



OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS

RESA 4 REPORT

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West Virginia Board of Education

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INTRODUCTION

An Education Performance Audit was conducted at RESA 4 in Summersville, West Virginia on October 2, 2009. The purpose of the on-site review was to review the areas of service provided by the Regional Education Services Agency (RESA) which serves Braxton, Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas, and Webster counties.

West Virginia Board of Education Policy 3233, *Establishment and Operation of Regional Education Service Agencies*, Section 6.4. states, "The Office of Education Performance Audits shall conduct routine on-site reviews of each RESA as directed by the West Virginia Board of Education."

The West Virginia Board of Education specifically directed the Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA) to conduct a review of RESA 4 in accordance with Policy 3233 and Policy 2320, *A Process for Improving Education: Performance Based Accreditation System*.

The Education Performance Team reviewed the RESA's strategic plan; RESA 4 Annual Report (Fiscal Year 2009); the Independent Auditor's Report and Related Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2008, and other documents pertinent to Areas of Service provided by the RESA. The Team interviewed the executive director, assistant director, and staff members and interviewed superintendents in the region served.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
Dr. Donna Davis, Team Chair	Deputy Director	Office of Education Performance Audits
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Nick P. Zervos	Executive Director	RESA 6

INTRODUCTION

West Virginia Regional Education Service Agencies

RESA 4 On-site Review

The Areas of Service for Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) are listed on this section of the audit report. The on-site team reported strengths and weaknesses, if any, for each area of service, and advise the RESA of available resources and technical assistance to further enhance the strengths and improve areas of weakness in the summary section.

Area of Service

1. Providing technical assistance to low-performing schools and school systems.

A RESA 4 team, consisting of the assistant executive director, the special education director, the coordinator of instructional services, the math science partnership coordinator, the safe and drug-free schools coordinator and the response to intervention (RTI) specialist, is operating under a multi-year plan for providing technical assistance to schools.

The RESA 4 technical assistance team provided specific, requested support to three schools in their region during the 2008-2009 school year: Greenbrier West High School, Richwood Middle School and Summersville Middle School.

The following plan was drafted by RESA 4 to carry out support to low-performing schools. This plan included both short and long range support as shown below.

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
1	Year 1 – Year 2	External Assistance Team Local District, School
2	Year 2 – Year 3	External Assistance Team Local District, School
3	Year 3 – Year 3+	Local District, School Others

Technical Assistance and Building School Capacity

Year One

At the written request of the county superintendent, RESA 4 facilitated technical assistance and capacity building in three designated low-performing schools. Work in the schools was based on concerns outlined in each superintendent's request. RESA 4 asked the superintendent to contact the school principal to indicate support for the initiative and provide an overview of the partnership's intent.

The RESA 4 External Assistance Team contacted the school principals and requested school demographic data (academic and social). An initial meeting was scheduled with the principals and school support teams (comprised of stakeholders) to discuss the data and develop an action plan.

A RESA 4 staff member is responsible for ongoing, regular communication with the principal to help ensure that the action plan is implemented. RESA 4 staff meets with the school support teams each semester to discuss progress toward the plan's goals.

Year Two

Year two phase focused on continuing to implement the action plan and modifying the plan by data-driven revisions or necessary updates.

Year Three and Beyond

During Year Three, the school assumes responsibility for continuing implementation and monitoring the action plan. RESA 4 will serve in a resource capacity.

Implementation Standards:

1.1. Assist schools and school systems with specific student, teacher, and school needs evidenced in local school plans.

- A RESA 4 team, consisting of the assistant executive director, the special education director, the coordinator of instructional services, the math science partnership coordinator, the safe and drug-free schools coordinator, and the RTI specialist, operates under a multi-year plan for providing technical assistance to schools.
- The RESA 4 technical assistance team provided specific, requested support to three schools during the 2008-2009 school year: Greenbrier

West High School, Richwood Middle School, and Summersville Middle School.

