at a record-setting pace at the Mineral County Hospital.

A dark side of a booming economy also surfaced. There was an alarming increase in methamphetamine use, family violence, and crime in general that overwhelmed the juvenile justice system. Juvenile drug and alcohol problems rapidly increased, and there were limited local treatment options, which greatly concerned law enforcement and juvenile authorities. A prevailing “live for today” mentality and disregard for the value of an education contributed to the problems.

With school enrollments in Mineral County School District #1 increasing, schools were getting crowded. This initially worried school officials, but then something happened to cause them to celebrate. The Bonanza School & Office Building Department finally approved a plan to build new schools. Projections of growth indicated enrollments would continue to increase for many years. Bonanza studied the projections and drew up a plan in which five new schools would be built over the next twelve years. Not only did this relieve the worries surrounding the equalization of school funding, some saw it as a blessing, speculating that Bonanza could now build new schools more quickly than Mineral County voters might if they had to pass bond issues in order to fund building projects.

In 2006, there was no doubt in the minds of the people in Mineral County and the state of Bonanza that the “boom” was back. Tax revenues from oil, coal, and cryagen filled the state treasury once again. In Mineral County, the coal and cryagen extraction and the service industries associated with mining created new jobs, swelled the population, and filled the schools. The state government responded with increased funding and an aggressive building plan. Things couldn’t be better in Mineral County School District #1.

It Takes a Global Village to Lower Emissions and Educate a Child

On the national scene, Democrats ruled, following the 2006 and 2008 elections. Many new initiatives got underway and would reach all the way to Mineral County, affecting its citizens and schools in ways that few had predicted.

Greenhouse gases and emissions were a prime target of the new administration. However, the coal mined in Mineral County remained a commodity that would not be phased out or reduced until demand for electricity diminished. In the short term, the need for low-cost power was balanced against the need to reduce emissions, and coal continued to be the source for much of

the nation's power. Trains continued to leave Bonanza mines in large numbers, delivering coal to power generation plants throughout this country and Mexico. Cryagen was a very clean burning fuel and wasn't targeted as a significant source of pollution. The government and industry in the state felt extremely fortunate. The primary sources of taxable wealth were not under attack as many had feared would happen.

Another new and refreshing change was enacted into law in 2010. The Village Education Initiative (VEI) was a highly anticipated piece of legislation which replaced NCLB. Democratic candidate and now president Esther Rodman appointed Henry Nagahama as Secretary of Education to replace Margaret Spellings in 2008. Nagahama immediately began work on replacement legislation which emphasized state and local control. Secretary Nagahama realized that funding education on a national level would be the only method of providing the "big stick" necessary to enforce the standards. A realist, he recognized the country was still mired in a Mideast occupation between warring tribal factions which drained the federal economy. Also, new and costly legislation to fund development of environmentally friendly fuels had taken center stage in the new administration's priorities.

Secretary Nagahama was a former school trustee from Los Angeles who had a core belief that schools with strong parent and community involvement were effective schools. He and the Rodman administration came out strongly against federal control of failing schools and emphasized parental involvement and local decision making. And so, VEI was born.

VEI placed the burden of providing a quality and comprehensive education squarely on the shoulders of each state. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was now based on a growth model called Growth & Achievement Measurement (GAM). One refreshing change from NCLB was implemented immediately. Special education students and students with limited knowledge of English were no longer expected to achieve unrealistic outcomes. Standards were revised to the delight of NCLB critics. "Our state and local standards are no longer a mile wide and an inch deep," proclaimed Secretary Nagahama. Restrictions on state and regional development and implementation of tests and measurements were lifted. Local educators were given a strong voice in how this initiative was to be put in place in the state. The full implementation of VEI in 2012 ended the era of NCLB, and educators were thrilled with the outcome of the legislation; parental and community involvement and local control were very popular concepts.

The Bonanza Department of Education also went through a transformation. New leadership in 2010 was well received when Jett Wagenbugler, another Mineral County resident, was elected state superintendent. A refreshing new collaborative effort to implement VEI left the school personnel feeling very good about having a role in the direction of education in the state. The trustees and administrators in Mineral County felt extremely positive about the change from NCLB to VEI.

President Rodman was easily re-elected in 2012. Federal funding of innovative education programs was quadrupled in another change spearheaded by Education Secretary Nagahama in

2014. The new administration and its policies continued to be extremely popular in the education community.

Economic Storm Clouds Gather Once Again

Rapid increases in state tax revenues were followed quickly by increases in state spending. Universities and colleges received generous increases. The wages of state employees were raised to keep pace with a rapidly increasing cost of living. Bonanza's aging citizens became a formidable political force, and fought for and won generous property tax exemptions and health insurance subsidies. Other popular tax cuts were passed by the Legislature and approved by the governor. By 2009, cryogen accounted for two thirds of the state tax revenues. Legislators were besieged with requests to fund all manner of projects, and they delivered. A significant amount of money was dedicated to drug intervention and treatment facilities. The state was awash with tax dollars and the dollars were spent at a record pace. After all, it was a great time to be in Bonanza, and why shouldn't every citizen benefit?

One change was slightly troubling, however. In Mineral County, the cryogen fields were quickly depleted, Wells drilled only ten years ago stopped producing and were abandoned. Mineral County cryogen production dropped. For the state government, this was a barely noticeable blip on the radar because cryogen was gold. It was being discovered and developed throughout the state, and it remained a highly valued commodity. Over in neighboring Mountain County and Creek County, rich new cryogen fields were being developed almost overnight. In other parts of the state, cryogen also was king, and the boom was spreading from traditional mineral rich areas to nearly every corner of the state.

Yet, an ominous cloud began to form over the state's economy. Warmer than usual winters were becoming common, and this affected the demand for cryogen. Anticipated demand was often over stated, and actual cryogen usage fell short of projections. The prices were still too high for cryogen to be used for electrical generation. New power plants using cryogen were no longer planned; nuclear plants were now being constructed. In addition, wind farms and solar power began to represent a much larger share of the electricity generated in the United States.

The prices for the commodity and the forecast for increased need were still strong enough to attract capital to bring the cryogen to markets in the United States from distant sources. Liquid cryogen (LC) ports were built in the Gulf Coast and East Coast of the United States to allow delivery of foreign cryogen in liquid form by tanker. In 2011, the long awaited WesCan cryogen pipeline from Alberta, Canada, was completed, giving U.S. markets increased access to Canadian cryogen.

The hurricane seasons over the ten-year period proved to be more benign than the forecasts predicted, with only lower level storms reaching the shores of the United States. These storms were much less severe and less costly than the hurricanes of 2005, causing only limited and temporary disruptions in offshore and coastal cryogen production and delivery systems.

In 2015, another major event which affected the U.S. cryogen market put the last proverbial nail in the coffin for the economy of Bonanza in 2016 and beyond. The huge AlaskCry cryogen pipeline now carried the vast supply of Alaskan cryogen to the lower forty-eight states.

Busted and Broke

There were suddenly many new and abundant cryogen sources fighting for a share of the U.S. market. By the time 2016 dawned, cryogen was no longer a scarce or costly commodity. The combination of favorable weather and new foreign and domestic sources of cryogen led to an abundant supply and increased storage capacity in the United States, causing the price to be slashed to one third of the 2006 level. Supply simply exceeded demand, the market was saturated, and forecasted demand never materialized. Consequently, cryogen production in Bonanza suddenly reduced to one half of 2012 production. The distance to markets and low wellhead price forced many producers in Bonanza to shut in wells and stop investing in new exploration. Oil and cryogen companies eliminated jobs, workers left the state, and property values plummeted. The economy of the state was hurting, and its coffers were depleted. The state went from a \$2 billion fund excess in 2012 to a \$1 billion deficit in 2016. The dependence on a single commodity disrupted the economy and devastated state and local government agency budgets. Not one, but all of these factors combined led to the greatest bust yet in the state of Bonanza.

Mineral County School District #1, Year 2016

What about those Mineral County schools? Today, in the year 2016, Mineral County is more diversified than other areas of the state, with coal mining and power generation as the base industries. Fortunately, the county didn't have the serious decline of the economy that other areas had. In fact, the relatively robust economy attracted workers from other, now depressed regions of the state.

