



**FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT  
FOR  
RITCHIE COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL  
RITCHIE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
JUNE 2008**

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

An announced Education Performance Audit of Ritchie County Middle School in Ritchie County was conducted on November 30, 2005.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Ritchie County Middle School was conducted March 13, 2008. 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

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

### 77 RITCHIE COUNTY

Robert Daquilante, Superintendent

### 302 RITCHIE COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL - Needs Improvement

Michael S. Dotson, Principal

Grades 06 - 08

Enrollment 353

## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

### Below Standard

#### 5.1.1. Achievement.

Ritchie County Middle School failed to achieve adequately yearly progress (AYP) in 5.1.1. Achievement of 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.

Ritchie County Middle School achieved AYP in reading/language arts in the all students (AS) subgroup by averaging and in the economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroup by application of the confidence interval – averaging and may have achievement difficulties if interventions are not applied and consistent classroom assessments for learning are not practiced to determine student mastery of specific skills. Furthermore, the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Information by Class data showed that 30.19 percent of Grade 8 students were below mastery in reading/language arts and 25.47 percent were below mastery in mathematics. Also, 23.01 percent of the Grade 6 students were below mastery in reading/language arts and 25.89 percent were below mastery in mathematics.

Ritchie County Middle School's professional development opportunities were specific to the school's performance deficiencies. The following professional development and training opportunities were provided.

1. COMPASS training.
2. Curriculum Alignment using Compass.
3. Individualized Education Program (IEP) training for all special education teachers using Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) alignment to write IEPs.
4. WESTEST analysis.
5. Alternate Assessment training.
6. Kurzweil and IEP computer program.
7. I KNOW website.
8. NAEP testing.

## **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**BELOW STANDARD.** On the 2007 WESTEST the Ritchie County Middle School achieved adequately yearly progress (AYP) in all subgroups except special education (SE) in both mathematics and reading/language arts. WESTEST scores, compared with the spring 2005 and the spring 2007 scores, showed increases in both subjects and all subgroups: Mathematics – All students (AS) - 72.90 percent (2005) and 80.34 percent (2007), racial ethnicity/white (W) – 72.80 percent (2005) and 80.81percent (2007), economically disadvantaged (SES) – 64.56 percent (2005) and 74.00 percent (2007), and special education (SE) – 26.56 percent (2005) and 42.85 percent (2007); reading/language arts – AS – 74.37 percent (2005) and 80.05 percent (2007), W – 74.57 percent (2005) and 80.23 percent (2007), SES – 65.70 percent (2005) and 74.50 percent (2007), and SE – 26.56 percent (2005) and 30.15 percent (2007).

Although the school progressed in the percent proficient, it failed to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) by the May 31, 2007 Date Certain and was determined to be Low Performing per W.Va. Code §18-2E-5.

## **EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

### **HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS**

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

#### **7.1. Curriculum**

##### **7.1.4. Instruction.** Instruction is consistent with the programmatic definitions in West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2510, *Assuring the Quality of Education: Regulations for Education Programs* (hereinafter Policy 2510). (Policy 2510)

Two teachers observed by the Team did not exhibit effective classroom management techniques. The first was a Grade 8 English classroom teacher in which instruction was on a much lower level than Grade 8. Students were not engaged throughout the entire class period; 10 out of 21 students were not doing anything educational throughout the Team observation. The second teacher was a long term mathematics substitute teacher. All teacher dialogue that was directed to the group was in competition with student dialogue. The students did not pay attention to the teacher throughout the entire observation and less than half of the class was engaged in the classroom activities.

## **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE.** The Team interviewed school administrators and teachers, reviewed lesson plans, visited classrooms and verified that classroom management was effective, lessons were well planned and delivered, and students were engaged and learning.

**7.1.6. 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 observed classrooms and interviewed teachers and students and found that all teachers were not providing instruction in writing to all students on a weekly basis. The Team also found that not all student writing was collected and corrected for spelling, punctuation, content, and grammar.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE.** The school was implementing Kansas Writing across the curriculum on at least a weekly basis. Interviews with teacher teams revealed that the teachers were coordinating instruction in writing with all subjects and proper grammar was being noted on student writings in all subject areas. "ELMO" was being used in the writing program by several teachers to view student writings and use those writings for teaching purposes, thereby, making writing more relevant to the students.

**7.2. Student and School Performance.**

**7.2.3. 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 of the lesson plans from the related arts classes were generic and outdated. The objectives in the physical education classes were not specific to the strategies and Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) to be taught. Some of the dates of the lessons in the music classes were from October 15, 2004. The agendas for each of the technical education classes were the same throughout the entire six week rotation and were repetitive each day of the week. Dates were not listed in the technical education plans and the plans did not address the uniqueness of each class and group of students. The Team recommended that the related arts teachers be given assistance on developing lesson plans.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE.** The Education Performance Audit Follow-up Team reviewed related arts teachers' lesson plans and interviewed the related arts teacher team. A format had been developed for the related arts teachers' lesson plans and was being implemented in all the areas.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1.4. Instruction.** Given the low achievement of the special education (SE) subgroup, the Team investigated the various reasons for this and offered the following recommendations to eliminate this achievement gap.

