

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



DRAFT EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

MONONGALIA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

FEBRUARY 2006

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of South Middle School in Monongalia County was conducted on December 7, 2005. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the review was to investigate the reasons for performance and progress that are persistently below standard and to make recommendations to the school and school system, as appropriate, and to the West Virginia Board of Education on such measures as it considers necessary to improve performance and progress to meet the standard.

The Education Performance Audit Team reviewed the Unified School Improvement Plan, interviewed school personnel and school system administrators, observed classrooms, and examined school records. The review was limited in scope and concentrated on the subgroups that failed to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

Office of Education Performance Audits Team Chair – Allen Brock, Coordinator

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Monica Beane, Coordinator, Office of Professional Preparation

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Sarah Lyons, Coordinator, Office of Instructional Technology

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
Ann Downs	Middle School Assistant Principal	Capon Bridge Middle Hampshire County
Brad Fittro	Middle School Assistant Principal	Robert L. Bland Middle Lewis County
Valerie Harris	Middle School Assistant Principal	Bridgeport Middle Harrison County
Kenneth Pack	High School Principal	Martinsburg High Berkeley County
Gregory Reed	High School Assistant Principal	Martinsburg High Berkeley County
Ronald Stephens	High School Principal	Musselman High Berkeley County

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

This section presents the Annual Performance Measures for Accountability and the Education Performance Audit Team's findings.

56 MONONGALIA COUNTY

Frank Devono, Superintendent

401 SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL – Needs Improvement

Dennis Gallon, Principal

Grades 06 - 08

Enrollment 757

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	716	750	739	98.53	76.62	Yes	Yes	✓
White	665	695	686	98.70	77.01	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	43	47	46	97.87	66.66	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	281	307	297	96.74	58.08	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	153	166	162	97.59	38.00	Yes	No	✗
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Reading/Language Arts								
All	716	750	738	98.40	78.43	Yes	Yes	✓
White	665	695	683	98.27	79.35	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	43	47	47	100.00	62.79	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	281	307	298	97.06	60.43	Yes	No	✗
Spec. Ed.	153	166	162	97.59	42.00	Yes	No	✗
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA

FAY -- Full Academic Year

* -- 0 students in subgroup

** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

Passed

Attendance Rate = 97.2%

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Information by Class

Mathematics											
Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished	Proficient
06	214	205	212	204	99.07	7.84	11.76	38.73	30.88	10.78	80.39
07	270	255	264	249	97.78	7.63	18.47	44.98	23.69	5.22	73.90
08	266	256	263	253	98.87	7.51	16.21	41.90	25.69	8.70	76.28

Reading											
Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished	Proficient
06	214	205	209	201	97.66	4.48	12.94	43.28	24.38	14.93	82.59
07	270	255	266	251	98.52	10.76	16.33	38.25	27.89	6.77	72.91
08	266	256	263	253	98.87	2.77	16.60	39.13	28.46	13.04	80.63

Enr. - Enrollment
FAY - Full Academic Year
Part. - Participation

Other Relevant Performance Data

**2004-2005 Writing Assessment
Distribution of Performance Across All Performance Levels
Grade 7**

	Total # Tested	% Novice	% Partial Mastery	% Mastery	% Above Mastery	% Distinguished	% Below # Mastery	% At or # Above Mastery
STATE – WV	21040	2%	24%	57%	14%	3%	27%	73%
MONONGALIA COUNTY	715	3%	23%	57%	12%	4%	26%	74%
SOUTH MIDDLE	265	3%	25%	59%	10%	3%	28%	72%

**Physical Assessment – Presidential Physical Fitness Test
Passage Rate**

Percentage of Students	School Year
49.48%	2003-04
50.46%	2002-03
57.596%	2001-02

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Below Standard

5.1.1. Achievement.

South Middle School failed to achieve adequately yearly progress (AYP) in 5.1.1. Achievement for the economically disadvantaged students (SES) subgroup in reading/language arts and the special education (SE) subgroup in mathematics and reading/language arts. In accordance with Section 9.4 of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320, *A Process for Improving Education: Performance Based Accreditation System*, the West Virginia Board of Education continued the school's Conditional Accreditation status at the September 2005 State Board meeting.

It was further noted that a substantial achievement gap existed for students in the racial/ethnicity black (B), economically disadvantaged (SES), and special education (SE) subgroups and that of the students in the all students (AS) and racial/ethnicity white (W) subgroups. An achievement disparity was also prevalent among the subgroups below the percent proficient. For example, racial/ethnicity (B) students achieved higher than economically disadvantaged (SES) students, most notably in mathematics.

South Middle School achieved AYP in the economically disadvantaged (SES) 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) subgroup were not considered in AYP because of the number (N) less than 50 students. Achievement of students in the racial/ethnicity (B) subgroup in reading/language arts was substantially below the State's proficiency level. Monongalia 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.

