

# OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



**FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR**

**BLUEFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**NOVEMBER 2005**

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits conducted an Education Performance Audit of Bluefield Middle School in Mercer County on October 7, 2004.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Bluefield Middle School in Mercer County was conducted October 10, 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

**51 MERCER COUNTY**  
Dr. Deborah H. Akers, Superintendent  
**301 BLUEFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL – Needs Improvement**  
Dr. Stephen B. Akers, Principal  
Grades 06 - 08  
Enrollment 587

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
<b>Mathematics</b>								
All	560	589	571	96.94	56.53	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
White	429	454	440	96.92	63.94	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	129	133	129	96.99	32.00	Yes	No	X
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	353	378	360	95.24	42.85	Yes	No	X
Spec. Ed.	124	129	122	94.57	17.09	Yes	No	X
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
<b>Reading/Language Arts</b>								
All	560	589	569	96.60	77.26	Yes	Yes	✓
White	429	454	438	96.48	82.60	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	129	133	129	96.99	60.00	Yes	No	X
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	353	378	358	94.71	69.46	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	124	129	120	93.02	26.95	By Improvement	No	X
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA

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

**Passed  
Attendance Rate = 94.7%**

## 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.

### 51 MERCER COUNTY

Dr. Deborah H. Akers, Superintendent

### 301 BLUEFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL – Needs Improvement

Todd Browning, Principal

Grades 06 - 08

Enrollment 595

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
<b>Mathematics</b>								
All	527	560	552	98.57	66.09	Yes	Yes	✓
White	400	424	419	98.82	72.29	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	125	134	131	97.76	46.34	Yes	Safe Harbors	✓
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	362	387	381	98.44	58.26	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	97	105	104	99.04	25.00	Yes	Safe Harbors	✓
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
<b>Reading/Language Arts</b>								
All	527	560	552	98.57	80.07	Yes	Yes	✓
White	400	424	418	98.58	84.59	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	125	134	132	98.50	66.12	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	362	387	381	98.44	73.10	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	97	105	105	100.00	29.89	Yes	No	X
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA

FAY -- Full Academic Year

\* -- 0 students in subgroup

\*\* -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

**Passed**  
**Attendance Rate = 93.7%**

## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

### Below Standard

#### 5.1.1. Achievement

Bluefield Middle School failed to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) in one or more subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. Three subgroups designated in 5.1.1 Achievement, included: Racial/Ethnic Black students (B), economically disadvantaged (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.** The percentage of special education students (SE) performing at the proficient level in reading/language arts was not sufficient to meet adequate yearly progress. The county system and the school have taken steps to increase student achievement by providing staff development in Learning Focus, higher order thinking skills, and differentiated instruction. The inclusion of special education students into general classes was expanded. An academic coach was employed to assist teachers and a Closing the Achievement Gap liaison from the West Virginia Department of Education was assigned to the school. The academic coach and the liaison have done model teaching with the staff.

## 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 education opportunities including reteaching, enrichment, and acceleration. (Policy 2510)

Through Team observations, three teachers did not show high expectations for their students. There was no evidence of varied instructional strategies and students were not engaged in the educational process.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE.** The Team observed that the teachers showed high expectations for all the students. Students were engaged in the instructional process, higher order thinking skills were evident, teachers were using open-ended questioning techniques, hands on student activities were occurring, and students were using graphic organizers.

**6.6. Personnel**

**6.6.2. Licensure.** Professional educators and other professional employees required to be licensed under West Virginia Board of Education policy are licensed for their assignments including employees engaged in extracurricular activities. (W.Va. Code §18A-3-2; Policy 5202)

The teacher who taught the Bible class was not certified by the State.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE .** The teacher was certified.

## **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 Bluefield Middle School and Mercer County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

**The Mercer County School system and Bluefield Middle School have taken steps to increase student achievement. The academic coach and liaison from the West Virginia Department of Education have done model teaching for the staff to provide teachers with additional teaching strategies. The inclusion program has been expanded to ensure that all students are taught the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). With the resources that are available and the steps that have been taken the Team determined that Bluefield Middle School and Mercer County have the capacity to increase student achievement. The school has demonstrated improved student achievement and increased the number of subgroups performing at the proficient level. During 2003-2004, the Racial/Ethnicity Black (B), Economically Disadvantaged (SES), and Special Education (SE) subgroups were below proficiency. Current WESTEST results show that only one subgroup (SE) performed below proficiency.**

## **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.

**17.2. School personnel.** Bluefield Middle School's greatest concern is personnel and the number of substitute teachers. At the time of the Education Performance Audit eight (8) long-term substitutes were employed, three (3) were teaching for teachers on medical leave and five (5) occupied vacant teaching positions. While the necessity for personnel is reasonable, realistic, and conforms to statutory requirements; the need for consistent, stable staff affects the teaching and learning process. For example, the substitute who was teaching science was not certified to teach science and will be long-term until January. It was noted that the science teachers plan together and meet as a team daily, thereby, assisting the substitute.

According to the principal, staff recruitment is a challenge. The Team noted that the staff at Bluefield Middle School was a dedicated professional group, and committed to educating students.

Bluefield Middle School has endured a declining enrollment from approximately 1200 students to a current 587. A shift in population trends has also occurred from a 33 percent Ethnicity/Black (B) population to 23 percent B. The school has a 70 percent rate of Economically Disadvantaged (SES) students.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

**According to the principal four long-term substitutes were employed. One mathematics teacher was out for medical leave and a certified substitute was filling the position.**

**A Grade 6 vacancy was being taught by a certified substitute.**

**A vacancy for a teacher of behavior disorder students was being advertised. The position was being filled by a non-certified substitute who was in the process of obtaining a permit.**

**A substitute for an inclusion teacher was not certified for special education; however, the teacher was certified as a Grade 6 teacher.**

**The school personnel situation has improved over last year (2004-2005); however, staff recruitment continues to be a challenge for Mercer County.**



**SCHOOL SYSTEM APPROVAL AND SCHOOL ACCREDITATION  
STATUS**

<b>School</b>	<b>Accreditation Status</b>	<b>Education Performance Audit High Quality Standards</b>	<b>Annual Performance Measures Needing Improvement</b>	<b>Date Certain</b>
51-301 Bluefield Middle School	Conditional Accreditation		5.1.1 (SE)	May 31, 2007