The large segment of the Mineral County population that was made up of baby boomers ten years ago are now mostly retired. This created numerous job opportunities, many of those in Mineral County School District #1. Other industries, including mining, power generation, railroads, and health care are also doing a great deal of hiring to replace the many retirees. As retirees flee Mineral County for states with warmer climates and favorable tax structures, real estate values are plummeting, further reducing the taxable wealth. The newly attracted workers cannot afford the large, high-end homes many of the retirees are selling, and those sellers are losing hundreds of thousands in equity on each home.

In a desperate cost cutting measure, the Bonanza legislature in 2015 passed a measure reducing school funding by 10 percent per year for each of the next two years. In the Mineral County schools, the funding cuts combined with a growing enrollment caused the Trustees to make some agonizing decisions. Programs were eliminated, a reduction in force slashed 100 staff positions, and all salaries for the 2015–2016 school year were frozen. This has had a very

demoralizing effect on the employees of the district, first faced with a tidal wave of students enrolling and severe overcrowding, and now critical financial problems.

The 12-year trend of increasing enrollment is now creating a strain on the resources of the local district. Enrollments which swelled elementary ranks are now overwhelming junior high and high schools as well. Mineral County school enrollments have grown by 2,500 students in the past ten years. The Bonanza School & Office Building Department, under new leadership, was able to build a substantial number of schools over the past ten years. Creative measures are becoming necessary to find classroom space to house the students and staff. Three of the five planned new schools are completed, and the fourth is under way. The three replacement elementary schools do not solve the problem at the elementary level. These schools replace older elementary buildings which are no longer suitable. Classes in elementary schools, which once averaged 20 students per classroom are now at 29. Additional elementary schools are badly needed. A large wave of students, now entering junior high and high school is the next concern. These schools are also becoming severely crowded. Something has to be done, and soon.

New schools are still needed, but the state government, with the responsibility to provide the buildings is now unresponsive. Bonanza is broke, and the state has been using rainy day funds to keep operating. There are cutbacks in state funding, state agencies have a hiring freeze, and budgets are slashed to the bone. The local Mineral County people worry the future needs of their students will not be met. The Legislature no longer has the resources to meet the needs of the students and continue to build new facilities. Equalization in funding leaves the Mineral County taxpayers and officials handcuffed and frustrated, with all local tax revenue being used to fund education for the entire state. The lack of resources to meet the needs of the district's students in 2016 may be the biggest crisis of the century for Mineral County School District #1. The state Legislature is unwilling to make the needs of the Mineral County schools a budget priority. The funding for Prairie Wind Junior High, for which construction had just begun, has been suddenly withdrawn from the School & Office Building Department's budget. The building contractor is fuming and the school district is facing a severe crowding problem. Another low blow was delivered when Red Butte High School, the next school in line to be built, was postponed indefinitely. Supportive legislation has been trumped by the sudden demise of the economy. Equalization of funding has taken all excess local resources from the district. The state is no longer able to fulfill its financial obligation to school funding.

Looking Ahead

It is the year 2016 in Mineral County School District #1, and it appears the district has a very difficult situation to handle with no help from outside sources. How will Mineral County schools deal with 2,500 additional students when the buildings are already filled to capacity?

On television, the local channels interrupt regular broadcasts to run a "Breaking News" story from the capitol. All cameras are on Governor Riley as she steps to the podium and begins speaking with a calm but assertive tone in her voice that she had practiced all week. The

governor lays out a strategy for balancing the budget of the state of Bonanza. The members of the Legislature sit almost spellbound as she unveils her plan. Many of the legislators respond with enthusiastic applause when she proposes an increase in the tax on coal. As Governor Riley moves on to explain the devastating cuts that must be made to balance the budget, the grim faces of the legislators look as if they are set in stone. When the governor recommends instituting a state income tax, there is such an audible gasp that the Speaker of the House rises to pound his gavel and call for order.

In the Mineral County School Administration Building, several members of the administration and board of trustees have gathered to hear the governor speak. The recommendation to place a moratorium on all school construction and eliminate the \$175 million line item to fund the desperately needed schools for Mineral County are met with disbelief by some and resignation by others. Some feel personally betrayed, while others are simply overwhelmed by the crisis now facing their school district.

Analysis of “A Boom Goes Bust in the New West” 2006–2016

Implications:

In this scenario, the state of Wyoming experiences a bust when demand for its natural resources plummets. When competition from foreign and domestic energy sources increases, combined with alternative energy breakthroughs, lessening the dependence on coal, and warmer winters reducing the need for coal, the statewide boom quickly grinds to a halt, leaving Campbell County—with its more diversified economy—as one of the few economically prosperous areas of the state.

As such, people flock to the county in search of jobs, bringing their children into our schools and putting increased pressure on other Campbell County social services. While the county is able to accommodate this influx for a while, soon classrooms and school buildings are bursting at the seams and with the loss of local resources to the state equalization measure, the county has fewer dollars per student with which to provide a quality education. Further, the capacity of the district to utilize local reserves to adjust to the boom and bust economy has been diminished.

A once booming state economy and commitment to funding education also fades. By 2015, the state legislature finds itself in a bind and is forced to cut education funds by 10 percent per year. In Campbell County, these cuts place further strain on the district’s ability to handle its growth, not to mention the rash of social issues plaguing its new citizens (drug use, housing matters, health care, and such). The prospect of building new schools to accommodate the new students also wanes as the state—which had assumed responsibility for this in 2006—is focused on other priorities and is unresponsive to local needs in this area. Clearly, Campbell County is on its own.

Thankfully, federal education policy has evolved to better support local control and flexibility. This helps to ease the pressure on schools to demonstrate the same results for all children, and other unrealistic outcomes built into the goals of No Child Left Behind although schools must now demonstrate growth in learning for each student. The Village Education Initiative emphasized parent involvement and local decision making allowing educational leaders in Wyoming, and in Campbell County to determine the best approach.

Indicators:

Trends or events that could signal the development of this scenario include the following:

1. The emergence of cheaper energy sources from both foreign and domestic sources, thereby increasing supply of natural resources in the marketplace and reducing the demand for Wyoming natural resources.

2. The development and use of alternative sources of energy causing a similar reduction in the demand for Wyoming natural resources.
3. Increasingly “green” focused policies at the federal level that develop and/or create more demand for alternative energy sources and promote conservation efforts. Similarly, tougher environmental restrictions on cars and other users of fossil fuels will threaten the Wyoming economy. These kinds of policies are likely, over time, to cause a reduction in the high demand for Wyoming natural resources.
4. The failure of the state to diversify its economy beyond a reliance on natural resources as the sole driver of economic prosperity in the state.
5. Over-reliance on existing sources of natural resources in Wyoming (as opposed to expanding exploration for new sources within the state) will also cause a smaller supply from Wyoming to be available.
6. Maintenance of economic prosperity, flourishing job market, and other resources in Campbell County relative to other parts of the state.
7. A Democrat is elected to the White House in 2008 appointing a secretary of education who is responsive to local education needs
8. Congress repeals No Child Left Behind and replaces it with new federal legislation that supports local control.

Options:

To meet the key challenges of this scenario, Campbell County must assume a long-term outlook on planning and anticipate this challenging future. While the district may remain resource-rich for the foreseeable future, especially relative to other Wyoming communities, smart planning now, in anticipation of increased enrollment with limited ability to add classroom space and invest new dollars to educate each child, would be a wise course to take.

The district should begin now to collaborate with stakeholders to prioritize district needs for the long term and identify the most essential functions of the school district. Thinking ahead to determine ways to conserve resources in anticipation of stretched resources in the future would be a wise course. Some possible steps might be these:

- Consider an alternative scheduling calendar such as a four day week, that would cut cost and allow some savings to occur (while also addressing the overcrowding issue, as it comes up).
- Seek out corporate sponsorships.

- Work with the legislature to have a portion of state revenue earmarked for the support of schools.
- Consider increasing class size and cutting other programs.
- Look at alternative instructional strategies that might be more effective with larger, more diverse population, or those that might be less expensive to implement.
- Consider teacher merit pay for performance based on individual student growth.

Involving the community in decision making at the local level will be essential to ensuring that the county finds success in this new world.

SCENARIO B: LOOKING AT THE WORLD THROUGH ROSE'S COLORED GLASSES

This scenario discusses conditions associated with a continued boom economy and a supportive government.

