

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

PRINCETON MIDDLE SCHOOL

MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

APRIL 2006

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits conducted an Education Performance Audit of Princeton Middle School in Mercer County on May 11, 2005.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Princeton Middle School in Mercer County was conducted March 1, 2006. 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 S. Akers, Superintendent

403 PRINCETON MIDDLE SCHOOL - Needs Improvement

Joe McKenzie, Principal

Grades 06 - 08

Enrollment 595

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	550	595	593	99.66	61.56	Yes	Yes	✓
White	506	549	547	99.64	62.17	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	35	37	37	100.00	45.71	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Low SES	276	314	312	99.36	48.00	Yes	No	✗
Spec. Ed.	81	100	98	98.00	15.00	Yes	No	✗
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Reading/Language Arts								
All	550	595	594	99.83	81.09	Yes	Yes	✓
White	506	549	548	99.82	81.81	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	35	37	37	100.00	68.57	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Low SES	276	314	313	99.68	71.73	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	81	100	99	99.00	34.56	Yes	No	✗
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**

FAY -- Full Academic Year

* -- 0 students in subgroup

** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

**Passed
Attendance Rate = 96.2%**

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 S. Akers, Superintendent

403 PRINCETON MIDDLE SCHOOL - Needs Improvement

Danny K. Buckner, Principal

Grades 06 - 08

Enrollment 576

MERCER COUNTY								
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	536	588	584	99.31	69.41	Yes	Yes	✓
White	491	538	535	99.44	70.34	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	38	39	38	97.43	51.35	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Low SES	272	305	301	98.68	56.87	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	85	97	96	98.96	17.85	Yes	No	✗
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Reading/Language Arts								
All	536	588	585	99.48	81.83	Yes	Yes	✓
White	491	538	536	99.62	82.44	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	38	39	38	97.43	70.27	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Low SES	272	305	302	99.01	71.48	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	85	97	96	98.96	35.71	Yes	No	✗
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**

FAY -- Full Academic Year

* -- 0 students in subgroup

** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

Passed
Attendance Rate = 95.1%

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Below Standard

5.1.1. Achievement.

Princeton 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 improve performance and progress on the standard and the West Virginia Board of Education upgraded Princeton Middle School to Conditional Accreditation status with a May 31, 2007 Date Certain to achieve AYP.

Princeton Middle School achieved AYP in the economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroup in reading/language arts subgroup only by application of the confidence interval. It is further noted that the racial/ethnicity black (B) subgroup with the number (N) less than 50, scored below the State's percent proficient level in mathematics and reading/language arts. The county curriculum staff and school staff are urged to address these subgroups in the county and school Unified Improvement Plans and apply interventions to close the achievement gap for the B and SES students.

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) information by class indicated that reading assessment scores showed a high percent of students proficient. However, mathematics scores showed a lower level of student achievement. Grade 6 class results showed 37.99% of students below mastery. The mathematics class results provide an indication for Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) development and school improvement.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

NONCOMPLIANCE. Princeton Middle School failed to achieve adequately yearly progress (AYP) in the special education (SE) subgroup designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. The school and county had implemented initiatives to increase the percentage of students performing at the proficient level which included the following.

1. Increased inclusion of special education students in general classes.
2. Providing two mathematics classes for all students
3. Employment of an academic coach to assist teachers.
4. Before and after-school tutoring.
5. Prioritizing the curriculum.
6. Learning focused strategies.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

NONCOMPLIANCES

6.1. Curriculum

- 6.1.1. Curriculum based on content standards and objectives. The curriculum is based on the content standards and objectives approved by the West Virginia Board of Education. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)**

Laboratory and hands-on science instruction did not make up 50 percent active inquiry, investigation, and experimentation of laboratory time according to classroom observations, lesson plans, grade books, and student and teacher interviews.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. A review of lesson plans and classroom observations showed that laboratory and hands-on science activities made up 50 percent active inquiry, investigation, and experimentation.

- 6.1.5. Instructional strategies. Staff demonstrates the use of the various instructional strategies and techniques contained in Policies 2510 and 2520. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)**

Inappropriate movies, as expressed by the students, were being shown in one English class. Some of which contained inappropriate language and content. Movies included: *Jurassic Park*, *The Mothman Prophecy*, and *The Incredibles*. The value of these movies was not expressed to the students as instructional. The Team recommended that any audiovisual (media) content be aligned with the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). Caution must be taken to preview the media to avoid content containing profanity and inappropriate content of questionable educational value.

A substitute teacher was using inadequate instructional strategies, as well as one teacher hired on a yearly permit. The substitute teacher was reading a paperback novel during instructional time. Improper use of inclusion method was evident by the permit teacher and the teacher lacked lesson plans. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or lesson plans of previous weeks were not available. This teacher refused to provide IEPs or ask the administration to make them available. The instructor did not have technology available for instruction. The Team recommended that substitute teachers be made aware of expectations for the building and be monitored by the administration.

A feeling of curriculum separation was evident from the perspective of the special education department by not being included in grade level team planning. The Team recommended that the special education department be included in a common planning period with appropriate grade level teams.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The Team determined that planning time had been adjusted to provide special education teachers the opportunity to meet with general education teachers. Guidelines for the use of movies and videos had been developed and included in the teacher handbook.

6.1.8. Instructional materials. Sufficient numbers of approved up-to-date textbooks, instructional materials, and other resources are available to deliver curricular content for the full instructional term. (Policy 2510)

One English teacher indicated that an insufficient number of textbooks were available in the class for every student.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The Team determined through teacher interviews that sufficient numbers of textbooks and supplemental materials were available.

