

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



DRAFT EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

INDEPENDENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL

RALEIGH COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

MARCH 2006

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction.....	2
Education Performance Audit Team	2
School Performance.....	3
Annual Performance Measures for Accountability.....	5
Education Performance Audit.....	6
Initiatives for Achieving Adequate Yearly Progress	6
High Quality Standards.....	7
Indicators of Efficiency.....	9
Building Capacity to Correct Deficiencies.....	10
Identification of Resource Needs	11
Early Detection and Intervention.....	12
School Accreditation Status	13

INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Independence Middle School in Raleigh County was conducted on February 7, 2006. 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 Five-Year Strategic 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 – Bane McCracken, Coordinator, Office of Healthy Schools

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
John Coe	Director of Attendance and Accreditation	Wood County Schools
Dr. Jack Kaufman	Professor of Education	Mercer County
Mary Alice Kaufman	Board Member	Mercer County
Devon Raddish	Middle School Assistant Principal	Lumberport Middle School Harrison County
Charles Vest	Junior High School Assistant Principal	Summersville Junior High School Nicholas County

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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

74 RALEIGH COUNTY
Dr. Charlotte Hutchens, Superintendent

408 INDEPENDENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL –Needs Improvement

Terry Poe, Principal
Grades 06 - 08
Enrollment 606

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	563	597	588	98.49	75.17	Yes	Yes	✓
White	541	574	565	98.43	76.21	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	17	18	18	100.00	41.17	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	388	418	409	97.84	68.76	Yes	Yes	✓
Spec. Ed.	59	64	63	98.43	18.96	Yes	No	✗
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading/Language Arts								
All	563	597	588	98.49	84.17	Yes	Yes	✓
White	541	574	565	98.43	85.01	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	17	18	18	100.00	52.94	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	388	418	409	97.84	79.79	Yes	Yes	✓
Spec. Ed.	59	64	62	96.87	32.75	Yes	Safe Harbors	✓
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

FAY -- Full Academic Year

* -- 0 students in subgroup

** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

Passed
Attendance Rate = 94.3%

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	205	198	201	194	98.05	6.70	15.46	47.42	24.74	5.67	77.84
07	191	179	190	178	99.48	3.93	20.79	61.24	13.48	0.56	75.28
08	201	186	197	184	98.01	5.98	21.74	50.54	19.57	2.17	72.28

Reading											
Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished	Proficient
06	205	198	202	195	98.54	2.56	15.38	44.10	28.72	9.23	82.05
07	191	179	190	178	99.48	3.37	10.11	54.49	27.53	4.49	86.52
08	201	186	196	183	97.51	3.83	12.02	45.36	31.69	7.10	84.15

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%
RALEIGH COUNTY	910	3%	20%	54%	18%	5%	23%	77%
INDEPENDENCE MIDDLE	189	2%	16%	61%	17%	4%	18%	82%

Physical Assessment – Presidential Physical Fitness Test Passage Rate

Percentage of Students	School Year
100%	2003-04
98.00%	2002-03
100%	2001-02

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Below Standard

5.1.1. Achievement.

Independence Middle School failed to achieve adequately yearly progress (AYP) in 5.1.1. Achievement in the special education students (SE) subgroup in mathematics. 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 2005 State Board meeting. The school revised its Five-Year Strategic Plan and was upgraded to Conditional Accreditation status at the State Board's February 2006 meeting.

Independence Middle School achieved AYP in the SE subgroup in reading/language arts by application of the safe harbors provision. The 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.

It is further noted that the racial/ethnic black (B) 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 this subgroup and apply interventions to improve achievement of all students.

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

1. Assessment Analysis and Disaggregation.
2. Reading in the Content Areas.
3. Standards-Based Mathematics.
4. Standards-Based English/Language Arts.
5. 6 + 1 Traits of Writing.
6. Reprioritized CSO training.
7. After School Tutoring training.
8. Cheryl Ware training on Writing and Reading.
9. An academic coach assists the school.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Education Performance Audit Team reported that Independence 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 facility, which was 12 years old, was immaculately clean, maintained, and decorated in a manner that promoted a great deal of pride in students and staff. The atmosphere was one that was educationally stimulating and welcoming to the community.

The students were exceptionally well-behaved, mannerly, and helpful to the Team members. Students opened doors for the Team, offered assistance, and presented themselves in a mature manner during the interview process.

6.1.5. Instructional strategies. The Team commended the English/Language Arts teachers for their instructional strategies that were thorough, varied, unique, and innovative. The classes observed had numerous instructional techniques and gave all students many different activities in which to participate.

The Team commended the use of student responders in the classrooms. This is a technological tool that allows students to answer questions by pressing a button, and the machine presents the student answers in percentage form for immediate feedback.

