

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

ROBERT L. BLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

LEWIS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

DECEMBER 2005

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits conducted an Education Performance Audit of Robert L. Bland Middle School in Lewis County on November 17, 2004.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Robert L. Bland Middle School in Lewis County was conducted October 11, 2005. The purpose of the follow-up was to verify correction of the findings identified during the original Education Performance Audit. The review was in accordance with West Virginia Code §18-2E-5 and West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320 which specify that a school that meets or exceeds the performance and progress standards but has other deficiencies shall remain on full accreditation status and a county school district shall remain on full approval status for the remainder of the accreditation period and shall have an opportunity to correct those deficiencies. The Code and policy include the provision that a school "... does not have any deficiencies which would endanger student health or safety or other extraordinary circumstances as defined by the West Virginia Board of Education."

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
2003-2004**

41 LEWIS COUNTY
Dr. Joseph A. Mace, Superintendent
301 ROBERT L. BLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL - Needs Improvement
Mary Grace Tallhamer, Principal
Grades 05 - 08
Enrollment 880

Group	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Enrolled on April 20	Number Tested	Participation Rate	Percent Proficient	Met Part. Rate Standard	Met Assessment Standard	Met Subgroup Standard
Mathematics								
All	849	877	875	99.77	63.04	Yes	Yes	✓
White	841	869	867	99.77	63.05	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	453	469	468	99.79	54.20	Yes	No	X
Spec. Ed.	196	198	198	100.00	19.89	Yes	No	X
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading/Language Arts								
All	849	877	874	99.66	69.42	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
White	841	869	866	99.65	69.84	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	453	469	467	99.57	60.84	Yes	No	X
Spec. Ed.	196	198	198	100.00	21.42	Yes	No	X
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

FAY -- Full Academic Year
* -- 0 students in subgroup
** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

**Passed
Attendance Rate = 95.9%**

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2004-2005

This section presents the performance measures and the Follow-up Education Performance Audit Team's findings. The high quality educational standards and performance measures were investigated through the examination of documents; observation of practices; and interviews with personnel, students, and parents.

41 LEWIS COUNTY

Dr. Joseph A. Mace, Superintendent

301 ROBERT L. BLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL - Needs Improvement

Grace Tallhamer, Principal

Grades 05 - 08

Enrollment 889

Group	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Enrolled on Test Week	Number Tested	Participation Rate	Percent Proficient	Met Part. Rate Standard	Met Assessment Standard	Met Subgroup Standard
Mathematics								
All	849	896	890	99.33	67.49	Yes	Yes	✓
White	837	884	878	99.32	67.62	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	483	515	513	99.61	59.12	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	178	185	182	98.37	19.42	Yes	No	✗
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Reading/Language Arts								
All	849	896	891	99.44	72.81	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
White	837	884	879	99.43	72.90	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	483	515	513	99.61	66.11	Yes	Safe Harbors	✓
Spec. Ed.	178	185	183	98.91	22.15	Yes	No	✗
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA

FAY -- Full Academic Year

* -- 0 students in subgroup

** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

Passed
Attendance Rate = 95.4%

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Below Standard

5.1.1. Achievement.

Robert L. Bland Middle School failed to achieve adequately yearly progress (AYP) in one or more subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. Two subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement, included: Economically disadvantaged students (SES) and special education students (SE). In accordance with Section 9.5 of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320, *A Process for Improving Education: Performance Based Accreditation System*, the West Virginia Board of Education issued the school Temporary Accreditation status at the September 10, 2004 State Board meeting.

The Team determined that the Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) had been revised to address 5.1.1. Achievement.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

NONCOMPLIANCE. Robert L. Bland Middle School improved achievement in the economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroup and made adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the Safe Harbor provision of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The school did not achieve AYP in the special education (SE) subgroup in the 2004-2005 school year.

