



**FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT
FOR
MERCER COUNTY TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTER**

MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

AUGUST 2009

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Mercer County Technical Education Center in Mercer County was conducted on January 8, 2008.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Mercer County Technical Education Center in Mercer County was conducted May 8, 2009. 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.”

51-701 MERCER COUNTY TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTER

William A. Sherwood, Director

PERFORMANCE DATA 2006-2007

6.1.8. Job placement rates for vocational programs.

- Students completing occupational concentrations – 145.
- Students placed (employed, continuing education, military) – 143 (99%).
- Eighty-one percent of those employed were employed in the field for which they were trained.
- Eighty-three percent of those continuing their education were continuing in the same field.

The Mercer County Technical Education Center's performance in placement was excellent. The percentages of students employed in field and continuing education in field exceeded the State standard (60 percent in field).

6.1.9. Percent of students passing end-of-course career/technical tests.

The State standard for End-of-Course career/technical tests for the 2006-07 school year was 52.30 percent of students scoring 74 percent or higher on the test.

End-of-Course Test		
Number Tested	Number Met Standard	Percent Met Standard
952	418	43.91

Mercer County Technical Education Center attained 43.91 percent, which required them to prepare and implement program improvement plans. The technical center needs to increase the End-of-Course passage rate.

The following professional development and/or training opportunities were available as reported by the director.

1. GradeQuick.
2. Time Management.
3. Checking for Understanding.
4. Essential Questions.
5. Focus on Learning.
6. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Website Scavenger Hunt.
7. Refining Your Syllabus.

8. Online End-of-Course Technical Skills Test (EOCTST) Questions.
9. Managing Student Behavior.
10. Test Score Analysis.
11. Thinking Maps: Parts 1 and 2.
12. School Culture.
13. Psych Up for Testing.
14. 21st Century Leaders.
15. Rock Solid Leadership.
16. Make a Difference.
17. Rachel's Challenge.
18. Napollio.
19. Maximizing the Block Schedule.
20. Technical Applications: Whiteboard, iPod, iTunes, Audacity.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

MET STANDARD. The number of students completing occupational concentrations in 2007-2008 was 131. These students had a placement rate of 96 percent with 82 percent placed in the field for which they were trained and 81 percent continuing their education in the same field. The End-of-Course passage rate increased 9.59 percent from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008.

The following staff development and/or training opportunities were available as reported by the director and faculty.

1. Strategic Plan Review.
2. Changes in Technology, Safety, and Differentiated Instruction Technology Training.
3. End of Course Testing, Lesson Plans, and Implementing Whiteboards.
4. Lesson Plans, Graphic Organizers, West Virginia 21st Century content standards and objectives (CSOs).
5. Lesson Plans, Marketing New Programs.
6. Faculty Collaboration on Strategic Plan – Review and Update Lesson Plans.
7. Lesson Plans/Multicultural Activities.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

NONCOMPLIANCES

7.1. Curriculum

7.1.5. Instructional strategies. Staff demonstrates the use of the various instructional strategies and techniques contained in Policies 2510 and 2520. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)

Teachers were not using a variety of instructional strategies in several of the classes observed. Instruction in many of these classes was not designed to address individual student needs and lessons were directed to whole group instruction.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The faculty received several trainings on using a variety of effective instructional strategies to improve instruction and student achievement. One of these strategies, Project Based Learning, especially received enthusiastic, positive comments from faculty members as being helpful in improving instruction in their classrooms. The Team visited classrooms and reviewed lesson plans and verified multiple instructional strategies were being used in all classes. The director monitored this through weekly lesson plan reviews and classroom walkthroughs.

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 interviewed teachers and students and found all teachers were not providing instruction in writing to all students on a weekly basis. Students received little feedback on their class writing activities.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The Team reviewed lesson plans and interviewed teachers and verified all teachers were involved in requiring the students to write in all classes at least weekly, and the writings were graded and returned to students. Student writing was displayed throughout the building. The director monitored lesson plans weekly to ensure writing activities were taking place in all classrooms.

7.1.12. 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)

Teachers throughout the building could not describe multicultural activities. Only three teachers could discuss any multicultural activities that were going on in the building. A written county multicultural plan was not evident from the teachers.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The Team interviewed teachers and found them anxious to share the many multicultural activities in which their students were involved. Numerous examples of student work in multicultural activities were displayed throughout the school. Teachers reported that they were always looking for ways of integrating multicultural lessons into their regular lessons. Teachers provided numerous examples of these multicultural activities.

7.2. Student and School Performance

7.2.1. County and School electronic strategic improvement plans. An electronic county strategic improvement plan and an electronic school strategic 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.

Teachers were not aware of the educational components of the school's Five-Year Strategic Plan. There were no identified action steps to the plan, only Goals and Objectives. Technology Federal Compliance Steps were included in the plan; however, school work action steps were not included.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The entire staff was involved in a review and update of the Five-Year Strategic Plan. The plan contained action steps devised by the staff and implemented by the staff in their lesson plans. The Team interviewed teachers and found all of them conversant on the plan and their responsibilities in implementing the plan.

- 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)**

The administration had not checked all lesson plans the first nine weeks. Several teachers stated that they do not do lesson planning; however, they teach to the needs of the students. It is imperative that all teachers maintain lesson plans and that these lesson plans be reviewed at least once per grading period.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The Team reviewed logs that showed lesson plans for all teachers had been submitted to the director by Friday evening of each week, reviewed by the director, commented upon as applicable, and returned to the teachers by Monday morning. The lesson plans were monitored for varied instructional strategies, multicultural activities, student writing, and completeness.