6.7. Safe, Drug Free, Violence Free, and Disciplined Schools

6.7.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations. School rules, procedures, and expectations are written; clearly communicated to students, parents, and staff; and enforced. (Policy 2510; Policy 4373)

One teacher used as discipline procedure the writing of sentences 25 times. The discipline of writing sentences is not an effective use of time and should be revised to apply discipline appropriate to the behavior. Also, this type of discipline may have the effect of discouraging students from writing if it is considered a form of discipline.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. A five-step discipline plan and a Positive Behavior Support program had been implemented, neither of which included writing as a punishment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.12. Multicultural activities. Although there were numerous high quality multicultural activities throughout the building, it was not evident that the multicultural activities were combined into a schoolwide multicultural program. The Team recommended that a cohesive plan be developed that defined intentional participation of all students in a schoolwide, year-long multicultural plan.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. A countywide Multicultural Plan had been approved by the Mercer County Board of Education.

6.2.2. Counseling services. Students interviewed expressed that counselors were not always available to discuss safety and code of conduct issues important to students. The Team suggested that counselors increase contact time involving issues such as bullying, sexual harassment, and all other areas of the student Code of Conduct that the students stated were of concern to them. This process should involve both the classroom teachers and the counselor.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. The counselors' offices had been moved to the classroom area of the school making counselor services more accessible to students. The Team determined through interviews and counselor logs and schedules that 75 percent of the counselors' time was in direct services to students.

6.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews. Chemicals not permitted by law for middle school instruction were found in chemistry classes. These included chemicals such as benzene and formaldehyde, as well as several questionable concentrated acids and organic solutions. Chemicals were improperly stored with aerosol cans, flammable materials, and concentrated acids. No Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) were available. Chemicals had leaked and mixed to overflow onto flammable materials. This was a violation of State Fire Code. The Team recommended that collaboration be made with the local high school chemistry teachers, the West Virginia State Fire Marshal, and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) science instructional coordinator, for an appropriate and safe storage of all chemicals. By law, MSDS must be available for each chemical of which none currently exist. Immediate cleanup and a long-range chemical inventory plan needed to be developed.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. A countywide inventory and disposal was conducted at all middle and high school science classrooms. All unsafe chemicals had been removed.

6.5.2. Codes of conduct. Information gathered from student interviews alleged inappropriate conduct from a faculty member toward middle school females. Student comments indicated awareness of the alleged inappropriate conduct and feeling uncomfortable in the presence of the teacher. The Team recommended that an investigation of the comments be conducted by the superintendent, principal, and any necessary outside agencies as prescribed by law. The Team brought this to the attention of the superintendent the morning following the Education Performance Audit. Subsequent to the audit, the county superintendent immediately conducted an investigation of the allegation and reported action regarding the results of the county's findings.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. The county immediately investigated the allegations and took action.

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 Princeton Middle School and Mercer County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies.

If the school fails to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) or show progress in the subgroups on the 2005 WESTEST, the Office of Education Performance Audits recommends that the West Virginia Department of Education school improvement team provide assistance to the school.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

While the school did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in all subgroups, the school did improve the percentage of students performing at the proficient level. The Team determined that Princeton Middle School and Mercer County Schools have the capacity to increase student achievement with the initiatives that have been implemented.

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.

17.1.8. Grades 1-12 classrooms. Room 109 was not of adequate size and did not have the following: Communication technologies, adequate storage, a chalkboard, a teacher's desk, a computer station, sufficient desks and chairs, and audiovisual equipment/controllable light/outlets, etc. Room 111 lacked adequate storage. Room 114 was not of adequate size. Room 115 was not of adequate size and lacked adequate amounts of storage. Room 117 was not of adequate size and did not have a computer station. Room 118 was not of adequate size and lacked adequate communication technologies. Room 119 was not of adequate size. Room 201 did not have sufficient numbers of student desks. Room 205 did not have a computer station. Rooms 207 and 209 did not have adequate storage.

17.1.9. Grades K-12 remedial. The K-12 remedial room was inadequate in size.

- 17.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The music facility was inadequate in size, was not located away from quiet areas of the building, lacked adequate storage, and lacked the following materials: Music stands, microphone, stereo sound system, piano, AV recording devices, equipment, and acoustical treatment. The physical education facility did not have electrical outlets.
- 17.1.11. Grades 6-12 science facilities.** As a whole, the science facilities were inadequate in size and were not located with easy access to outdoor activities and isolated to keep odors from the remainder of the building. AC and DC current, air vacuum, ventilation fume hoods, and sufficient laboratory workspace were not available.
- 17.1.12. Grades 7-12 auditorium/stage.** The controlled illumination was outdated and there were inadequate numbers of electrical outlets.
- 17.1.14. Food service.** A teachers' dining area and locker/dressing room were not provided.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The facility resource needs remained as noted in the July 2005 Draft Report.

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.

The counseling services needed to be revised to address the issues of concern related by the students.

The Team recommended that Princeton Middle School pursue assistance from the Mercer County central office, RESA I, and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) to increase student achievement in all areas. Given the low performance in these cells, it is imperative that programs and practices be implemented immediately in order to address these issues.

TEAM SUMMARY

The counseling services had been adjusted to better serve the students. The counselors' offices were easily accessible to students, the counselors were frequently in classrooms, small group and individual counseling was evident, the counselors were involved in the academic advisory period, and all students suspended from school were referred to the counselor.

**SCHOOL SYSTEM APPROVAL AND SCHOOL ACCREDITATION
STATUS**

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit High Quality Standards	Annual Performance Measures Needing Improvement	Date Certain
51-403 Princeton Middle	Conditional Accreditation		5.1.1 (SE)	May 31, 2007

Education Performance Audit Summary

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