The staff implemented the activities in the Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) to improve achievement. Some of those activities were:

1. Staff development on differentiated instructional strategies with co-teaching, West Virginia Six-Point Writing Assessment (WVDOE), Marzano's Instructional Strategies, and Project Learning.
2. Prioritization of the mathematics curriculum.
3. After-school tutoring in mathematics, reading, and writing.
4. Teachers' team planning time is used two days a week to tutor students who are behind in class work or work on students' skill deficiencies as shown by their WESTEST scores.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

NONCOMPLIANCES

6.1. Curriculum

- 6.1.2. High expectations. Through curricular offerings, instructional practices, and administrative practices, staff demonstrates high expectations for the learning and achieving of all students and all students have equal educational opportunities including reteaching, enrichment, and acceleration. (Policy 2510)**

Approximately 60 percent of the students in one science class were not making adequate progress. An interview with the Special Education Aide in the classroom revealed that none of her special education students were passing the course.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. Due to curriculum reorganization, the number of teachers in some areas (science and social studies) was reduced. This particular teacher was caught in the Reduction In Force (RIF) and was transferred to a fifth grade classroom. The principal has conferenced several times with the teacher about students' grades. The teacher's grades are being monitored by the principal every 4½ weeks with grade distribution information and conferences.

- 6.1.4. Instruction. Instruction is consistent with the programmatic definitions in Policy 2510. (Policy 2510)**

Generally, instructional strategies employed by teachers were many and varied. However, some of the science teachers did not meet the 50 percent investigation, inquiry, and experimentation requirements of Policy 2510. This may be attributed to the lack of properly equipped laboratories.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. All science classrooms now have tables and science teachers have been advised they may order whatever equipment and supplies, within reason, needed for their science classes. Visits to the science rooms showed teachers and students were all involved in hands-on science activities. The 50 percent requirement was being monitored by the principal through regular reviews of lesson plans and classroom visits.

- 6.1.11. Guidance and advisement. Students are provided specific guidance and advisement opportunities to allow them to choose a career major prior to completion of grade 10. (Policy 2510)**

There was no evidence that Developmental Guidance was being taught. Interviews with teachers and students indicated that character education was being discussed on Mondays, but no other component was addressed. The Team recommended that the guidance counselors be rescheduled to provide instruction of Developmental Guidance.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The guidance counselors developed a guide for teaching developmental guidance in the school. The program was being implemented by the counselors as they were scheduled into social studies classrooms. Counselors were currently implementing the developmental guidance program in the grades five and six classrooms. Grades seven and eight classes will be scheduled later in the year. The counseling staff had been increased by one-half a counselor this year to a total of two counselors for the school.

6.1.13. Instructional day. Priority is given to teaching and learning, and classroom instructional time is protected from interruption. An instructional day is provided that includes a minimum of 315 minutes for kindergarten and grades 1 through 4; 330 minutes for grades 5 through 8; and 345 minutes for grades 9 through 12. The county board submits a school calendar with a minimum 180 instructional days. (W.Va. Code §18-5-45; Policy 2510)

Advisory time did meet the requirements of instructional time. Instructional time must be supported with Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) or a waiver by the local school board. Homework; tutoring; and community projects, although good activities, did not have Content Standards and Objectives and did not meet the definition of instruction. If this is included, the school does not meet the requirements of 330 minutes of instruction for a school day.

The Advisory time was considered in the 330 minutes required daily instruction. Activities during this time, i.e., homework, tutoring, and community projects are not instruction. Therefore, the school did not meet the required 330 minutes of instruction.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The school schedule had been reorganized and the advisory was eliminated from the schedule with this time added to the core classes.

6.2. Student and School Performance

6.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback. Lesson plans that are based on approved content standards and objectives are prepared in advance and the principal reviews, comments on them a minimum of once each quarter, and provides written feedback to the teacher as necessary to improve instruction. (Policy 2510; Policy 5310)

Through interviews with the staff, the Team found that one teacher did not have written lesson plans, nor could it be explained that the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) were being covered. It is imperative that lesson plans be developed by all

teachers and that the CSOs be covered to assure student achievement. Given the performance of the economically disadvantaged (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups, it is particularly important that lesson plans be prepared in advance and the principal review and comment on them for instructional relevance.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE The principal provided training to the staff on correlating instruction with the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). This correlation was monitored by the principal through lesson plans reviews. The one teacher cited had current year lesson plans available for the Team to review.

