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Program promotes more academic rigor

By The Associated Press

CHEYENNE - Three school districts in Wyoming have signed up for a new program that encourages students to take tougher classes in high school.

Natrona County School District 1 in Casper, Niobrara County School District 1 in Lusk and Fremont County School District 25 in Riverton are participating in the Wyoming State Scholars Initiative, and more districts are expected to join, state program director Sheila Martin said Thursday.

The program pairs businesses and educators to encourage students to take tougher courses, like physics and chemistry.

"We believe that a rigorous curriculum is the way to succeed," state Superintendent of Public Instruction Jim McBride said.

The program is similar to the state's Hathaway Scholarship program in the coursework it requires students to take, McBride said.

Students who meet the program requirements can earn awards and recognition. They also could be eligible for scholarships and grants.

Under the program, business leaders can come into the classrooms in participating schools and discuss with students how valuable education is in the working world.

The scholars program requires students to take four years of English, three years of math, 3½ years of social studies, two years of foreign language and three years of chemistry, for a total of 15.5 credits.

Wyoming students now need at least 13 core credits to graduate.

If students want to become a Wyoming Scholar and also qualify for the highest level of the Hathaway Scholarship, they would need to take 17.5 credits.

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