- Last year (2008-2009) this assistance program was initiated in two RESA 4 schools.
- RESA 4 staff met with the superintendent and principal from each school prior to beginning the school assistance plan.
- RESA 4 staff met with each team of teachers (focus group interviews).
- RESA 4 is a collaborating partner with identified schools and provided monetary and other support to develop and implement plans of intervention which addressed each school's critical needs. Both RESA 4 and the schools were active participants in the grant activities.
- RESA 4 is awarding three grants for high schools to improve graduation rates.
- Demographic data from each low-performing school being served was identified (academic and social).

1.2. Provide leadership and equitable services for school improvement to schools and school districts to enable every learner to perform at higher levels of achievement.

- During the 2007-2008 school year, Mathematics Program Improvement Reviews (MPIRs) were coordinated, facilitated, and conducted in cooperation with the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and County Mathematics Leadership Teams (CMLTs).
- Technical assistance related to mathematics is provided upon request.
- RESA 4 provided mathematics professional development and classroom support.
- The Math Science Partnership (MSP) provided 14 days of professional development and classroom support to enhance instructional pedagogy and increase student achievement.
- RESA 4 staff responded to the OEPA report to Greenbrier County Schools and conducted a cultural typology survey at a specified school.
- The RESA provided Response to Intervention (RTI) assistance to schools.
- RESA 4 provided 21st Century Communication Learning Center (CCLC) programs in 4 schools.
- Special education assistance was provided to all RESA 4 schools.

Area of Service

2. Providing high quality, targeted staff development designed to enhance the performance and progress of students.

West Virginia Board of Education goals were advanced in RESA 4 through the following programs and activities.

Partnerships were developed with RESA 4 schools that provide sustained technical assistance to increase overall school effectiveness. RESA 4 staff provided training and support for mathematics teachers, numeracy coaches, after-school tutors, and administrators. Funding to RESA 4 counties for English as a Second Language (ESL Title III) services was also provided. Teacher effectiveness was enhanced through facilitating high quality, targeted, professional development for teachers and administrators in teaching and learning practices designed to increase the performance and progress of students with disabilities.

Implementation Standards

2.1. Assists schools and school systems in improving teaching.

- RESA 4 provided mathematics professional development and classroom support utilizing the Math Science Partnership (MSP) which included 14 days of professional development as well as classroom support to enhance instructional pedagogy and increase student achievement.
- Math Science Partnership (MSP) County Numeracy Coaches' training was conducted monthly and as requested.
- RESA 4 assisted county coordinators in planning and delivering mathematics professional development, when requested.
- RESA 4 provided training on Secondary Lenses on Learning (school team consisted of the principal, counselor, special education teacher, and mathematics teacher).
- RESA 4 provided science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) Consortium trainings (GPS, Robotics, County Planning).
- The agency completed MSP Summer Institute (fall and spring follow-ups) Professional Learning Communities and lesson study.
- RESA 4 trained and provided classroom support for online curriculum units, instructional guides, strategies bank (Teach21 Resources).
- RESA 4 provided standards-based (inquiry-based) mathematics content and pedagogy training and support.
- Enhanced Technology Integration. RESA 4 provided graphing calculator and Sketchpad trainings, facilitated GPS integration, SASinschool, and Thinkfinity
- RESA 4 provided Intel Teaching Thinking with Technology.

