

Laramie County Democratic Party  
08/25/2009

- 1) Meeting called to order at 7:05, 18 people attended
- 2) Introductions of attendees
- 3) Guest speaker - Ken Decaria, Wyoming Education Association. Mr. Decaria talked about his background in the State Senate and how he got elected. He also discussed recruiting candidates for office. He ran in a District with 62% GOP registration and 25% Democratic, and had no Republican opponent in his last campaign.

These are notes from Mr. Decaria's talk and the discussion that followed:

Mr. Decaria talked about the background of state school lawsuits over funding for large school districts vs. small districts. He says the legislature is now facing the prospect of cutting spending. Schools are in good shape financially, but there are concerns about the next biennium. Getting some federal grants may be tough because Wyoming is so spread out. Charter schools have good success with low income and minority students, but high achieving students do worse, according to a national study. Mr. Decaria discussed some of the research being done on education in Wyoming, interpreting the PAWS tests and whether the tests are doing what was intended. He says it is a challenging time right now because of declining state revenues.

Following his talk, there was general discussion of improving education in Junior High School, and how PAWS does not help advanced kids... it's a waste of kids time to do remedial work. We should teach beyond the standards. Part of the problem is No Child Left Beyond, which took away specialized teaching time and standardized stuff. ADHD kids need structure. Other kids need stability to help them learn. The discussion continued on a wide range of educational issues.

Communications Director had to leave before the meeting was ended, so minutes are abbreviated.