Looking at the World through Rose's Colored Glasses

Rose Lopez slipped on the purple sunglasses with gold frames she bought for her first work day in Gillette. This was the day she had been waiting for as long as she could remember. For years, Rose had wanted to work in Campbell County School District (CCSD), and her dream was finally a reality. Everyone in Wyoming said Campbell County was the best place to teach, just as everyone said Gillette was *the* place to live in Wyoming. This has been especially true since 2004, when the production of coal bed methane meant even more money, not to mention increased population, for both Campbell County and the state. The school district completed three new elementary schools beginning in 2007 and had seven more that were finished or on the drawing board since then. In Rose's mind, more money flowing into the state and county meant more shopping malls and restaurants, new homes and parks, high-tech schools, and the promise of a job for anyone willing to work. What could be wrong with that?

But everyone else thought the current energy boom would go bust, as it did in the mid 1980s when the price of oil suddenly dropped. While the rest of Wyoming hoped the bust of the '80s would be the end of Campbell County's dominance in terms of the coal and oil industries, most people thought that they could ride out another downturn, and if it actually did occur, end up stronger than ever. And they were right.

In 2006, the CCSD Board of Trustees voted to raise their first-year teacher salary to \$40,000, thanks to the Wyoming legislature giving well over \$2 billion to education at all levels throughout the state. Rose couldn't be more excited about her future prospects, and she wasn't the only one. Money from energy industries continued to pour into the district from 2006 until 2016, making Campbell County an ideal place to teach and to raise a family.

Changes in Federal Priorities Pack Local Wallop

Beginning in 2006, when the Democrats took control of both the U.S. House and Senate, the focus began gradually to shift away from the war and more toward domestic matters, including education. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the reauthorized act, NCLB II, continued to dominate any and all discussions about education. While the full reauthorization of NCLB didn't happen until after the presidential election in 2008, the education-friendly 110th Congress did provide more education money to all states, starting in 2007. With the money, however, came tightened reins and higher scrutiny of test scores; without the focus on a foreign war, attention turned to preparing to live and work in a global society, and that had repercussions for education.

For schools and teachers, it meant a new emphasis on improving student scores on the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) assessment, which replaced the various state tests, in an effort to provide continuity in assessment and reporting. National standards were not a new concept as many European countries had embraced them for years. In 2010, the United States instituted its own national standards. These standards were designed to provide a consistent, rigorous curriculum for all students regardless of where they received their education. Educators from around the nation served on committees to help develop a curriculum that was student-centered rather than teacher-driven. The upshot was a set of standards that were deep and rich rather than being a long and unfocused list of things for teachers to teach.

In addition to national standards, there was another significant change in education. A growth model for demonstrating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was the direct result of lobbying efforts by various teachers' unions and districts. Members of these groups championed the idea that the original NCLB goal of attaining 100 percent proficiency among all students was an improbability. Of course, Rose knew about NCLB II; it was a focus in her last district, as it was in all districts across the country.

Rose's last school hadn't made AYP for the last four years, and staff changes were imminent. She also knew that the school administration had moved budget money to a fund devoted solely to helping subgroups that didn't make AYP. In part, this was a good thing, thought Rose. She wasn't sure how she felt about all the requirements and public reports in this new age of accountability, but she was glad that the government wasn't letting kids slip through the cracks, especially ones who were struggling. The trouble was that it was difficult to provide even the basic items for all students when everyone had to cut their budgets to make certain the district had enough in their NCLB fund. It wasn't that Rose didn't feel supported, it was more that she wanted to work in a district where money wouldn't always be redirected elsewhere, and one of the strongest recruiting points about CCSD was the amount of AML money (whatever that was) the district received. More access to the money had to be something good, she thought.

Green Solutions “Needed” Not “Wanted”

It turns out that AML stands for Abandoned Mine Lands. And yes, states with abandoned mine lands, like Wyoming, got two percent of the funds designated for the state added to the state education budget. Half of the funds were allocated for an environmental curriculum developed by the Department of Energy. This was one way for the government to respond to demands from the more vocal and highly visible environmental groups, such as former Vice President Al Gore's Climate Project. His effort to spread his environmental “gospel” began in earnest in 2006 when the first group of 50 volunteers attended an initial training in Nashville, Tennessee, Gore's

hometown.⁶ At a minimum, the Department of Energy wanted to encourage student awareness of the need to be more environmentally conscious as well as encourage creativity in finding new sources or ways to improve the use of energy.

Sure enough, following an education-friendly Congress came a “greener” Congress in 2012. Its concern was the environment on a world level, and members of Congress were determined to not only help preserve resources, but to help make the world’s population better stewards of those resources, if possible. By 2012, the United States was seeing new opportunities to impact the world’s environment because of the growth occurring in India and China. Both countries were now at the same place the United States had been throughout the late ‘60s and early ‘70s in terms of pollution and environmental impact. China, concerned about its image as host of the 2008 Olympics, had made a laudable effort to address its pollution problems, but it had been too little too late. Furthermore, neither China nor India could continue to deny its need for low-cost energy and turned to other countries, particularly the United States, to provide them with cleaner sources of energy.

All of this helped to feed the energy boom in Campbell County that started back in 2004 and lasted until now, 2016. The “Green Machine,” a group of congressmen and congresswomen who were particularly concerned with environmental issues and who also happened to represent energy producing states, helped pass legislation that resulted in making low-sulphur coal desirable. Yes, low sulphur coal produces lower sulphur dioxide (SO₂) emissions and is better for the environment, but thanks to this legislation, the Pollution Production Penalty Tax also is much lower on Wyoming’s Powder River Basin coal than that found in other states.

In addition, over the last few years, new technologies have been developed to make coal easier to transport and new processes were discovered to make liquid coal and coal gas, which is easily transported to India and China via energy planes and the just completed Rozet-Anchorage-Bering Strait pipeline. Because of the government involvement in this project, 50 percent of the profit from these endeavors goes right back into research to find more green uses for coal.

A Double-Edged Sword of Prosperity in Campbell County

Rose pulled into the parking lot of South Campus where the new teacher breakfast was held. She took out her new PDA—an Apple Core, the latest in a series of PDAs designed by Apple specifically for education. All staff members were getting an Apple Core but as a new teacher she got hers early. If nothing else, Campbell County was on the forefront of technology. They had COWS (Computers on Wheels—a cart of 30 laptops in every classroom), a Smartboard, classroom library of trade books on e-paper, and things Rose hadn’t been able to see. Rose was

⁶ “Al Gore training volunteers to spread global warming message.” 21 September 2006. *International Herald Tribune*. <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/mdgs/mdg-stories/mdg-7-environmental-sustainability/doc/al-gore-training-volunteers.html>

thrilled to use cutting edge technology with her students in her Engineering Technology classes in the Career Academy school within a school. On *her* Apple Core was the agenda for her first day of orientation, all the documents for the meetings over the next five days, her class lists, and more information she wasn't sure she knew how to access. She glanced at the day's agenda and saw there was a 2-hour afternoon session on the basics of poverty in schools. What was that about? Campbell County schools had a huge budget, 10,000 students, and one of the highest standards of living in the state! Why was poverty even a concern?

Even though Gillette had flourished over the past twelve years, the reality is that along with prosperity came problems. With so much disposable income, Campbell County experienced a surge in drug use. It's fair to say that legal (alcohol) and illegal (primarily methamphetamine) drugs were and are rampant in the city. As you might expect, this has had an immediate and dramatic effect on family life. In the worst cases, children are abused or neglected. Even when alcohol and drugs aren't a problem, it is tempting for some parents to spend more time in bars and less time with their spouses and children simply due to the lack of opportunities for other types of entertainment. With the rapid boom, new construction has barely kept up with demand; as soon as recreational facilities are completed—gyms, swimming pools, game rooms, and the like—they already are inadequate to meet the community needs. Although various counties and towns had tried to provide non-alcoholic clubs for young adults, the Wyoming stereotype of the “hard-working, hard-drinking, hard-living” citizen continues to support drinking establishments.

Our kids are a real concern. Students as young as nine and ten are left at home to care for their brothers and sisters while a single parent or both parents are working long hours or seeking relief from stressful work schedules by “partying.” Although the mining industry has made many changes in how minerals are mined and has adopted procedures that are more acceptable to environmental groups, there has been little change in workers' hours. Shift work is still alive and well, resulting in husbands and wives who have very little contact with each other while working opposing shifts or who leave children to care for themselves.

