

MINUTES

DISTRICT COURT JUDGES CONFERENCE MEETING DECEMBER 11, 2025

Present in person: Snyder, Rogers, Wilking, Johnson, McKay, Westby, Robinson, Cooley, Kirven, Eames, Condor, McGrady, Forgey, Peasley, Lavery, Bluemel, Kaste, Overfield, Burningham; Present by Video: Phillips, Hibben, Owens, Healy.

1:00 PM Heard from Chief Justice Boomgaarden. She gave a thank you to DJ's for assisting with 45 supreme court appointments and writing of 17 opinions. She reported on Bench Bar activities. She informed the conference that retired judges, Sullins and Sharpe, are available to cover conflict cases and requests for assistance can be brought to the executive committee.

The Chief Justice provided her ask list for the District Court Judges Conference:

- 1) Look at strategic plan for Judicial Branch and submit any comments, Elisa Butler is updating the operational plan which will happen at March WJC meeting. They are continuing to work on building trust and hoping to provide more transparency.
- 2) Please identify good candidates and help recruit for judicial vacancies.
- 3) Reach out to legislatures to educate and help support the goals of the Judicial Branch strategic plan.

1:19PM Presentation by Judge Kaste on Directed Outpatient Treatment

2:25PM Presentation by Cody Jerebak on WYLAP

3:30PM Presentation by Stephanie Neuman on Trauma

MINUTES OF THE DISTRICT COURT JUDGES CONFERENCE BUSINESS MEETING

December 12, 2025; Townsend Justice Center, Casper, Wyoming

Present in person: Snyder, Rogers, Wilking, Johnson, McKay, Westby, Robinson, Cooley, Kirven, Condor, McGrady, Forgey, Peasley, Lavery, Bluemel, Kaste, Overfield, Hibben, Eames(in and out), Froelicher; Present by Video: Phillips, Hibben, Owens, Healy; Not present; Buchanan, Castano, Simpson

A motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting was made by Judge Bluemel and seconded by Judge Robinson;

A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Judge Bluemel and seconded by Judge Robinson;

Old Business:

District Court Workload Study: The conference heard a presentation on a potential court workload study from the AOC by Elisa Butler. It was indicated that the funds were available in the current budget and the project could take up to a year or more to complete a full report. Further presentation about a potential workload study was given by Anthony Kim, Suzanne Tallarico, Shannon Nguyen from the National Center for State Courts. The National Center for State Courts would be the entity overseeing the project. All presenters were available for questions.

It was brought up that the Conference had discussions on this issue both in the April and September meetings. The floor was reopened for further presentation from the First Judicial District Judges who were concerned about their increased case numbers and the potential need for additional data to support the future need to obtain additional judges.

A robust discussion was held on the topic of the workload study and further discussion was held on the need of the conference to assist each other with workloads as necessary.

Judge Froelicher made a motion for the District Court Judges Conference to participate in a workload study. Judge Cooley seconded the motion. A point of order was made to clarify that Judges who were not present were able to provide their proxy to another Judge who could vote for them. A call of the roll was made for the vote which resulted in 16 No votes, 9 Yes votes, Judge Snyder as Chair abstained and Judge Simpson was not present.

Call roll for the vote: Nay-16, Yay-9, Simpson not present, Snyder abstained as Chair in case of a tie. The motion failed.

A shorter discussion was held on the possibility of eliminating the intermediary appellate court for purposes of some administrative appeals and having them proceed directly to the Supreme Court. This could help reduce workloads for the District Court, especially in the First Judicial District. It would also save costs and create efficiency for both the judicial and executive branches by eliminating the requirement for two levels of appellate review.

Committee Assignments: A review of committee assignments identified the upcoming loss of Judge Lavery and request of Judge Forgey to be removed from the District Court Conference Rules Committee. It was determined they would not be replaced and three judges would be left on the committee.

New Business:

Judge Kaste presented a memo prepared by Emily Madden requesting a change to the URDC Rule on settlement of claims for minors. A motion to modify the URDC was made by

Judge Westby and seconded by Judge Cooley. Judge Kaste agreed to get a red-line copy of the rule and submit it to the WJC.

Courtroom streaming was discussed with the premise outdated equipment being identified as the issue for failure of systems in certain courtrooms around the state. Funds are not currently available for upgrades to the systems. It will be up to individual Chambers if streaming will be available based on the resources available to them.

Judge Snyder submitted a form to use for assignment of conflict cases to different judges. It addresses the issue of access for court Chambers to the electronic filing system of other counties when cases are assigned.

The Conference discussed creating a working group to address the “Legal Desert” issue. The group would work with the Wyoming State Bar or Judiciary to help address lack of attorneys in rural areas. The State Bar does have some money available for internships in private practice. Judge Overfield and Judge Peasley were willing to assist.

Judicial Evaluation Committee presented the possibility of the State Bar doing one more evaluations as they have done in the past. It is unknown if they may do more in the future. The evaluation has had minimal participation. Judge Owens and Judge Healy volunteered to serve on any Supreme Court Committee related to this issue. It was suggested that the IAALS model is not the evaluator or system for this type of evaluation. The Committee will look towards better evaluation systems for future use.

The Education Committee reported training for new judges will include an opportunity for job shadowing for one to two weeks prior to a new judge taking the bench. There will also be an initial survey given to new judges to identify areas of further education depending on their prior experience to better prepare them to serve on the bench. The message was shared that if anyone is retiring or planning to leave for any reason that they give as much notice as possible to allow the Judicial Nominating Commission time to organize their schedule and timelines for seeking new candidates.

Judge Overfield raised the issue of retention, storage and distribution of trial/appellate exhibits and different policies in effect. Several methods are utilized, some of which still involve the court reporters and the district court clerks. More information needed to be gathered to have a more informed discussion on this issue at our spring meeting. It will be on the agenda to discuss in April.

Committee Reports:

Technology Committee: Reported on the technology policy to lock down access to out of county confidential information. Reminded everyone of Judge Snyder’s solution when

assigning a case to a judge use a form to order access. Judge Snyder emailed the form to everyone in the conference.

Additional committee reports were given by the following committees: Access to Justice, Behavioral Health, Education, E-Filing, Executive, Forms, Human Resources, Legislative, Technology Civil Rules Committee and Service of Process.

A few reports were substantive and already mentioned in the earlier discussions. Judge Hibben talked about abduction prevention orders that can be used in certain cases, but will not be part of the standard forms packet. The Technology Committee reminded everyone of the technology upgrade requirement for all court reporters to utilize Windows 11. Judge Phillips reported the Civil Rules Committee was proposing a change to Wyoming Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 4 to allow for alternative means of service of judicial process. The proposed rule change would be put out to comment to the State Bar and further vetted before any final rule changes would go to the Wyoming Judicial Council for approval.

The next meeting of the District Court Judges Conference was rescheduled due to the unavailability of the Saratoga conference facilities on the previously scheduled dates. The next meeting will be held in Saratoga, Wyoming on April 23-24, 2026.

APPROVED AT DCJC MEETING APRIL 24, 2026.



DCJC Secretary/Treasurer