The following professional development/training opportunities were provided by the West Virginia Department of Education, RESA VII, county and/or school.

1. CADRE I Reading Initiative.
2. Infusing Literacy into Content Instruction.
3. Overview of Standards Based Mathematics Materials.
4. Reading in Content Areas.
5. WESTEST (How to Prepare Students for the WESTEST).
6. Improving Student Achievement with OnLine Resources.
7. Integrating Understanding by Design into Your Lesson Planning.
8. Marco Polo.
9. Math Around the World.
10. Standards Based Mathematics Activities.
11. Using Rubrics for Evaluation and Learning.

12. Strategic Reading.
13. Teaching with Technology.
14. Generational Poverty.
15. The Differentiated Classroom: Different Strategies for Different Learners.
16. ACT EXPLORE and PLAN Update.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Education Performance Audit Team reported that South Middle School had undertaken initiatives for achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The prominent initiatives and activities included the following.

- 6.1.3. Learning environment.** The educational facility was well maintained and attractive. The facility was designed well and was student-friendly.
- The student body exhibited excellent behavior and impeccable manners throughout the Team's visit. Students were well behaved and presented themselves in a mature manner. The pillars of the Character Education program were thoroughly implemented and observed by all Team members.
- 6.7.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations.** The school environment appeared calm, safe, and nurturing. The students and staff indicated that they felt safe and secure and that the discipline was fair and applied consistently throughout the student body.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress to Meet the Standard (5.1.1. SES and SE)

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)**

The Team interviewed teachers and observed classrooms and determined that some teachers were not utilizing the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) to direct their curriculum. Some teachers referred to the West Virginia Board of Education Instructional Goals and Objectives (IGOs) instead of the CSOs.

- 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)**

When the Team interviewed the grade level teachers during their planning period, several teachers in one grade level team responded, "It is a problem of genetics," when referring to the rationale explaining the low tests scores. Most teachers were not able to articulate how high expectations are conveyed to students.

6.1.3. Learning environment. School staff provides a safe and nurturing environment that is conducive to learning. (Policy 2510)

Special education classrooms had more than two core subjects and grade levels scheduled per period throughout the day. This practice made it difficult, if not impossible, to deliver a high level of effective instruction. Given the achievement scores of the special education (SE) subgroup, this practice impeded student learning and achievement.

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)

The Team did not observe varied instructional strategies and best practices for instruction. Instruction in many of the classes observed relied upon direct instruction with worksheets, reading, and whole group instruction. When the administration was asked how instructional strategies are implemented or demonstrated, the response was that they monitor through lesson plans and classroom walk-throughs. However, classroom observations and lesson plan reviews failed to validate this. Additionally, students were not engaged in activities that promoted higher order thinking skills.

6.1.6. Instruction in writing. Instruction in writing shall be a part of every child's weekly educational curriculum in grades K through 12 in every appropriate class. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)

The Team interviewed teachers and students and found that some teachers were fully implementing instruction in writing (as demonstrated in student portfolios), but other teachers were not providing instruction in writing to all students on a weekly basis. The Team also found that numerous teachers did not collect and correct student writing for spelling, punctuation, content, and grammar after giving students writing assignments.

6.1.12. Multicultural activities. Multicultural activities are included at all programmatic levels, K-4, 5-8, and 9-12 with an emphasis on prevention and zero tolerance for racial, sexual, religious/ethnic harassment or violence. (Policy 2421)

The Team was not presented a multicultural plan. When the principal was asked to present the plan, he provided an agenda for an upcoming meeting at the school level to discuss this plan December 6, 2006. The audit date was December 7, 2005. No formal plan was in place on the date of the audit, although the county is addressing a countywide plan. Additionally, the Team observed minimal multicultural activities in place throughout the building.

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)**

The Team reported that some lesson plans had not been checked by the administration. A lesson plan review schedule was in place; however, some plans were vague and could not be followed by substitute teachers. Given the deficiencies in the special education (SE) subgroup and the performance of the economically disadvantaged (SES) and the racial/ethnicity black (B) subgroups, it is important that the administrators review plans and assure that lessons are coherent, relevant, sequential, and address students' learning needs. The Team did not see a direct relationship of the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) in the lessons. One teacher did not have lesson plans for the date of the audit or for the remaining two days of the week.

6.8. Leadership

- 6.8.1. Leadership. Leadership at the school district, school, and classroom levels is demonstrated by vision, school culture and instruction, management and environment, community, and professionalism. (Policy 5500.03)**

The Team observed that the principal had worked closely with the faculty to develop a strong family culture at the school; however, the school had not advanced to the next step of improvement concerning WESTEST data analysis, varied instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, and the West Virginia Writing Assessment. The administrative team needed to develop an overall plan that brings the Curriculum Team and administration together to address economically disadvantaged (SES), special education (SE), and racial/ethnicity black (B) low assessment results. These meetings need minutes and records and results shared with the Faculty Senate.