Of course, more drug use and alcohol abuse usually means increased crime. The blotter in *The News Record* gives a run down of what some students face every day— domestic violence, assault, theft. Now, schools throughout the state spend more time taking care of the basic needs of many of their students because parents are either working to make the almighty dollar or are out spending it. Campbell County addressed these problems with joint efforts on city, school, and county levels with education and support for teachers, students, and parents. The addition of the Resident Rehabilitation Center at Campbell County Memorial Hospital provided treatment in the community without separating families allowing treatment of unique issues among all family members affected by abuse of all kinds. Additional counselors in each school made counseling more readily available to students and parents alike. Extensive professional development trained all staff in recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse and developed the coordinated joint referral process which proven to be successful in providing necessary services.

More money also means opportunity and Campbell County took advantage of that. Career academies were introduced and thrived at Campbell County High School, giving students an alternative option to learn about interesting careers and even provided a chance to work in those jobs before they moved onto post secondary education. The Montessori School, Wyoming Virtual Academy and John Paul II Catholic school opened in 2007 offering a broad spectrum of educational diversity. The AVA Art Center not only offered art education but began plans in 2010 to build an art museum on the site of the former Twin Spruce Junior High, which was moved to its new location on Garner Lake Road and named Foreman Junior High. Connected to the school is the Northeast Wyoming Challenger Center, a nationally recognized science and aeronautics center drawing thousands of visitors a year from across the country and abroad.

A Higher Cost of Living

When Rose went to the Super Target the night before, she overheard two women talking about the “Mexicans” who were overtaking Gillette. Even though Rose’s maiden name was Neighbors her married name was Lopez, and these comments cut a little deep. With the boom and influx of workers to Campbell County, the Hispanic population and other minority groups has increased. Having been a very “white” community prior to the boom, this influx of other cultures required schools to provide more individualized instruction for students who are English-language learners (ELL) and to provide teachers with more training in cultural diversity. Rose again reminded herself to learn more about the AYP requirements for ELL students. She knew that these kids were all over the map as far as learning to speak English and understanding content that is English-based, and she was grateful that the changes to NCLB would give every child an equal shot at school success.

Poverty? Drug use? Maybe that explained the group of students Rose saw at the Skate Park at Complex last night. Rose and her husband drove around the city to see what Gillette had to offer and were impressed with the many parks and green spaces. The skate park was new, but Nate, Rose’s husband, noticed most of the kids didn’t have skateboards. What they did have looked like brown paper sacks with bottles inside. Surely this wasn’t part of the old stereotype of “winos” drinking cheap alcohol out of paper bags? Rose wasn’t sure what she had gotten herself into. Perhaps this wasn’t indicative of the entire community. Certainly the state and district had money to spend. But there were also problems that no one had mentioned. She wondered if the growth would taper off and the problems would work themselves out, given enough time. After all, it was great to live somewhere where there wasn’t unemployment and where policies were in place to support teachers and to pay them well. It also would be good for her students to learn about and appreciate different cultures, she told herself. While Campbell County had lost some of its allure for Rose when she realized the price a community pays for prosperity, she also saw how well Campbell County residents pulled together to deal with these critical issues. Rose could see clearly now through her colored lenses as she went forth into her first day of work.

Analysis of “Rose’s Colored Glasses” 2006-2016

Implications:

In this scenario, Campbell County enjoys a sustained trend of economic health and prosperity. Demand for the county’s natural resources remains high and continues to grow with each passing year. Jobs are abundant and people—of all shapes, sizes, colors, and income levels—flock to the popular community for both work and the quality of life available to them. An atmosphere of relative abundance permeates both private and public institutions.

Policymakers looking to make wise investments with the state’s new wealth increase funding for education. As a result, Campbell County is able to expand its instructional options to include specialized programs, innovative teaching, and technology-based applications. The district is also able to attract and retain high quality teachers by raising the starting salary for teachers and other incentives.

Federal education policy also takes a turn for the better, channeling more federal resources for education in exchange for better results, measured in terms of growth, on the national assessment, based on the new national standards. While some may view the presence of national standards as not supportive of local control, educators, mindful of the 21st century skills needed for all U.S. students welcome the consistency in expectations, measures, and focus on results. Educators are also thankful that many were involved in the development of the new standards resulting in a high quality set.

Life is pretty good for most residents of Campbell County and this success is reflected in the schools. Few worries confront the county, but it is not entirely worry-free. Indeed, leaders must remember that with excess in resources, comes excess in living—and sometimes that excess leads to destructive and wasteful behaviors.

In addition, the population boom that comes with the boom economy draws people looking for jobs of all types, including the lower paying ones. Like never before, the county is now dealing with the need to import workers to take the lower paying jobs that more affluent residents do not want. More often than not, this means a rise in the county’s immigrant and Spanish speaking population, bringing new challenges for affordable housing, teaching English as a second language, and other societal issues. The question on leaders’ minds in 2016 will be focused on the county’s ability to handle these new challenges.

Indicators:

Trends or events that could signal the development of this scenario include:

1. A continuing increase in the price of fuel at the gas pumps, enabling Wyoming energy companies to reap more and more profits each year.
2. Concerted investments on the part of the federal government, and also energy industries for research and development in various natural energy sources. This investment could help Wyoming to explore and diversify its supply of natural energy resources (and become less reliant on a single source). The investment could also help Wyoming produce more environmentally friendly sources of coal and other existing natural resources, as the demand for these rises in the coming years.
3. Increased consumption of natural resources across the globe, especially as China and India continues to grow, prompting rising demand for fuel produced in Wyoming.
4. As the demand for more “green” approaches to energy becomes more mainstream, Wyoming has developed the ability to produce more green energy.
5. The 2008 elections produce a President who is friendly to both education and energy.
6. As the war in Iraq—and the federal resources to fund it—winds down, federal leaders invest more in education and other domestic programs.
7. NCLB is reauthorized to emphasize growth models and high quality national standards and assessment.
8. There is increased funding available for virtual schools.

Options:

Campbell County has very few serious challenges to confront in this scenario and could do very well for itself by simply doing nothing. But for most, merely surviving is not the same as thriving and moving the district successfully into the future. Furthermore, it would be unwise for leaders in this county to ignore the looming social and cultural forces likely to emerge within the next ten years. Planning now to address such challenges in the future would be a wise use of time.

Anticipating the boom economy that might be built on the development of new technology and alternative fuels within Wyoming—and one that connects the Wyoming jobs directly to the global economy, dealing with countries like India and China—means that young people will require a far more advanced level of education in the next ten years. In order to become productive members of the new workforce (and avoid having the new jobs taken solely by

imported workers) all students will need to pursue a higher education, learn foreign languages, and become technologically savvy. In short, all students will need to excel in 21st century skills. Campbell County School District should develop its capacity to deliver such skills to all students sooner rather than later.

Further, as the community becomes more economically and culturally diverse, both due to increasing immigration and exchanges within the global marketplace, students and community members will need to gain a better appreciation of cultural and global awareness. The district may want to consider implementing some creative strategies to develop 21st century skills in its students. Some options include these:

- Increasing opportunities for global exchanges for students—Bringing the world here!
- Incorporating more thematic units into the curriculum that explore various global topics and issues.
- Enhance the curriculum to ensure that 21st century skills, including foreign languages and cultural awareness are being taught. Other 21st century skills include problem solving, team building, lifelong learning, etc.

The district may also want to consider re-designing the way students currently experience school, to get more “bang for the buck,” so to speak. Such options include these:

- Creating smaller schools or schools within schools so that students have more personalized experiences on a day to day basis—and can deepen their engagement in learning.
- Developing stronger partnerships with the community to share facilities and other resources creating a more relevant educational experience for students (while also saving money).
- Expanding opportunities for advanced placement courses and offering opportunities for concurrent enrollment with higher education so that students can accelerate their learning.
- Investing in the future by designing 21st century facilities, hiring staff with experience teaching 21st century skills, and re-aligning the curriculum based on the new expectations.

SCENARIO C: BLACK GOLD

Black Gold

Deep Causes

This scenario assumes that the “boom” is continuing in Wyoming’s Campbell County, and demand for energy grows. However, with this boom, government restrictions controlling energy growth continue at all levels— federal, state, and local. These restrictions even carry over into education as evidenced by Campbell County School District’s (CCSD) struggles with increased demands from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) and those imposed by the No Child Left Behind Acts (NCLB) of 2001 and 2007. The following deep causes could lead to this scenario:

- Low sulfur Powder River coal is preferred by industry and U.S. power plants.
- U.S. demand for electricity continues to climb.
- Low income and immigrant populations moving to Gillette for new jobs create new challenges for CCSD.
- Reauthorization of NCLB provides for heavy-handed state/federal imposed sanctions.
- A Democratic Congress and President are elected in 2008.
- A national curriculum eliminates duplication efforts and further restricts control of local boards.
- An increasing number of students with health problems and issues are enrolled in the districts.
- Recalibration efforts lead to decreased funding.
- Global warming sparks research and development of Powder River Basin energy sources.
- The number of students with disabilities is increasing annually.