- RESA 4 provided Teacher Quality (ITQ) trainings and follow-up sessions for implementing RTI programs in elementary and middle schools.
 - RESA 4 provided an array of special education programs: RTI/Blueprints, CSO Rigor and Relevance, Stress Management, Co-teaching, and Using Your Core Program – Differentiating Instruction.
 - RESA 4 provided administrator trainings, such as, Employment Discipline in an Education Environment and Principal Mentor Training.
 - RESA 4 provided Life Skills Trainings for teachers.
 - RESA 4 offered Differentiated Instruction and Cooperative Learning trainings.
 - The 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) trainings focused on program components: Targeted reading and math tutoring, entrepreneurship, enrichment, physical fitness, and community service.
 - RESA 4 provided ongoing Professional Learning Communities training.
 - RESA 4 continued ongoing statewide substitute teacher trainings.
 - RESA 4 provided training in the Utilized Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) training (walkthroughs looking for critical thinking).
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- 2.2. Participation in RESA staff development services enables teachers and administrators to improve instruction and/or job related practices.**
- RESA 4 provided a multitude and variety of Pre-K-12 staff development opportunities for teacher and administrator professional growth and to improve instruction.

Area of Service

- 3. Facilitating coordination and cooperation among the county board of education within their respective regions in such areas as cooperative purchasing; sharing of specialized personnel, communications and technology curriculum development; and operation of specialized programs for students with exceptionalities.**

RESA 4 provided coordination and cooperation of many programs for Region 4 counties. All programs are available to all counties. The counties select the services in which they wish to participate based upon their identified needs.

Cooperative programs utilized in RESA 4 are delineated in implementation standards 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

Implementation Standards

3.1. Cooperative and coordinated services are based upon the needs of schools and school districts.

- Paper Purchasing.
- Math Science Partnership.
- IVAN Network used to facilitate meetings with various intracounty and statewide meetings, e.g., Dr. Paine's address to principals, coordinator staff development meetings, etc.
- Medicaid Reimbursement.
- Regional Math Field Day, Science Bowl, and Social Studies Fair.
- Assist counties with English as Second Language (ESL) students.

3.2. Cooperative and coordinated services are cost-efficient.

- Online Individualized Education Program (IEP) for 25 West Virginia counties.
- Substitute Calling System (professional and service personnel).
- Substitute Teacher Training.
- PLATO Educational Program.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Natural Gas Purchase.
- Education Resource Center.
- Staff development/curriculum and instructional supplies purchasing.
- 21st century community learning.
- Special education program and support activities.
- Safe and Drug Free (SDF) Schools.

- Tobacco Prevention.

3.3. Cooperative and coordinated services are provided in a timely delivery.

- Substitute Calling System
- Substitute Teacher Training
- Computer Repair
- West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) support.

Areas of Service

4. Installing, maintaining and/or repairing education related technology equipment and software with special attention to state-level basic skills and Student Utilization of Computers in Curriculum for the Enhancement of Scholastic Skills (SUCCESS) programs.

In 2009, the Computer Repair Program Completed 1,882 work orders with the majority of those repairs in one of the four major state projects: Tools for Schools Elementary (formerly Basic Skills), Tools for Schools Secondary (formerly SUCCESS), World Schools, and West Virginia Education Instruction System (WVEIS). Additionally, RESA 4 has helped design and cable many rooms and labs in the area schools. RESA 4 continues to provide IBM warranty services to their counties.

RESA 4 also repaired computers for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and detention centers as needed. The computer department also conducts trainings for teachers when requested.

Implementation Standards

4.1. Provide timely delivery of services.

- All work orders are sent to RESA 4 via the Internet and stored in a database or called in by a county director of technology. The lead technician reviews and assigns work orders to the technicians.
- The timeliness of service delivery depends on whether or not new parts are required to complete the work order. RESA 4 gives priority to equipment related to the four state projects.
- Some jobs are scheduled with the counties at a later date for the convenience or to accommodate county work and classroom schedules.
- The State required computer repair report for FY 2008–2009 indicated that computer repairs were completed within the required time guidelines.
- WVEIS assists in maintaining and installing Client Access and helping with connectivity, e-mail, user ID and user assignment issues. The West Virginia Department of Education provides network support by assisting in maintaining T1 lines, routers, switches, and computers and printers for classroom and administrative needs.
- WVEIS also assists in setting up distance learning cameras for classrooms, staff development sessions, and meetings. The WVEIS department also houses the servers for E-School Mall, E-Schools Substitute Calling System, Plato, Special Education IEPs, and RESA 4.