6.5. Administrative Practices and School-Community Relations

6.5.2. Codes of conduct. The county and schools implement, investigate, and monitor the code of conduct for students and the code of conduct for employees. (W.Va. Code §18-2E-5; Policy 4373; Policy 5902)

Student grades in a science classroom were posted on a bulletin board. Students were referenced by student number and only the failing grades were posted. The Education Performance Audit Team and students interviewed viewed this as a punitive action and a violation of confidentiality.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The principal instructed staff not to post any grades for any students anywhere in the building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.3. Learning environment. Student interviews revealed that an adequate number of functional rest room facilities and water fountains was not available for the student population. It was evident that this issue negatively affected the learning environment. The Team recommended that the facility be upgraded to provide appropriate facilities for the student and faculty.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. Even though the number of facilities (rest rooms and water fountains) had not changed, the county maintenance department has attempted to keep the facilities in full operation.

6.1.5. Instructional strategies. Not all teachers reported receiving appropriate training in inclusion of special education students in the regular education classrooms. This leads to inappropriate or under utilized collaboration between regular and special education teachers and aides. The Team recommended that proper training and sustained staff

development be provided to encourage the development of a more effective, collaborative team approach.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. The staff received several staff development programs on instructional strategies and how to work effectively in co-teacher settings.

6.1.5. Instructional strategies. Teacher interviews indicated that appropriate modifications for special education students in the regular education environment were not being provided in all settings. The Team recommended that Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) be carefully reviewed by teachers and building administrators to assure that appropriate instruction, through modification, is being delivered to special education students in the general education classrooms.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. During the team planning time, all general education and special education teachers plan together for instruction for all the students.

General classroom teachers were provided lists of special education students in their classes which showed modifications of instruction needed for each special education student enrolled in their class.

INDICATORS OF EFFICIENCY

Indicators of efficiency for student and school system performance and processes were reviewed in the following areas: Curriculum delivery, including but not limited to, the use of distance learning; facilities; administrative practices; personnel; utilization of regional education service agency, or other regional services that may be established by their assigned regional education service agency. This section contains indicators of efficiency that the Education Performance Team assessed as requiring more efficient and effective application.

The indicators of efficiency listed are intended to guide Robert L. Bland Middle School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Indicators of Efficiency shall not be used to affect the approval status of Lewis County or the accreditation status of the schools.

Curriculum delivery.

Collaboration between the special educators and general educators was not effective. The Team recommended that the Lewis County Director of Special Education contact the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education, and the RESA VII Director of Special Education for assistance in collaboration and curriculum delivery.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The Lewis County Special Education Director worked with the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education, to provide two training sessions on classroom collaboration and effective instructional strategies. RESA VII personnel also provided instructional strategies training for the staff.

BUILDING CAPACITY TO CORRECT DEFICIENCIES

- 16.1. Capacity building is a process for targeting resources strategically to improve the teaching and learning process. School and county Unified Improvement Plan development is intended, in part, to provide mechanisms to target resources strategically to the teaching and learning process to improve student, school, and school system performance.**

The Team determined that Robert L. Bland Middle School and Lewis County have the capacity with the assistance of the West Virginia Department of Education and RESA VII to correct the identified deficiencies.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

Achievement of the students in the economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroup improved to the point the school achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) in this subgroup. The special education (SE) subgroup did not achieve AYP during the 2004-2005 school year and did not demonstrate progress. Robert L. Bland Middle School is urged to continue engaging RESA VII and the West Virginia Department of Education for assistance.

IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCE NEEDS

A thorough and efficient system of schools requires the provision of an adequate level of appropriately managed resources. The West Virginia Board of Education adopted resource evaluation as a part of the accreditation and evaluation process. This process is intended to meaningfully evaluate the needs for facilities, personnel, curriculum, equipment and materials in each of the county's schools and how those impact program and student performance.