The administration could not provide the Team members specific indications of staff meetings. When interviewed, the principal explained that faculty meetings were held on the first Tuesday of each month; however, the Team visited on the first Wednesday and nothing supported any such meeting on the Tuesday preceding the audit. The Team believed strengthened communication between the administration and the staff would improve student achievement issues and assure a schoolwide achievement goal.

RECOMMENDATION

- 6.2.1. Unified County and School Improvement Plan.** The Team observed that while the school had a Five-Year Strategic Plan in place, the staff did not follow some of the items in the plan. Specifically, the activity stated in the plan, "Teachers will begin each class with a sample WESTEST question," was not observed or shown in lesson plans. The Team recommended that the administration review the Five-Year Strategic Plan with staff members and ensure that the plan is implemented fully to enhance student achievement.

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 Audit Team assessed as requiring more efficient and effective application.

The indicators of efficiency listed are intended to guide South Middle School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Monongalia County is obligated to follow the Indicators of Efficiency noted by the Team. Indicators of Efficiency shall not be used to affect the approval status of Monongalia County or the accreditation status of the schools.

7.1.1. Curriculum. The school district and school conduct an annual curriculum audit regarding student curricular requests and overall school curriculum needs, including distance learning in combination with accessible and available resources.

Given the seriousness of the deficiencies found, it is imperative that a concerted effort be made by the staff of South Middle School and Monongalia County to eliminate these issues. Each of the deficiencies reported has a detrimental impact on student achievement; when all are combined, the results can be less than acceptable.

Building Capacity to Correct Deficiencies

West Virginia Code §18-2E-5 establishes that the needed resources are available to assist the school or school system in achieving the standards and alleviating the deficiencies identified in the assessment and accountability process. To assist South Middle School in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS	RECOMMENDED RESOURCES
6.1.1. Curriculum based on content standards and objectives.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.1.2. High expectations.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.1.3. Learning environment.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.1.5. Instructional strategies.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.1.6. Instruction in writing.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.1.12. Multicultural activities.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Student Services and Health Promotion (304) 558-8830
6.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.8.1. Leadership.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Professional Development (304) 558-0539

- 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 South Middle School and Monongalia County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies. However, given the high number and diversity of the issues found assistance from RESA VII and the West Virginia Department of Education must be received. The administration at the school has only been in place less than four years and has made great changes at the school. The Team believed that they have the ability to correct the deficiencies, but assistance from the two groups mentioned above will help expedite this process.

- 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;**

Monongalia County has provided an abundance of staff development in programs and practices to improve student performance. It would be beneficial if staff development programs were continuous and sustained to lead to the results of improved student performance. Student specific levels of achievement need to have weaknesses addressed with learning sequences applied to students' prior knowledge. Assessment must be ongoing with identified criteria linked to students' mastery of the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs).

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 plus one acre for each 100 students over 600. The site was not large enough for future expansion.
- 17.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art facility was not of adequate size, did not have adequate storage, and did not have two deep sinks.
- 17.1.11. Grades 6-12 science facilities.** The science facilities were not of adequate size and did not have a sink, hot and cold water, gas, and adequate storage.

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), special education (SE), and racial/ethnicity black (B) subgroups, South Middle School and Monongalia County must implement high yield instructional practices that will improve students' achievement. Monongalia 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. Instructional activities must be data-driven and instruction must be relevant to the curriculum and provide all students the opportunity to learn.

School Accreditation Status

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit High Quality Standards	Annual Performance Measures Needing Improvement	Date Certain
56-401 South Middle	Conditional Accreditation	6.1.1; 6.1.2; 6.1.3;		
		6.1.5; 6.1.6; 6.1.12; 6.2.3; 6.8.1	5.1.1 (SES/ SE)	May 31, 2007

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team identified eight (8) high quality standards – necessary to improve performance and progress to meet 5.1.1 Achievement – for economically disadvantaged (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups. The Team also presented two (2) school initiatives for achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP) and one (1) recommendation. The Team offered an indicator of efficiency for curriculum, suggested capacity building resources, and noted an early detection and intervention concern.

South Middle School’s Education Performance Audit was limited in scope to the performance and process standards and progress related to student and school performance in the area of deficiency (5.1.1 SES/SE). The Team also conducted a resource evaluation to assess the resource needs of the school. The Team submits this draft report to guide South Middle School in improvement efforts. The school and county have until the next accreditation cycle to correct deficiencies noted in the report and a Date Certain of May 31, 2007 to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).