4.2. School and county participation in RESA computer repair services.

- RESA 4 counties participate in the RESA 4 computer repair program.
- Each of the RESA 4 counties is charged the price of the part plus 10 percent of the price and a \$5 fee for all computer repairs.
- Cabling services are also offered to the RESA 4 counties at the cost of \$120 for Category 5 drops and \$140 for Category 6 drops. Computer repair services are also provided for the Adult Basic Education (ABE) classrooms and detention centers as needed.

4.3. Provide qualified technicians.

- Two full-time technicians serve the six RESA 4 counties. One additional full-time technician serves only Fayette County. RESA 4 technicians hold A+, IBM, Compaq, N+, CISCO, HTLM as well as several other certifications.
- Two of the technicians have bachelor degrees.
- Two of the technicians have BICSI certifications in network cabling.
- All technicians met the minimum of the A+ and net certification.

Area of Service

5. Receiving and administering grants under the provisions of federal and/or State law.

The West Virginia Department of Education awarded a 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grant of \$250,000 annually for five years. The purpose of this program is to create community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities for children and families who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. This grant provides after school programs in Braxton, Fayette, and Webster Counties. RESA 4 is in the first year of this grant.

RESA 4 is in the second year of a second 21st CCLC grant of \$274,400 annually. This grant provides afterschool programs in Fayette, Nicholas, and Greenbrier counties. Also, RESA 4 is in the fourth year of a third 21st CCLC grant of \$212,150 annually. This grant provides afterschool programs in Fayette, Greenbrier, Pocahontas, and Webster counties.

The RESA 4 consortium received the Title III Alternative Language Program grant of \$15,575. These funds are to be used to identify students in homes where English is not the primary language. Eighty nine (89) students were identified as English as Second Language (ESL) students in RESA 4. Woodcock testing was conducted for the new ESL students.

RESA 4 was awarded a Math-Science Partnership (MSP) grant of \$189,000 per year for a period of three years by the West Virginia Mathematics and Science Partnership Program. These funds are to be used to strengthen the content and pedagogical knowledge of RESA 4's high school mathematics teachers to enable them to be highly qualified.

RESA 4 Safe and Drug-Free Schools Consortium grant for the 2008-2009 school year provided Title IV funding for safe schools. The grant focused on research-based

programs to provide alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention, as well as intervention and support programming to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Six counties were in the RESA 4 Safe and Drug-Free Schools Consortium: Braxton, Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas, and Webster. WVEIS data reflected a decrease in all disciplinary infractions related to the grant.

The Coordinator for Safe and Drug-Free Schools trained 74 middle and high school students in peer mediation and 56 students in natural helpers. The coordinator also spoke with 1,657 students on bullying, 208 students on substance abuse, and 612 students on inhalant abuse. He also worked in conjunction with the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) office to provide presentations during after school programs in one elementary and two middle schools.

Implementation Standards

5.1. There is evidence of adequate agency support for receiving and administering grants.

RESA 4 receives and administers grants from various sources, including, but not limited to the following.

- 21st CCLC After school Grants (three).
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities.
- Tobacco Prevention Grant.
- Explorations Grant.
- Math Science Partnership Grant.
- School of Practice Grant.
- Improving Teacher Quality Grant.
- West Virginia Arts Grant.
- Student Programs Grant (Social Studies Fair).
- IDEA Part B School Age Discretionary.
- IDEA Part B Preschool Discretionary.
- Title III West Virginia Education Information System.
- Computer Maintenance and Repair.

5.2. Agency grants are based on needs of schools, districts, and community.

RESA 4 grants are focused on the following.

- Increasing student achievement and performance.
- Enhancing content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers and administrators.
- Developing and promoting character, healthy living, and citizenship in students and school personnel.
- These grant funds are based on the needs of RESA 4's six counties and 73 schools in maintaining and tracking student, employee, and financial data.