1. The school should consider emphasizing having special education teachers and aides work predominantly in the reading/language arts and mathematics classes. Self-contained special education classrooms in science and social studies needed to be examined for effectiveness.
2. The school is urged to provide as much access to general education classes and curriculum through teaming and collaboration as possible in reading/language arts and mathematics.
3. The top performing students identified as moderate mentally impaired (MMI) should be placed in a collaborative class for exposure to a more intense curriculum.
4. While some of the general education teachers and special education teachers have common planning times, the school should strive to make this available to all collaborative teachers.
5. The Team observed that the expectations for the special education students were lowered in some of the classes. It is imperative that the special education students be challenged to decrease the achievement gap. Teachers must be cautious of confusing lowering expectations with helping the special education students.

#### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.** Special education teachers and aides were assigned to work in the areas of reading/language arts and mathematics. Teachers received staff development to prepare them to co-teach with special education teachers working in the classrooms in most subjects. All special education students, except the profoundly impaired, were being included in core academic classes. Attempts were being made to provide common planning times for teachers to collaborate. Where this could not be done daily, it was being provided on an “as needed” basis. In the core academic classes the instructional strategies and expectations for all students were the same with additional help being provided students (special education and others) who needed it.

**7.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.** Only one of the mathematics classes observed had full function graphing calculators for student use. The Team recommended that at least the Grades 7 and 8 mathematics classes have the graphing calculators.

#### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.** Graphing calculators were provided for Grades 7 and 8 mathematics classes.

**7.7.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations.** The Team observed that in the physical education class a high school student was supervising a group of students while the physical education teacher was working with another group of students in an area where the teacher could not see the other group. The Team recommended that the physical education teacher supervise the entire class.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. Physical education students were all in an area where they were being supervised by the physical education teacher.**

## **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 Ritchie County Middle School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Ritchie 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 Ritchie County or the accreditation status of the schools.

**8.1.1. 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, 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 and RESA V.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

**With assistance from RESA V, the West Virginia Department of Education, and Ritchie County Schools, the Ritchie County Middle School staff has received several professional development trainings to improve the effectiveness of collaboration between the general education teachers and special education teachers.**



### **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 Ritchie County Middle School in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

- 18.1. Capacity building is a process for targeting resources strategically to improve the teaching and learning process. School and county electronic strategic 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 Ritchie County Middle School and Ritchie County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies. However, the capacity must be developed in the special education department to provide quality services as demonstrated by the general education teachers. The Team recommended that the Ritchie County School System Director of Special Education and the school administrator engage the Special Education Director and the Professional Development Director at RESA V in developing the school's capacity to improve the school's achievement of the special education students.

#### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

The RESA V special education director visited Ritchie County Middle School on several occasions to provide professional development and other assistance to the Ritchie County Middle School staff. Special education teachers and general education teachers were effectively collaborating on instructional strategies to use in the classrooms and the special education students had been successfully included in most of the general education classrooms. The results of these efforts were shown in the special education students increased achievement on the WESTEST. The percent of the special education (SE) subgroup at the percent proficient in mathematics that increased from the 2005 WESTEST to the 2007 WESTEST (26.98 percent to 43.85 percent) and in reading/language arts that increased was (26.56 percent to 30.15 percent).

## **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, Ritchie County Middle School and Ritchie County must implement high yield instructional practices that will improve students' achievement. Ritchie County must actively pursue assistance from RESA V, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the West Virginia Center for Professional Development to assist with school improvement efforts. The special education (SE) curriculum must be data-driven and instruction must be relevant to the curriculum and provide all students the opportunity to learn.

### **FOLLOW-UP TEAM SUMMARY**

**With the assistance of personnel from RESA V, the West Virginia Department of Education, West Virginia Center for Professional Development, and Ritchie County Schools; the Ritchie County Middle School staff had received effective and sustained professional development to improve instructional practices and use data to improve instruction and student achievement.**

**Professional development and training included the following:**

- 1. Improving Writing Strategies.**
- 2. Kansas Writing.**
- 3. Effective Strategies for Teaching Mathematics.**
- 4. Strategies for Co-teaching and Collaboration in the Classroom.**
- 5. Interactive Skill Instruction.**
- 6. Effectively Using Technology to Enhance Instruction.**
- 7. Grade Level Team Book Studies.**
- 8. Effective Strategies for Teaching Mathematics.**
- 9. Analyzing and Using WESTEST Results for Improved Instruction.**

**The West Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Improvement, has been providing targeted technical assistance to this school.**

**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>
77-302 Ritchie County Middle	Low Performing		5.1.1 (SE)	May 31, 2011

**Education Performance Audit Summary**

The Office of Education Performance Audits recommends that the West Virginia Board of Education continue the Low Performing status of Ritchie County Middle School.

The Office of Education Performance Audits conducted an Education Performance Audit of Ritchie County Middle School pursuant to W.Va. Code §18-2E-5. The West Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Improvement, is serving as an Improvement Consultant Team to assist the school in achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP). The Office of Education Performance Audits and the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Improvement, will continue to collaborate on the school's achievement leadership and practices to assure that it continues to progress and achieve AYP by the May 31, 2011 Date Certain.