“Black Gold”

Time: 2016

Place: The superintendent’s office, Campbell County School District

Scene: Dr. Strahorn, superintendent of Campbell County School District, has announced his retirement and is meeting with Ms. Linda Lane, lead education reporter for the *Gillette News Record*. Dr. Strahorn reminisces about the past decade and the changes he has experienced.

Linda: So Dr. Strahorn, I’d like to give *News Record* readers a sense of some of the changes you’ve seen over the past ten years with the district, the county, and education in general. What

would you say have been the most significant changes, and what do you consider your greatest successes and challenges while superintendent? There must be some things that stand out in your mind.

Dr. Strahorn: I'd like to begin by saying that I enjoyed the challenges at my previous district, and that I had a great bunch of folks to work with, but when I decided it was time to make a move, I couldn't resist the appeal of Gillette, which was a larger district with a great reputation. I am still amazed that in 2016, enrollment is steadily growing, and our present numbers are at 13,000 students, kindergarten through 12th grade.

As to your question, I'd say there are a few local changes that immediately come to mind. The first is a historic pay raise in 2006 due to financial resources from a boom energy economy and funding from our state legislature. That year, we were fortunate to provide a starting base rate of \$40,000 for beginning teachers. Of course, you'll recall that NCLB mandated a greater emphasis on accountability, testing, and teacher quality. These mandates required increased levels of oversight, monitoring, and reporting, all of which cost more money. Combined with our rapid growth in enrollment, we had a tough time finding the resources to keep up. The feds increased funding in some areas, but it didn't really help us here in Campbell County. When the Act was reauthorized as NCLB-2007, it caused greater scrutiny and more rigorous accountability measures for all school systems, and we certainly found this to be true in our district. During those early years of my superintendency, the expectation of schools' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all students became a very public issue, especially with our secondary schools.

Linda: Let's talk more about the changes related to AYP, such as the requirements for special education students and also for English-language learners. What has CCSD done to address these areas?

Dr. Strahorn: Our schools really struggled to provide the resources needed to bring all students to a level of proficiency that met the expectations of NCLB & NCLB-2007. We have had a large influx of non-English speaking students who continue to enter our county and district due to the exploding growth in the energy industry. Unfortunately, Congress reauthorized the act, but it didn't anticipate the kind of situation we have here. Maybe this shouldn't have been such a surprise; looking back, it's easier to see that we had a large number of baby boomers retiring at the same time that we were experiencing tremendous growth in our Hispanic population. As you might expect, they have become a majority of our county workforce, and they brought their families, many of whom do not have a strong command of the English language. We have had to allocate more resources to ESL (English as a second language) teachers, as we now have 20 percent of our student population designated ESL. The district has worked hard in trying to provide professional development and resources to help with teaching strategies to help improve the education of children who do not speak English.

The other area that has been problematic is making AYP with students who have disabilities, an area where our numbers have risen dramatically. The increase is a result of a number of

things, including better and earlier diagnoses. Fortunately, special education needs are 100 percent reimbursable, but the state legislature now is proposing a reduction to an 80 percent reimbursement. In ten years, we have seen a 12 percent rise in students with disabilities and 40 percent of our student population has been identified as having chronic health issues. As a district we continue to lobby our legislators to include 100 percent reimbursement for special education.

Linda: Wow, that is a huge increase! How did this happen in just ten years?

Dr. Strahorn: Shocking, isn't it? For one thing, Linda, it's harder to be healthy; people have to make the right nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle choices. I hate to say it, but our prosperity beset us with chronic self-induced diseases, and obesity and diabetes are two that are leading the way. We have a whole new generation of children with these problems. Our measures with the Healthy School movement have proved to be beneficial; unfortunately, WDE has been slow to respond with adequate resources, especially funding of health and physical education teachers.

Linda: Hmm, now I'm worried, Dr. Strahorn; I think I'll head to the gym when our interview is over. Let's shift gears a little. I'd like to hear your thoughts about the local school board election. It's been in the news a lot lately, and some candidates are slinging mud. One editorial in a competitor's newspaper, whose name I won't mention here, called the board of trustees an anachronism. Do you think the board has lost its ability to control or effect change? Is it now just a figure head?

Dr. Strahorn: Linda, you know I believe we have the best and most significant board in the country right here in Campbell County! But, do school boards in this country have as much power as they did when I first became a superintendent? Frankly, I would say no. How can they be in charge of their districts when the feds tell them what to teach and test every year? The national curriculum has really changed everything. The Wyoming Legislature has supported the national standards since they were first proposed by the Democrats and President Obama, but do you remember what happened in 2009, when more than half the schools in Wyoming failed to make AYP?

Firm sanctions were put in place, and the state proposed heavy handed measures including the recommendation of taking control over these schools. Since local school boards have less control, the WDE is in favor of consolidating districts into regional centers and dividing the state into six sections. The WDE also required that instructional facilitators implement new building and district wide professional development without input from our staff. Simply put, I am opposed to this restructuring. Each community and county in the state has distinct needs and a unique culture, and the WDE is failing to recognize this.

Linda: Speaking of needs, has the district seen some impact dollars based on our continuing growth?

Dr. Strahorn: You would think so, wouldn't you, Linda? This has been a real paradox. Although the economy for the country was sluggish, in 2010 Gillette and Campbell County continued to steadily grow, thanks to America's energy consumption. However, the state hadn't increased funding because it continued to believe local control should take the lead role in providing more of its own financial solutions by requesting the impact dollars directly from the county commissioners. So, the loss of this funding intensified the gap in school resources for meeting NCLB requirements, and the result was that by 2012, 85 Wyoming schools were not able to meet AYP requirements.

Linda: It sounds like you are angry over this issue. Isn't CCSD aggressively taking action in school funding litigation?

Dr. Strahorn: You bet I sound angry; I'm madder than a hornet in a rainstorm over this issue! Basically, we need to rectify inequities in school funding, especially with Campbell County supplying the majority of the money in the state coffers. In 2014, the Wyoming Legislature voted to divert School Foundation money to improvement of infrastructure for districts that weren't experiencing the same growth in schools as CCSD. That was the last straw for many of us, including the districts with large increases in enrollment who received no additional funding.

Yes, back in 2006 we raised beginning teacher pay to a higher point than it had ever been before. But the most recent recalibration of the state funding model of 2011 did not increase monies to raise wages for teachers and support personnel. Sadly, that historic pay raise has slowly been outpaced by growth and has whittled away our ability to stay competitive in today's teacher market. Following this latest slap in the face, CCSD joined other districts in similar situations in a lawsuit—Campbell IV—to argue some of the issues facing districts affected by rapid growth, including inadequate facilities, technology, staffing, and lack of room. With prior state Supreme Court cases that have helped to level the playing field for large districts, we feel this is something we need to pursue. As we have always said, "We will quit suing when we quit winning."

Linda: Thank you, Dr. Strahorn; it sounds like you have steered the district ship through some troubled waters. I think the logical direction for this interview is to talk more about the local economy and some of these problematic changes you've mentioned.

Dr. Strahorn: Well, I can tell you that I have witnessed many highs and lows, but I am amazed the economy has sustained this kind of growth, especially when energy seems to go in cycles. I guess I'm a frustrated economist because I just find this stuff fascinating. Let me retrieve some notes I jotted down while doing some reading on my own. I know you're a local girl, but did you know just how dependent Gillette and Campbell County's economy is on energy?

When the Global Warming report of 2007 cited fossil fuels as having a 90 percent probability of contributing to the warming of the planet, many of us were worried about the report's

impact on our economy. After all, the top 10 producing coal mines in the United States are in Wyoming, and nine of them are in Campbell County. Nationwide, production and consumption were setting record highs. Add to that the passage of the Clean Air Act and a demand for clean coal, and here in Campbell County production increased to nearly 360 million tons; that's about 33 percent of total nationwide demand. The bottom line, economically speaking, is that coal and natural gas are the largest contributors to Wyoming's economic revenue and tax base, and Campbell County produces not only coal and oil, but also natural gas. It's easy to see why there has been little interest in finding alternative ways to grow the local economy.