- 17.1. Facilities, equipment, and materials.** Facilities and equipment specified in Policy 6200, Chapters 1 through 14, are available in all schools, classrooms, and other required areas. A determination will be made by using the Process for Improving Education (W.Va. Code §18-2E-5) whether any identified deficiencies adversely impact and impair the delivery of a high quality educational program if it is below the West Virginia Board of Education standards due to inadequacies or inappropriate management in the areas of facilities, equipment, and materials. The Education Performance Audit Teams shall utilize an assessment instrument for the evaluation of school facilities which generally follows the requirements of Policy 6200. Note: Corrective measures to be taken in response to any identified resource deficiency will of necessity be subject to the feasibility of modifying existing facilities, consideration of alternative methods of instructional delivery, availability of funding, and prioritization of educational needs through Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plans and the West Virginia School Building Authority. This policy does not change the authority, judgment, or priorities of the School Building Authority who is statutorily responsible for prioritizing "Need" for the purpose of funding school improvements or school construction in the State of West Virginia or the prerogative of the Legislature in providing resources. (Policy 6200 and *Tomblin v. Gainer*)

According to the items checked in the School Facilities Evaluation Checklist, the school was below standard in the following areas. The principal checked and the Team confirmed the following school facility resource needs.

- 17.1.1. School location.** The site was not 11 acres +1 acre for each 100 students over 600 and the site was not large enough for future expansion. The school was not located away from undesirable noise and traffic. The site was not suitable for special instructional needs, e.g., outdoor learning. Sidewalks were not adequate with designated crosswalks, curbcuts, and correct slope. On-site solid surface parking was not sufficient for staff, visitors, and handicapped individuals.
- 17.1.2. Administrative and service facilities.** An adequate reception/waiting area was not available.
- 17.1.3. Teachers' workroom.** An adequate teachers' work area was not provided.
- 17.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art area did not have access to natural and artificial light, hot and cold water, outlets, a ceramic kiln, or black-out areas. The music facility was not located away from quiet areas of the building and did not have music stands, podium, recording devices, microphones, stereo sound system, piano, audiovisual equipment, or acoustical treatment.

- 17.1.11. Grades 6-12 science facilities.** The science facilities were not adequate in size (40-50 square feet/student with 1000 square feet minimum). There was no AC and DC current, air vacuum, or darkening provisions.
- 17.1.14. Food service.** The food service area was not convenient to a service drive for deliveries and removal of wastes. The food service area could not accommodate 3/8s of the student body. Seating for dining and study purposes and a chalkboard and bulletin board were not available. A teachers' dining area that was of adequate size (250-300 square feet) was not available.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The facility resource needs remained as noted in the January 2005 Draft Report with the exception of the following:

- 1. A cafeteria addition allowed sufficient seating for dining.**
- 2. A new fire alarm and sprinkler system had been installed.**
- 3. The other building needs identified, along with other facilities improvements, had been included in the county Major Improvement Project (MIP) request.**

EARLY DETECTION AND INTERVENTION

One of the most important elements in the Education Performance Audit process is monitoring student progress through early detection and intervention programs.

Given the achievement levels of students in the economically disadvantaged students (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups, Robert L. Bland Middle School and Lewis County must implement curriculum and instruction that will improve achievement. Lewis County must actively pursue assistance from RESA VII, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the West Virginia Center for Professional Development to assist with school improvement efforts. Curriculum must be data-driven and instruction must be relevant to the curriculum and provide all students the opportunity to learn.

TEAM SUMMARY

RESA VII and the West Virginia Department of Education provided Robert L. Bland Middle School numerous professional development/training programs.

- 1. Strategic Plan.**
- 2. County Improvement Team.**
- 3. Writing Rubric.**
- 4. Differentiated Instruction.**
- 5. Special Education Summer Workshops.**
- 6. Cooperative Learning.**
- 7. Literacy Strategies for Every Teacher.**
- 8. Strategies for Teaching in the Block.**
- 9. Effective Co-Teaching and Teaming.**

**SCHOOL SYSTEM APPROVAL AND SCHOOL ACCREDITATION
STATUS**

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit High Quality Standards	Annual Performance Measures Needing Improvement	Date Certain
41-301 Robert L. Bland Middle	Temporary Accreditation		5.1.1 (SE)	May 31, 2007

The Office of Education Performance Audits recommends that the West Virginia Board of Education continue the Full Approval status of the Lewis County School System and continue the Temporary Accreditation status of Robert L. Bland Middle School with a May 31, 2007 Date Certain to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).