6.8.1. Leadership. The principal and assistant principal exhibited excellent leadership. The two worked extremely well together and complemented each other in an effective manner. The Team commended the assistant principal for his knowledge of curriculum and his instructional leadership.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress to Meet the Standard (5.1.1 - 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)

Health and physical education did not have a sequential written curriculum based on the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). Activities were not presented based on the development of student skill development nor did they address the five movement forms:

1. Team Sports.
2. Individual Competitive.
3. Individual Non-competitive.
4. Rhythmic Activities.
5. Outdoor Adventure.

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 interviews and observations, the Team reported that very little true collaboration occurred between the special education teachers and the general education teachers. In most cases, the general education teacher was dominant in developing and implementing lesson plans. Full collaboration was not evident to the Team.

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)

There was no evidence that the resources of the library were being utilized to the extent possible. The librarian stated that the average book check-out rate was 54 books per month. Student interviews confirmed that they rarely checked out books. Students and staff reported that they seldom visited the library. Only one student was observed by the Team to be utilizing the library during the day of the Education Performance Audit. This supported the statements made by the students and staff.

6.1.11. Guidance and advisement. Students are provided specific guidance and advisement opportunities to allow them to choose a career major prior to completion of grade 10. (Policy 2510)

The Team was unable to determine schedules of student counseling and student career advisement opportunities of the guidance counselors. A list of probable duties and an approximate number of students served individually by the two counselors were provided. There was no plan to indicate that the components of the guidance program

were presented. Evidence did not exist that the counselors were involved in developmental guidance, career guidance, small group, or classroom counseling. A comprehensive plan should be developed to ensure that appropriate counseling is provided. The Team noted that the counselors were more reactive than proactive. More time needed to be spent dealing with student issues and how to deal with issues before they happened.

6.2. Student and School Performance

- 6.2.1. Unified County and School Improvement Plan. A Unified County Improvement Plan and a Unified School Improvement Plan are established, implemented, and reviewed annually. Each respective plan shall be a five-year plan that includes the mission and goals of the school or school system to improve student or school system performance or progress. The plan shall be revised annually in each area in which the school or system is below the standard on the annual performance measures.**

A Five-Year Strategic Plan was developed; however, teachers could not articulate the various components of the plan. The administration stated that a training session would be provided to the staff soon after the Education Performance Audit. Half of the school year has passed with little knowledge of those who implement the plan to improve student and school progress.

RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1.12. Multicultural activities.** Although teachers implemented individual activities relevant to multicultural education, a unified, comprehensive plan that organize activities was not evidenced. The Team recommended that the county or school organize information as a team to create a multicultural plan.

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 Independence Middle School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Raleigh 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 Raleigh 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.

The effectiveness of collaboration between general education teachers and special education teachers must be improved. Given the low test scores in the special education (SE) subgroup, especially in mathematics, it is imperative that this issue be addressed as soon as possible. Assistance may be requested from the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Instructional Services and Office of Special Education.

The Five-Year Strategic Plan needed to be effectively implemented and applied to result in improved student, school, and school system performance.

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 Independence 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
6.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.	West Virginia Department of Education Offices of Instructional Technology (304) 558-7880
6.1.11. Guidance and advisement.	West Virginia Department of Education Offices of Student Services and Health Promotion (304) 558-8830
6.2.1. Unified County and School Improvement Plan.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805

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 Independence Middle School and Raleigh County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies. However, the capacity must be developed in the special education department to provide quality services. The Team recommended that the Raleigh County School System Director of Special Education and the school administrator engage the Special Education Director and the Professional Development Director at RESA I in developing the school's capacity to improve the school's achievement of the special education students.

Capacity building needed to be developed for educators at the school in strategically targeting resources to the teaching and learning process as indicated in the Five-Year Strategic Plan to improve student and school achievement.

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 physical education facilities did not have a bulletin board.
- 17.1.12. Grades 7-12 auditorium/stage.** The middle school stage was not of adequate size, was not located for convenient access to language arts and music instructional area, or close to seating. The following were not provided: Fire resistant curtains, acoustical panels, film screens, controlled illumination, and outlets.
- 17.1.15 Health service units.** The health services unit was not of adequate size. The following items were not available: Curtained or small rooms with cots, bulletin board, toilet, lavatory, scales, or refrigerator with locked 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 special education (SE) subgroup, Independence Middle School and Raleigh County must implement high yield instructional practices and instruction that will improve students' achievement. Raleigh County must actively pursue assistance from RESA I, 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

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit High Quality Standards	Annual Performance Measures Needing Improvement	Date Certain
74-408 Independence Middle	Conditional Accreditation	6.1.1; 6.1.2; 6.1.7; 6.1.11; 6.2.1		
			5.1.1 (SE)	May 31, 2008

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team identified five high quality standards – necessary to improve performance and progress to meet 5.1.1 Achievement – for the special education (SE) subgroup. The Team presented one recommendation, noted one indicator of efficiency, suggested capacity building resources, and noted an early detection and intervention concern.

Independence 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 SE). The Team also conducted a resource evaluation to assess the resource needs of the school. The Team submits this draft report to guide Independence Middle School in improvement efforts. The school and county have until the next accreditation cycle to correct deficiencies noted in the report and a May 31, 2008 Date Certain to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).