Linda: So, Dr. Strahorn, are you saying that you've seen a downturn in your projections based on the latest findings from the World Scientist Global Warming Forum held in 2014 in Zurich?

Dr. Strahorn: You know, a lot of people assumed that so much talk about global warming would have a devastating impact on Wyoming, but that hasn't been the reality. You are correct, though, that the Forums in 2007 and 2008 marked a turning point in people's awareness of global warming, and scientists were beginning to understand the causes, too. President Bush even called for the passage of mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions. Congress backed the idea, and they immediately placed strict limits on emissions produced through the generation of electrical power. However, electric generation accounted for 92 percent, or 1.039 billion tons, of all coal that Americans consumed. Our demand for electricity was not going to go away, especially when Campbell County coal mines offered a low sulfur product that met many of the new emission restrictions. Consequently, and somewhat unexpectedly, a federal grant of 1.2 billion dollars now supports research and a large test project at Coal Creek mine involving clean-coal technologies.

Linda: I know you don't have a crystal ball, Dr. Strahorn, but you have been immersed in the business of our schools and community for the last ten years, so what do you think lies ahead for Campbell County?

Dr. Strahorn: I see one of the greatest accomplishments of our county and district as supporting the energy industry, the career/technical avenues, and engineering sciences to make sure our students can continue to live and work in Campbell County. The new Technology Center had an influx of federal dollars due to the Coal Creek project and the Jeff Wasserburger wing has been added to the center to assist in the continued study of the feasibility of methane being a renewable resource. As you know, mathematics and science are the foundation of engineering, yet our test scores show that we need to continue to work in these areas. The single most important thing that CCSD can do right now is keep expectations high, and high expectations means attracting the best teachers, reducing truancy, and finding creative ways to supplement the National Curriculum. Cooperation between CCSD and the Gillette College on career technical education and the local needs of the economy is a major role of our district.

Linda: I guess I've been lucky. My best subject in school was always English, and now I'm a reporter, but you've made a believer out of me, Dr. Strahorn. Kids today need to take as much

math and science as they can. I'm going to talk to my niece about this interview. Any other closing advice?

Dr. Strahorn: Thanks Linda, just one comment. The greatest natural resource among a county blessed with abundant minerals has been our staff. With many hurdles to cross, our staff, including teachers, counselors, bus drivers, administrators, food service workers, nurses and every other member of our workforce, has contributed to my decision to stay in this district. I applaud the efforts of this greatest of all natural resources. You know, you might want to talk to your niece about becoming a teacher.

Analysis of “Black Gold” 2006-2016

Implications:

In this scenario, Campbell County continues to experience a healthy boom as demand for energy grows. Even when policies become more “green” with tighter restrictions, the county benefits from its clean coal production and involvement in R&D efforts to produce alternative energy and clean fuels.

While the boom economy is great, it had put pressure on the district in several ways. First, people are flocking to Campbell County to take advantage of the new jobs available there. This is causing rapid and continuing increases in enrollment and the district has declining ability to appropriately adjust to this growth. A rapid rise in the immigrant population bringing children who do not speak English is challenging the district to stretch its already tight resources to meet the new needs of English-language learners.

The prolonged culture of affluence has also affected the school population in unfortunate ways with a rapid increase of students who have special needs, obesity and other health or emotional issues. State and federal funding for special programs to deal with these types of issues in schools—even just maintaining physical education in schools—have not kept pace with these changes.

Making matters worse, the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind brought even tighter controls and restrictions and much less flexibility, especially with the advent of the new national curriculum. While some view the national curriculum as an opportunity for consistency and clear expectations, most see it as a barrier to effective teaching and learning, especially since it reflects a one-size-fits all model of learning, and a poor quality one at that.

With the boom economy still continuing, the district might be able to get itself out of the jam, if only the state and federal government would cooperate and allow more flexibility to meet local needs.

Indicators:

Trends or events that could signal the development of this scenario include:

1. Unemployment remains low in Campbell County—jobs are abundant.
2. The next President elected in 2008 pushes for a national curriculum and tighter controls on No Child Left Behind.
3. The demand for coal and natural gas remains high, despite a turn toward more “green” energy sources.

4. The U. S. population continues the trend of unhealthy habits, perpetuating obesity, the use of drugs, lack of exercise, and other unhealthy habits. This “popular culture” seeps into the next generation of children, affecting them negatively.
5. The state becomes unresponsive to local needs.
6. The state threatens to cut reimbursement for schools’ special education needs.

Options:

Even as Campbell County proper experiences a sustained, booming economy, the school district risks losing its competitive edge if careful planning and long-term strategies are not adopted. It is possible for the district to experience numerous challenges brought on by tighter policy controls, fewer state and federal resources, and increasing populations of students with special needs and English-language learners.

If the district does not act to address these challenges early, jobs, which will most likely require higher skill levels, higher education, and technical abilities, will go to workers who move to Campbell County from other parts of the country or world. Increasing numbers of Campbell County students, especially those with special needs and language barriers, will be unprepared for these jobs, and will be shut out of the booming economy. This will, in turn, create more pressure on social services—creating an underclass, over time, in the county.

Campbell County School District has an opportunity to combat this trend, however, if it acts early and resolutely to prepare itself for the changes ahead. The district could begin now to invest in high quality teacher professional development to ensure that its teaching force is well equipped to handle different populations of students, while still pursuing mastery of learning for all students. Creating more and stronger partnerships with institutions of higher education to ensure that more pathways to college are present is another positive step that the district could take. Investing in technology now, for all students to boost their learning of 21st century skills is also a good idea.

The district may also want to develop a steady growth plan, investing in its infrastructure each year, in order to be prepared when the growth eventually comes. Attracting and retaining high quality teachers to the district will also be important.

Working with municipal agencies, nonprofits, and others to help combat the unhealthy habits and trends operating in the Campbell County culture might help reduce the impact and numbers of students with special and other needs in the schools in years to come. Including prevention and educational programs on healthy eating, exercise, and healthy habits in today’s curriculum would also help ensure that as adults these students maintain a healthier lifestyle.

The district may also want to launch a more concerted effort to educate state legislators about the projected challenges it may face. Such an effort might prevent state (and possibly federal) funds for special needs and/or English-language learners from being cut.

SCENARIO D: DISTRICT GOES FROM RICHES TO RAGS

This scenario, written in the form of a newspaper story, reports on conditions associated with a local and state economy that has gone from boom to bust, and a government role in education that is obstructive to the educational needs of our district.

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Wyoming Press

If it happens in the West, we cover it Best!

District Goes From Riches to Rags

April 13, 2016

Campbell County, Wyo.— In this first part of a two-part series, which the *Wyoming Press* will run on consecutive Sundays, Staff Reporter Ophelia Payne chronicles the rise and decline of what once was one of the most resource rich school districts in the state. A waning local economy and the federal strong arm of No Child Left Behind II has taken the Campbell County School District from riches to rags. This reality has left a lot of people asking how and why the economy turned sour so quickly and the steps local residents now must take in order to return to a thriving economy and school district.

Part One: Boom Economy Gone Bust

Ten years ago, the Campbell County School District (CCSD) was one of the wealthiest in the state. One of five “recapture” districts, CCSD had been the recipient of millions in rebated recapture dollars. Rebated recapture funds were local monies that came back to the district from the state once equitable guarantees for other school districts were met. During this time, CCSD enjoyed abundant financial resources in addition to the funding amounts provided through the Wyoming Schools Funding Model.

The District used these additional funds to, among other things, finance the construction of a new running track in Wright, purchase much needed technology equipment for libraries and classrooms, and provide pay bonuses for staff whose salaries had fallen well below the national average. Veteran high school history teacher, Barb Dyer commented, “Rebated recapture was like winning the lottery every year.”

Then, in the General Election of November 2006, voters approved a state constitutional amendment that allowed the state to keep the excess dollars that once went back to local districts. This event marked the beginning of the decline of financial stability in the Campbell County School District.

Prior to this fateful cast of vote, CCSD enjoyed the riches of residing in a county with an assessed valuation supported by the energy industry. At this time, Wyoming led the nation in coal production, producing over one-third of all U.S. coal. Campbell County coal production had increased to nearly 360 million tons or about 33 percent of the national demand, due in part to the passage of the Clean Air Act and a demand for clean coal. Coal was second only to natural gas as the largest contributor to Wyoming's economic revenue and tax base. In addition, Campbell County was a major producer of oil and natural gas, and was often referred to as the "Energy Capital" because of its vast oil reserves, natural gas production, electrical power plants, and the large number of coalmines, which produced coal for electrical generation. Campbell County's energy-related economy provided endless possibilities for employment and was the catalyst for one of the fastest growing counties in the state. *Western Sunsets* magazine included Campbell County in its annual "Best places to live" issue in 2006.

