

# OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



**DRAFT EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR**

**NICHOLAS COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

**NICHOLAS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**NOVEMBER 2005**

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Nicholas County High School in Nicholas County was conducted on October 12, 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 – Donna Burge-Tetrick, Coordinator,  
Office of Planning, Evaluation, Special Programs and Support Services

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Dr. Karen Huffman, Executive Director,  
Office of Professional Preparation

## TEAM MEMBERS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>School/County</b>
William Chapman	Middle School Principal	Spencer Middle Roane County
Robin Lewis	Director of Curriculum	Upshur County
Gary Nichols	Middle School Principal	Shady Spring Middle Raleigh County
Elizabeth Parmer	High School Principal	Lewis County High Lewis County
Thomas Sanders	High School Principal	Pocahontas County High Pocahontas County

### SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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

**62 NICHOLAS COUNTY**  
Luther Baker, Superintendent

#### 501 NICHOLAS COUNTY HIGH - Needs Improvement

Patricia Metheney, Principal  
Grades 10 - 12  
Enrollment 611

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	182	191	182	95.28	68.96	Yes	Yes	✓
White	179	188	179	95.21	68.42	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	104	109	101	92.66	59.79	By Average	Yes	✓
Spec. Ed.	32	36	28	77.77	36.00	NA	NA	NA
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
<b>Reading/Language Arts</b>								
All	182	191	181	94.76	72.83	Yes	Yes	✓
White	179	188	178	94.68	72.35	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	104	109	100	91.74	60.41	No	Confidence Interval	✗
Spec. Ed.	32	36	28	77.77	16.00	NA	NA	NA
LEP	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA

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

**Passed**  
**Graduation Rate = 85.3%**

## Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Information by Class

<b>Mathematics</b>											
<b>Class</b>	<b>Tested Enr.</b>	<b>FAY Enr.</b>	<b>Tested</b>	<b>FAY Tested</b>	<b>Part. Rate</b>	<b>Novice</b>	<b>Below Mastery</b>	<b>Mastery</b>	<b>Above Mastery</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
10	191	182	182	174	95.29	4.60	26.44	43.10	17.82	8.05	68.97

<b>Reading</b>											
<b>Class</b>	<b>Tested Enr.</b>	<b>FAY Enr.</b>	<b>Tested</b>	<b>FAY Tested</b>	<b>Part. Rate</b>	<b>Novice</b>	<b>Below Mastery</b>	<b>Mastery</b>	<b>Above Mastery</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
10	191	182	181	173	94.76	3.47	23.70	35.26	26.59	10.98	72.83

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

## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

### Achieved Standard

#### 5.1.1. Achievement.

**Nicholas County High School achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) only by application of the confidence interval for the economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroup in reading/language arts.**

**It is further noted that the special education students (SE) subgroup with the number (N) less than 50, scored far 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 and apply interventions to improve achievement of all students.**

### Below Standard

#### 5.1.2. Participation rate.

**One subgroup designated in 5.1.2. Participation rate, economically disadvantaged students (SES) failed to achieve AYP.**

Nicholas County High School's professional development opportunities were specific to the school's performance deficiencies.

The following professional opportunities were provided by the county and/or school.

1. Vertical Team (English and Math teachers).
2. SAS in School Training (Technology).
3. Collaborative Co-Teaching Awareness.
4. Differentiated Instruction Awareness.
5. Multicultural Curriculum.
6. Student Assistance Team.
7. Ruby Payne Workshop.
8. BMI (Body Mass Index) Assessment Training.
9. Nutrition Awareness.
10. Fitnessgram Training.
11. Nicholas County Summer Academy in which attendees working outside normally contracted days were paid a stipend. Topics included: A Framework for Understanding Poverty, Learning Structures, etc.
12. Nicholas County High School offered the following for continuing education: Supersize Me, Professional Learning Communities, Character Education Planning, Technology, WESTEST Scores Evaluation, etc., or employees have six hours of approved alternative credit.

## EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

### INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

**The Education Performance Audit Team reported that Nicholas County High 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. A great deal of attention to the building was evident and supported a feeling of pride and enthusiasm by the students and staff.

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.

### HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

**Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress to Meet the Standard.**

#### 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 observed inconsistencies among the faculty members concerning their lesson plans and teaching the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). Several teachers could not articulate how the CSOs were utilized to guide their classroom 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)**

The Team observed high numbers of students sleeping/resting with heads on their desks and/or not engaged in learning activities. Several teachers were observed sitting behind their desk for a majority of the class period.

- 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 in best practice instruction. Instruction in many of the classes observed relied upon direct instruction with worksheets and whole group instruction. Teachers verified this observation in the teacher interview sessions.

**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 all teachers were not giving writing assignments to all students on a weekly basis. Also, the Team found that not all of the student writing was collected and corrected for spelling, punctuation, content, and grammar.

**6.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application. The application of technology is included throughout all programs of study and students have regular access to library/educational technology centers or classroom libraries. (Policy 2470; Policy 2510)**

Although technology was available, there was no evidence of extensive technology use by student logs, student interviews, or Team observation. The Team noted minimal computer usage throughout the day of the Education Performance Audit and students and teachers also confirmed this.

## **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)**

Some lesson plans were difficult to follow and would be difficult for a substitute teacher to implement. Plans needed to be enhanced, including a greater understanding and utilization of essential questions. Several plans had items such as “discuss pages 49-57” with no clarification as to the issues that were to be presented or discussed with the students.