7.6. Personnel

- 7.6.2. Licensure. Professional educators and other professional employees required to be licensed under West Virginia Board of Education policy are licensed for their assignments including employees engaged in extracurricular activities. (W.Va. Code §18A-3-2; Policy 5202)**

Two teachers did not hold the appropriate certification.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. One teacher who did not hold appropriate certification for a class she was teaching had been rescheduled and was certified for all classes she was teaching. The other teacher had a license endorsed to teach electrical technology in grades 9-Adult and all the classes he was teaching were covered by this license. An error in the certificate code for this teacher had been corrected.

- 7.6.3. Evaluation. The county board adopts and implements an evaluation policy for professional and service personnel that is in accordance with W.Va. Code, West Virginia Board of Education policy, and county policy. (W.Va. Code §18A-2-12; Policy 5310; Policy 5314)**

One teacher observation form was not signed within the five day period, rendering the observation null and void.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. A review of all observation forms completed this year (2008-2009) showed all had been reviewed with the employee and signed by both the evaluator and employee within five days following the observation.

- 7.6.4. **Teacher and principal internship.** The county board develops and implements a beginning teacher internship program and a beginning principal internship program that conform with W.Va. Code and West Virginia Board of Education policies. (W.Va. Code §18A-3-2b and 2d; Policy 5899; Policy 5900)

One new teacher did not have an official mentor assigned.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The teacher who did not have an official mentor was provided with one beginning January 2008 and continued through January 2009. The mentor was interviewed to verify the requirements of the mentoring program were being met. Other staff members who were eligible for a mentor had been provided one.

7.8. Leadership

- 7.8.1. **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)

Due to the number of deficiencies found at the Mercer County Technical Education Center, the Team determined that assistance from the central office administration, the West Virginia Department of Education, and RESA I be sought to assist the building administrator in school operations and leadership.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The director reported the staff of the Mercer County central office had provided support, training, and direction in all areas cited in the Office of Education Performance Audits (OPEA) report. Numerous staff development opportunities had been provided the director and staff to improve the school operations and student achievement.

RECOMMENDATION

7.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application. The Team observed minimal use of computers throughout the building and interviews with teachers and students indicated that technology was not used at maximum capacity in several classrooms. The Team determined that more emphasis was needed on the importance of the integration of technology in instructional delivery.

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. The technology integration specialists serving Princeton High School provided technology training for the Technical Education Center staff. Electronic whiteboards had been purchased for the classrooms and teachers had been trained and were excited about using them in instruction. Computer laboratory logs revealed the laboratories were being used by all classes.

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 Team assessed as requiring more efficient and effective application.

The indicators of efficiency listed are intended to guide Mercer County Technical Education Center in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Mercer 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 Mercer County or the accreditation status of the school.

The school's Five-Year Strategic Plan must be updated to include action steps to assist teachers in meeting the needs of all students.

The administration must review all lesson plans at least quarterly and monitor these plans and classes to ensure that instruction is directed to meet the needs of all students daily. Also, instruction in writing must be incorporated weekly in all appropriate classes.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The staff was involved in rewriting and updating the Five-Year Strategic Plan and collaborated in designing action steps that would meet student needs. Staff members reported they were using the plan as the guide for their instruction.

Staff submitted lesson plans to the director at the end of each week. The director reviewed the lesson plans, provided comments, and returned them to the teachers by Monday morning. The director specifically reviewed the plans for the inclusion of a variety of instructional strategies, multicultural activities, and weekly student writing.

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 Mercer County Technical Education Center 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 the Mercer County Technical Education Center and Mercer County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies. It is imperative, however, that the administration take an active role in the observations of all classrooms to ensure that all teachers vary and direct instruction to meet the needs of all students. The central office staff is urged to continue the support of the school and to provide assistance. Furthermore, the technical center must implement program improvement plans to increase the End-of-Course passage rate.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The deficiencies cited in the audit report had been addressed and improvements had been made. The center administrators actively visited classrooms with the “classroom walkthrough” program. During the walkthroughs and lesson plan reviews, the administrators were specifically looking for the essential components of effective lesson plans and instruction. Needs in these areas were quickly communicated to teachers and steps were taken to improve.

The End-of-Course passage rate improved 9.59 percent from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008.

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.

19.1. 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 of West Virginia 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*)

19.1.13. Grades 7-12 school site vocational. The Agricultural Education and Mechanics Facilities, Home Economics Facility, and Technology Education Facility did not have adequate space, equipment, or storage.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The director of Mercer County Technical Education Center reported that the center does not offer courses in agricultural education, mechanics, home economics, and technology education.

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.

Mercer County Technical Education Center must implement the Five-Year Strategic Plan schoolwide in a manner that monitors student performance and clearly specifies goals, objectives, and action steps to achieve the goals and objectives.

FOLLOW-UP TEAM SUMMARY

The entire staff of Mercer County Technical Education Center has been involved in reviewing and up-dating the Five-Year Strategic Plan. Action steps had been included in the plan and were being implemented in the classrooms. The director monitored instruction through weekly lesson plan reviews and classroom walkthroughs. The center had shown improvement in student achievement as indicated by the increase in the percent of students who passed the end-of-course tests.

SCHOOL ACCREDITATION STATUS

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit Noncompliances	Annual Performance Measures Noncompliances	Date Certain
51-701 Mercer County Technical Education Center	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 of Mercer County Technical Education Center.