However, the years 2007–2008 brought significant changes that had a major impact on the area's economy. With an increased public awareness of global climate change, due in part to the media buzz around the 2006 release of Al Gore's Academy Award-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, the Bush Administration dampened public outcry by calling for the passage of mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions. A largely Democratic Congress backed this legislation and immediately placed strict limits on emissions produced through the generation of electrical power. Unfortunately, the sulfur content in raw coal made it an unlikely fuel for power generation, and the demand for Powder River Basin coal began to decline.

As production slowed, workers were let go. The belief that Wyoming coal could continue to contribute to the nation's energy needs for another 200 years gave way to the reality of an unmarketable resource. The state of California, once one of the biggest users of electricity generated in Wyoming, refused to purchase electricity generated by coal. This devastating development was fueled by Californian's demands for environmentally friendly power generation. As a result of this emerging trend, the plans for new coal-fired power plants in Campbell County were abandoned. For the first time in over 10 years, the economy in Campbell County was starting to crumble. Business owner Bill Loney described the impact of these changes on sales at his three hardware stores this way: "Our sales could no longer support keeping three stores open. Currently our profit margin barely supports the one store we have left, and that is with a minimal number of employees."

Unforeseen Factors Converge on the State

The Presidential election of 2008 also proved to have a dramatic effect on Wyoming's economy. In 2010, President Clinton announced her endorsement of the Kyoto Treaty and

pledged support in further lowering the emission of greenhouse gases. Clinton urged Congress to endorse a reduction in emissions, primarily carbon dioxide, by 10 percent below 1990 levels over the next decade. As Congress responded in earnest, the demand for coal became even less, and the boom economy in Campbell County was sinking deeper into trouble.

By 2010, global warming also had reduced the demand for heating fuels to such an extent that oil and gas production had decreased by 50 percent and the drilling of new wells in Campbell County had ceased. What once was a thriving economy and the source of abundant resources in the District had diminished incredibly. In the meantime, the entire state of Wyoming was suffering a similar fate.

As the federal government continued to tout mandates on emission restrictions, alternative energy sources, which had earlier been cost prohibitive, became more affordable and widely accepted. Automobile manufactures began to mass-produce and market affordable hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. Assisted by government rebates for the buyers of these cars and increased production taxes on vehicles with internal combustion engines, the automobile industry was forever changed. The result was a significant decrease in the demand for oil and gas, which prompted the closing of major refineries in Wyoming. Taxes generated from Wyoming's energy economy had declined significantly, reducing state revenues and causing state officials to tap into the once overflowing surplus.

In 2014, as the state infrastructure became obsolete, roads deteriorated, and so did the quality of life in Wyoming. Many workers retired and others, who had become discouraged and disenchanted, chose to leave. In a knee-jerk reaction, the state set new priorities, and money that once supported the state school system was cut to provide dollars for improving roads and supporting the state retirement system. School districts across the state saw a decrease in funding of as much as 50 percent.

Future Prospects of County Schools

2016 reveals a strikingly different picture of Gillette and Campbell County. The local economy, once so robust, is now depleted. Gillette, which once boasted a population of 30,000, has diminished to 10,000. Schools once overflowing with students have been closed. A school district, which at one time employed over 1,500 staff members, has dwindled to less than 500. Businesses that once thrived on the energy economy no longer exist. The bleak economy provides little hope for the future.

The residents of Campbell County have endured the boom and bust cycles associated with the energy industry for the past 40 years. They've survived depressed times only to enjoy repeated economic revivals and renewed hope. But this time, nothing looms on the horizon to indicate an upswing in the economy. The demand for resources so plentiful in Campbell County no longer exists. The billions of tons of coal that lie underground will likely remain. The state, the counties, and Campbell County School District have gone from riches to rags.

District Goes From Riches to Rags

April 20, 2016

Campbell County, Wyo. — In this, the conclusion of our two-part series, *Wyoming Press* Reporter Payne continues to chronicle the dramatic rise and decline of what was once one of the most resource-rich school districts in the state. To hear a pod-cast of interviews from teachers, business owners, and district officials mentioned in this series, visit our Web site at wyomingpress.com.

Part Two: Local Control Taken Over by Outsiders

The passing of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) caused increased scrutiny and accountability of our school systems nationwide. The expectation of school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all students became a very public issue. Many schools struggled to provide the resources needed to bring all students to a level of proficiency that met the expectations of NCLB. The 2007 reauthorization of this act brought no relief or additional financial assistance to local schools. Long-term expectations of NCLB II remained out of reach for most schools because the reauthorization failed to address the special challenges the schools face. Heavy-handed sanctions for schools failing to meet AYP were inevitable.

In the meantime, the 2007 Wyoming Legislature narrowly passed HB 147, which consolidated Wyoming school districts within county boundaries, and provided governance through county committees and oversight by the State Board of Education. This legislation marked an effort to reduce local school district costs through the elimination of district-level administrative positions, giving this authority to the State Superintendent of Instruction and the Wyoming Department of Education. This statewide reorganization took effect during the 2008–2009 school year.

In 2009, following the reorganization, more than half of the schools in Wyoming failed to make AYP as required by NCLB II. Firm sanctions were put in place, resulting in measures to increase state control over these schools.

In 2010, due to a national economic recession and to overcome the debt incurred through the prolonged occupation of Iraq and war with Iran, President Clinton was forced to severely reduce federal program funding to schools. This, along with a declining state education budget, brought significant funding reductions to all Wyoming schools. The loss of this funding intensified the gap in school resources needed to assist students in meeting proficiency levels required by NCLB II. By 2012, no Wyoming schools were able to meet AYP requirements. This meant Campbell County lost control of their local schools as the state took over management.

In 2014, due to a weak state economy and a budget deficit, the Wyoming Legislature voted to divert School Foundation money to be used in the improvement of roads and bridges. This led to a 50 percent decrease in state funding to schools, and much of the state monies that were left for education were designated to the continuing costs of NCLB II mandated student testing.

And now in 2016, with limited funds available, the Wyoming education system does not resemble the system that was in place a mere ten years ago. Per NCLB II directives, the failing statewide Wyoming school system is now in the hands of private education firms. Local school boards, who once took pride in their communities and worked hard to meet the unique needs of the students in their schools, no longer exist.

Private contractors now provide all administrative needs, so a school visitor does not find a superintendent in the district or a principal in the school building; instead, an Operations Director, with an office on the East Coast, handles all purchasing requests; an Academics Program Director oversees a team of curriculum developers; and for many classes, students access long-distance instruction from around the globe using technology, rather than direct instruction with a teacher in the classroom. Those teachers who remain in the system are faced with salaries that have not kept pace with surrounding states.

City and County Suffer

The culture of Gillette and Campbell County also has suffered. The economy, once so rich, is now at an all time low. The unemployment rate of the county is over 25 percent. One out of every four adults in the county is jobless. There has been a disturbing increase in the number of crimes committed, particularly those related to drug use, and overall alcohol and drug use continue to climb. Trish Fish, a mother of three school-aged children, ages seven through eleven, had this to say: “I’m very worried about the future of families in this county. I first moved here during the boom of 2006 and there were plenty of good paying jobs, a Super Wal-Mart had just opened, and the city and schools had some great activities for our kids. Now, all of that has changed, and I’m afraid we are going to have to uproot our children from their friends and the only home they have known so we can find a safer place to live with decent jobs and good schools.”

The Campbell County School District was once considered by many to be the most progressive school district in the state. Former Superintendent Sarah Bellum recalled, “CCSD was an organization of excellence; it was a district that attracted the finest employees and provided the best education to our students this country had to offer.” While the economic boom years brought great resources to the schools and classrooms, when the boom went bust, those plentiful resources disappeared. In addition, NCLB II mandated higher standards for school performance, but schools didn’t receive the kind of federal or state assistance they needed to attain these goals and maintain forward momentum. As a result, the district has disbanded, and schooling is left in the hands of the state and privately run charter schools. The state, the counties, and Campbell County School District have gone from riches to rags.

