

# OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



**FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR**

**BLUEFIELD HIGH 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 Bluefield High School in Mercer County on May 12, 2005.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Bluefield High School in Mercer County was conducted March 3, 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

**502 BLUEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL - Needs Improvement**

Joseph Turner, Principal

Grades 09 - 12

Enrollment 655

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	130	135	131	97.04	53.90	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
White	93	97	93	95.88	61.53	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	37	38	38	100.00	35.13	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	68	71	69	97.18	40.90	Yes	No	✗
Spec. Ed.	31	31	30	96.77	10.00	NA	NA	NA
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>Reading/Language Arts</b>								
All	130	135	131	97.04	72.65	Yes	Yes	✓
White	93	97	93	95.88	78.02	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	37	38	38	100.00	59.45	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	68	71	69	97.18	59.09	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	31	31	30	96.77	23.33	NA	NA	NA
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

FAY -- Full Academic Year

\* -- 0 students in subgroup

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

**Passed**

**Graduation Rate = 87.5%**

## 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  
**502 BLUEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL – Passed**  
Joseph Turner, Principal  
Grades 09 - 12  
Enrollment 658

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	146	154	149	96.75	72.53	Yes	Yes	✓
White	109	114	112	98.24	74.76	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	37	40	37	92.50	65.71	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	62	66	63	95.45	60.00	Yes	Yes	✓
Spec. Ed.	35	37	34	91.89	24.24	NA	NA	NA
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
<b>Reading/Language Arts</b>								
All	146	154	148	96.10	70.21	Yes	Averaging	✓
White	109	114	111	97.36	74.52	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	37	40	37	92.50	57.14	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	62	66	62	93.93	59.32	By Average	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	35	37	33	89.18	21.87	NA	NA	NA
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**

FAY -- Full Academic Year

\* -- 0 students in subgroup

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

**Passed**  
**Graduation Rate = 89.1%**

## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

### Below Standard

#### 5.1.1. Achievement.

Bluefield High School failed to achieve adequately yearly progress (AYP) in one or more subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. One subgroup designated in 5.1.1. Achievement, included economically disadvantaged students (SES). 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 school revised its Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) to improve performance and progress on the standard and the West Virginia Board of Education upgraded Bluefield High School to Conditional Accreditation status with a May 31, 2007 Date Certain to achieve AYP.

Bluefield High School achieved AYP in the economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroup in reading/language arts and the all students (AS) subgroup in mathematics by application of the confidence interval and may have an achievement deficiency if remediation and interventions have not been emphasized. Additionally, students in the racial/ethnicity black (B) and the special education (SE) subgroups were not considered in AYP because of the number (N) less than 50 in these subgroups. Achievement of students in the B subgroup in mathematics and SE subgroup in reading/language arts and mathematics was substantially below the State's proficiency level. Mercer County curriculum staff and school staff must monitor the achievement of these students and promote instructional strategies and activities that are designed to close the achievement gap.

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) information by class data showed that 30.47 percent of Grade 10 students were below mastery in mathematics. This provides an implication for the Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) and school improvement programs.

### FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

**COMPLIANCE.** Bluefield High School achieved adequately yearly progress (AYP) in all subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. Initiatives that contributed to increased student achievement included the following.

1. Implementation of learning focused strategies.
2. Sequencing of mathematics courses.
3. Implementation of basic skills classes in English and mathematics.
4. Twentieth Century tutoring program.

## EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

### NONCOMPLIANCE

#### 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)**

In numerous cases lesson plans were either incomplete or nonexistent. Often there were no indications of instructional activities. The driver education teachers produced lesson plans from 1995. Physical education, chemistry, and one English teacher failed to produce lesson plans. These plans were not reviewed by the principal and signed with any consistency.

#### FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

**COMPLIANCE. The Team reviewed lesson plans and determined that all teachers had lesson plans. All plans had been reviewed by the administrators and comments were included where needed.**

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1.2 High expectations.** Several economically disadvantaged (SES) students indicated that they felt discriminated against by not being given equal opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities, citing the required participation fees. Activities included: Cheerleading, band, show choir, and athletic teams. The Team recommended that students and parents be advised of alternative methods of payments for these fees. The Team also recommended that the school seek other forms of funding these activities. The principal stated that procedures existed to accommodate these fees; however, several students were not made aware of these procedures and consequently failed to participate in the activities.

#### FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. Procedures were in place to ensure that all students had the opportunity to participate in school activities.**

**6.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.** The Team observed computers in the classrooms were not being integrated into the instruction. Teachers also indicated more technology was used in the computer laboratories than inside their classrooms. Two portable wireless mobile laptop laboratories were available; however, evidence of their use was not observed. The Team recommended that the faculty explore more appropriate integration of technology. Professional development should be provided to assist with this implementation.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.** Professional development for the use of technology had been provided and the Team determined that the portable wireless mobile laptop laboratories were being utilized.

**6.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews.** Surplus legacy chemicals were stored in the chemistry department. These chemicals were both organic and heavy metal in content consisting of the following: 2-butanol, cyclohexane, amyl alcohol, kerosene, gasoline, and sodium. Chemical storage cabinets were used in the classroom and some were not locked nor were the cabinets not vented. The Team recommended that these organic and heavy metal unused chemicals be properly disposed. Furthermore, proper storage of chemicals needed to be assessed. The Team recommended that the school and Mercer County evaluate the need for using mercury compounds in the Advanced Placement Chemistry program. Subsequent to the audit, the county superintendent reported that the chemicals had been removed from the school to ensure safety issues. The Team will verify this removal upon return to the school for the Follow-up Education Performance Audit.

**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.

**6.5.4. Physical Assessment.** The student passage rate on the Presidential Physical Fitness Test (PPFT) declined from 56.82 percent in 2002-03 to 38.51 percent in 2003-04. The physical education department needs to review skill deficiencies and address curriculum as indicated to develop the skills necessary for students to perform at a higher level on the physical assessment.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.** The physical education department was in the process of transitioning to the newly adopted physical assessment program.

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

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

**The identified deficiencies had been corrected.**

- 16.3.2. Determining the areas of weakness and of ineffectiveness that appear to have contributed to the substandard performance of students or the deficiencies of the school or school system;**

Under the direction of the principal and assistant principal, Bluefield High School has begun to investigate programs to correct deficiencies in the area of economically disadvantaged students (SES). Mercer County central office staff is providing assistance and programs are being investigated that will help to increase student achievement at all levels. The Office of Education Performance Audits encourages Mercer County and Bluefield High School staff to implement programs and practices that improve achievement of all students (AS) with particular attention to the racial/ethnicity black (B) and special education (SE) subgroups that have a number (N) of 50 and are not achieving at a high level.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

**Assessment data indicated that the school achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP). The school continued to address those subgroups that met AYP by confidence interval by sequencing the mathematics program and by including more special education students in general classes.**



## 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.

- 17.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art facility did not have mechanical ventilation. The music facilities did not have acoustical treatment. The physical education facilities did not have a drinking fountain, provisions for two or more teaching stations, and a record player or compact disk player.
- 17.1.14. Food service.** The food service area did not have lockers.
- 17.1.15. Health service units.** A health services area of adequate size was not available. The following items were not available: Curtained or small rooms with cots, bulletin board, toilet, lavatory, scales, refrigerator with locked storage, work counter, and desk and chair.

### FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

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

**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>
51-502 Bluefield High	Full Accreditation			

**Education Performance Audit Summary**

The Office of Education Performance Audits recommends that the West Virginia Board of Education continue the Full Accreditation status for Bluefield High School and the Full Approval status of the Mercer County School System.