**6.2.4. Data analysis. Prior to the beginning of and through the school term the county, school, and teacher have a system for analyzing, interpreting, and using student performance data to identify and assist students who are not at grade level in achieving approved state and local content standards and objectives. The county, principal, counselors, and teachers assess student scores on the American College Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test and develop curriculum, programs, and/or practices to improve student and school performance. (Policy 2510)**

Through teacher interviews and classroom observations, the Team did not observe a system for analyzing, interpreting, and using student performance data to identify and assist students who are not at grade level in achieving approved State and local Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). In view of the achievement levels of the economically disadvantaged (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups, the analysis of performance data is particularly important so that curriculum and instruction can be adjusted to improve student achievement.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1.12. Multicultural activities.** Although teachers implemented individual activities relevant to multicultural education, including zero tolerance prevention, no unified, comprehensive approach to organize this instruction was evidenced. The Team recommended that the school organize information as a team to create a systematic approach to delivering multicultural activities.
- 6.2.1. Unified County and School Improvement Plan.** The school five-year strategic plan was progressing and will be completed within the timeline; however, only three areas of focus had been developed. These areas included student achievement, student fitness, and social/emotional/character education. After reading the plan, the Team determined that, given the low achievement in the economically disadvantaged (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups, more emphasis should be placed upon student achievement. The Team recommended that the five-year strategic plan be altered to emphasize student achievement of those subgroups.

## **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 Nicholas County High School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Nicholas 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 Nicholas 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.**

Programs were needed to assist teachers in the proper development of lesson plans, varying instructional strategies, and in implementing the writing process. These issues would better serve the school and have a direct impact on student achievement.

### **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 Nicholas County High School in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

<b>HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED RESOURCES</b>
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
6.1.5. 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
6.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Technology (304) 558-7880
6.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.2.4. Data analysis.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Assessment (304) 558-2546

**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 Nicholas County High School and Nicholas County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies; however, the capacity must be developed in the special education department to provide quality services to address the low

performance of the low SES and SE subgroups on the WESTEST. The Team recommended that the Nicholas County School System Director of Special Education and the school administrator engage the Special Education Director and the Professional Development Director at RESA IV in developing the school's capacity to improve the school's achievement of the SE students and SES students.

### 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 suitable for special instructional needs, e.g. outdoor learning.
- 17.1.4. Counselor's office.** Adequate space was not available.
- 17.1.8. Grades 1-12 classrooms.** Room 101 did not have adequate storage. Room 116 did not have adequate storage and was not located in an area near related educational areas away from disruptive noises. Room 187 was not of adequate size. Room 189 was not of adequate size. Room 208 was not of adequate size. Room 200 was not of adequate size, did not have adequate communication technologies, and was not located near related educational areas away from disruptive noises. Room 207 was not of adequate size and was not located near related educational areas away from disruptive noises. Room 211 was not of adequate size, was not located near related educational areas away from disruptive noises, and did not have adequate storage. Room 219 was not of adequate size, did not have adequate storage, desks and chairs, or controllable lights/outlets. Room 236 was not of adequate size. Room 237 was not of adequate

size and was not located near related educational areas. Room 258 did not have adequate storage, chalkboard and bulletin boards, or sufficient numbers of desks and chairs. Room 265 did not have adequate communications technologies, was not located near related educational areas away from disruptive noises, had inadequate storage, and had an insufficient number of teacher/student desks and chairs.

- 17.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art facility did not have mechanical ventilation. The music facility was not of adequate size, was not located away from quiet areas of the building, did not have adequate storage, and did not have sufficient numbers of the following: Music stands, recording devices, microphones, stereo sound systems, piano, and AV equipment. The gymnasium did not have forced ventilation or a drinking fountain.
- 17.1.11. Grades 6-12 science facilities.** Room 102 did not have balance cases. Room 104 did not have balance cases or darkening provisions. Room 105 did not have AC and DC current, an air vacuum, or balance cases. Room 200 did not have DC current, an air vacuum, ventilation fume hood, balance cases, or darkening provisions. The Chemistry I class did not have DC current, an air vacuum, ventilation fume hood, balance cases, or darkening provisions. The Science 10 class was not of adequate size and did not have the following: sink, hot and cold water, gas, AC and DC current, air vacuum, ventilation fume hood, sufficient laboratory workspace, fire extinguisher, blanket, emergency shower, balance cases, darkening provisions, main gas shut-off, and adequate storage.
- 17.1.12. Grades 7-12 auditorium/stage.** The auditorium did not have space for an orchestra and was not acoustically treated.
- 17.1.14. Food service.** A teachers' dining area of adequate size was not provided.

### **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 students (SE) subgroups, Nicholas County High School and Nicholas County must implement concentrated instruction that will improve achievement. Nicholas County must actively pursue assistance from RESA IV, 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.**

**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>
62-501 Nicholas County High	Temporary Accreditation	6.1.1; 6.1.2; 6.1.5; 6.1.6; 6.1.7; 6.2.3; 6.2.4	5.1.2 (SES)	

**Education Performance Audit Summary**

The Team identified seven (7) high quality standards – necessary to improve performance and progress and presented two (2) recommendations.

Nicholas County High 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 (5.1.2 Participation rate). The Team also conducted a resource evaluation to assess the resource needs of the school. The Team submits this draft report to guide Nicholas County High School in improvement efforts. The school and county have until the next accreditation cycle to correct deficiencies noted in the report.