Analysis of “Riches to Rags” 2006–2016

Implications:

In this scenario, the entire State of Wyoming, and Campbell County in particular, are adversely affected by the decreased demand for fossil fuels caused by an increased demand for and availability of environmentally friendly sources of energy. There is an economic bust and it is here to stay. As a result, people in Campbell County lose their jobs, homes, and enrollment in the school district rapidly declines.

Because the bust is statewide, once plentiful state coffers intended for educational investment, are now dried up, and being used for other “basic needs” as defined by the state. The war in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East has escalated and therefore no relief can come from the federal government. In short, the school district is broke, and there is literally no place to turn.

As the pressure for increased economic competitiveness nationally continues to rise, Congress and the 2008 President place even tighter controls and demands on schools through the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Growing evidence of the success of charter schools, especially those linked to national networks, such as KIPP, Green Dot, and others, has prompted the conversion of unsuccessful schools to be turned over to these private entities to become an even stronger and more prescriptive element of No Child Left Behind.

Even if there were resources available to do much of anything with, local Campbell County leaders’ hands would be tied for the many schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress. Of the parents and students who do remain in Campbell County, many have given up on the school district and are opting for other options—such as online schools—provided by national, private, and sometimes global educational organizations.

If the current conditions remain and the trends continue, many in the district wonder how much longer the district itself can continue to exist at all.

Indicators:

Trends or events that could signal the development of this scenario include these:

1. Widespread concern about global warming leads to strong policies to reduce greenhouse gases, including the passage of the Kyoto Treaty and other federal policies. Democrats elected in 2006 and 2008 push for these stricter environmental regulations on the energy industry, making coal, oil, and gas production more costly in Wyoming, and less desired nationwide.

2. Consumer demand for environmentally friendly and low-carbon products and services pushes states and other former customers of Wyoming's resources to "buy-cot" greenhouse gas emitting fuels and look elsewhere for its energy needs.
3. Alternative fuel technologies have advanced to the point where hydrogen fuel cell cars replace the hybrid vehicles popular early in the century, sharply reducing demand for fossil fuels.
4. The failure of the state to diversify its economy beyond a reliance on natural resources as the sole driver of economic prosperity in the state.
5. Over-reliance on existing sources of natural resources in Wyoming (as opposed to expanding exploration for new sources within the state) will also cause a smaller supply from Wyoming to be available.
6. No Child Left Behind is reauthorized and contains even tighter controls and accountability measures, including specific language to promote conversion of low achieving schools into privately operated charter schools.
7. Federal and state policies (and private investment) advance opportunities for virtual school options to become available anytime, anywhere.
8. The war in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East continues, and expands, requiring more federal dollars and reducing the federal government's ability to fund domestic programs, such as education.
9. Due to an economic recession, President Clinton eliminates federal program funding to schools.
10. Due to the weak state economy, the Wyoming legislature votes to divert school foundation funds to repair roads and decrease state funding to schools by 50 percent.
11. A natural disaster occurs in Wyoming (e.g., an earthquake, volcano, or explosion of the Yellowstone caldera).

Options:

To meet the key challenges of this scenario, Campbell County must begin investing its abundant resources now in order to avoid depletion in the future. The district may want to consider these actions:

- Prioritize most essential needs and focus on those over the long term.
- Avoid unnecessary investments not aligned with these priorities.

- Lobby with the state to increase the maximum amount of cash reserve that can be budgeted each year
- Explore alternative educational delivery systems, such as virtual schooling, distance learning, and other options.
- Partner with community colleges to provide classes.
- Collaborate with the state and businesses to diversify Wyoming's (and Campbell County's) economy so that it is not so dependent on its natural resources. Educate Campbell County students to prepare them for these new industries and jobs of the future.

**APPENDIX A: DRIVERS OF CHANGE BRAINSTORMING
SESSION, 10/25/06**

Drivers of Change

Top priority issues from brainstorming session

Group #1 -

9	School Safety
8	Funding
8	Lack of qualified workers
7	Changing federal laws
7	Technology
7	Drop out rate
6	Curriculum
6	Family Structure
6	Disciplinary programs
6	Increasing healthcare costs
6	Drug prevention
6	Space / overcrowding
5	PAWS
5	Economics
5	Parental Control
4	NCLB
3	Professional development
2	Increase at risk programs
2	Terrorism
2	Immigration
2	Need for increased physical activity

Group #2 -

13	Work force demands
11	Technology
11	Drug issues
9	Boom & bust
8	Population Growth
8	Government policy
8	NCLB – State / Federal Policy
7	Family / social structure
7	Diversity in schools
7	Retirement
6	Virtual schools
5	School safety
5	Economy
4	Healthy schools
4	School calendar
4	Immigration
3	Amendment B (Vote NO!)
3	Internet
3	Family involvement
3	Jobs
3	Work ethic
2	Drop out rate
2	Bullying
1	Schools within schools
1	Privatization
1	Learning styles
1	Athletics

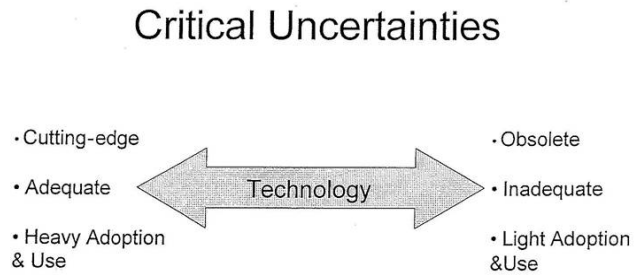
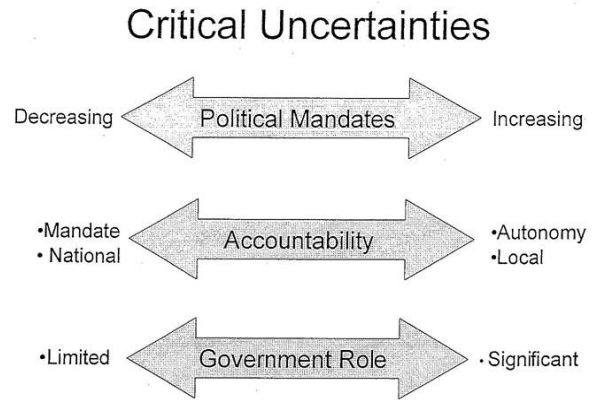
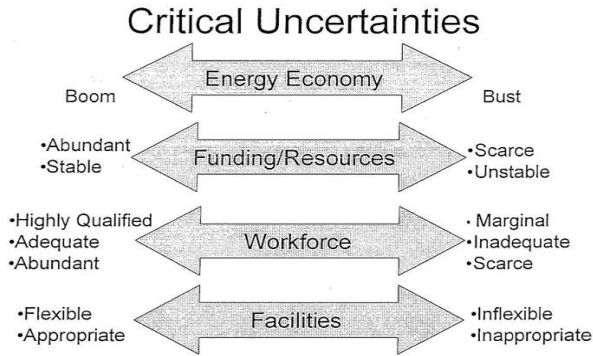
Group #3 -

10	Teacher turnover / replacement / retention
10	Facilities Commission
9	Accountability
8	Emphasis on pre-K
6	Facilities Planning Study
6	Service Delivery
5	Amendment B / recapture
5	Enrollment (up/down)
5	Fossil Fuel supply/ demand
4	PAWS
4	Community College collaboration
4	Rec Mill
4	Funding
4	Length of day / year (loss of trad sched)
4	Economy (Energy)
4	Administration change
3	Tech Prep
3	Substance abuse
3	Funding / system
3	Community
3	Distance Learning
3	Costs
2	Drop out rate
2	Growth Patterns
2	Parental Expectations
2	Role of education / parenting
2	Cultural Ethnic change / diversity
2	Immigration (policies, amount)
2	Technology Advances
2	Student / teacher ratio
1	Demographic Equity

Group #4 -

20	Price of oil / coal / methane
13	NCLB
13	School safety
11	Meth / drugs
10	Technology
10	School facility commission
8	Aging population
8	Teacher shortages
6	Parent / School Relationships
5	Professional learning communities
5	Rehabilitation / parents using
5	Job availability
4	The Middle East
4	8:00-3:00 diverse time offerings – alternative schedules
3	Immigration
3	Virtual schooling
3	Bullying
3	Poor lunch program
2	Diversity of students
2	Poverty
1	Separation of sexes – class – school
1	Meeting needs of Digital Natives

APPENDIX B: CRITICAL UNCERTAINTIES AND THEIR



AXES CONSIDERED