Area of Service

6. Developing and/or implementing any other programs or services as directed by law or by the West Virginia Board of Education.

The RESA 4 Tobacco Prevention Program staff member serves as the regional liaison with the school districts to provide training, technical assistance, and staff development in tobacco prevention, education, and cessation. This position also aids principals and staff with tobacco policy options and considerations, related youth empowerment initiatives, and alternatives to suspension programs.

Special education staff assists RESA 4 counties with the development and improvement of services for students with disabilities, gifted students, and Pre-K students. The special education program also provides leadership to low-performing schools and facilitates the provision of high quality professional development.

Implementation Standards

6.1. There is evidence of adequate agency support for legislative and West Virginia Board of Education mandates and initiatives.

- The goal of the WVEIS department at RESA 4 is to provide support and training to the users of WVEIS in the six counties. The staff provides training and assistance to WVEIS users either in person (one-on-one), in group sessions, through the help desk via telephone, e-mail, or instant messaging.
- The WVEIS staff provides support and training for all aspects of the Student Management System (SMS), including attendance, grades, and schedules.
- The staff provides training for the WVEIS Web Based Application (also known as WVEIS on the Web, which is a conversion of the typical 'green

screens' or DOS-based programs to a more user-friendly Web Browser format).

- The WEVIS staff provides support and training, when needed, for the Employee Management Systems (EMS), Financial Management Systems (FMS), and Human Resources Management Systems (HMS). Several in-service trainings are held throughout the year for specific county needs. The continued support and training of their end-users provides the assistance they need in maintaining and collecting the data required by the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE).
- The WVEIS department also assists in collecting State data reports for 1st, 2nd, and 10th month student data and employee data (used in the determination of Highly Qualified Teachers).
- The WVEIS department assists counties with the following functions: Pre-slugging and scanning various scan sheets; querying data for special reports or data bases; vocational, special education, discipline, work-based experience, career majors and pathways, and transportation reports; bank reconciliations for five of the six counties; lunch programs and Food Service Billing (FSB); LockBox (centralized payment of invoices); E-School Mall purchasing program (Fayette County); certified list of personnel reports; testing pre-slug; Fitnessgram; driver education reports and certificates; Promise Scholarship data; and homeless data.
- WVEIS staff developed FORMSprint documents for creating customized reports such as transcript labels, driver education certificates, purchase orders, W-2s, and 1099 reports.

6.2. The agency's budget reflects support for the agency goals.

- The RESA 4 budget reflects support for providing technical assistance and staff development for low-performing schools as well as all other schools.
- RESA 4 operates as a provider of supplemental programs and services for students; a commitment is shown in the budget which reflects those needed services.
- The budget indicates targeted staff development for teachers and administrators as well as leadership development at the school and county levels.
- The budget also reflects that expenditures support RESA 4's Strategic Plan of Services.

6.3. The agency has a system that holds personnel accountable for the support of the agency's goals and services delivery.

- All RESA 4 service and professional personnel were evaluated by their immediate supervisor as outlined in RESA 4 Policy 1.02 (Evaluation of Personnel). A sample of evaluations reviewed indicated that the policy was followed.
- Individual directors also demonstrated additional program monitoring and services that were included in the prepared files and in the written narratives presented to the OEPA Team.
- The RESA 4 evaluation personnel policy was implemented in compliance with any and all state regulations, policy, and intent.

6.4. The agency has an approved system of internal controls over financial reporting, compliance with State regulations applicable to RESAs, compliance with fiscal agent, and compliance with requirements of federal assistance administered by the RESAs.

- RESA 4's fiscal management procedures and processes outline the procedure for accounts and funds received, the processing of payroll, and the purchasing and accounts payable function.
- The system outlines the relationship with the Nicholas County Board of Education (fiscal agent) and the accounting and administering of federal funds.
- It appears that the system is operating in compliance with West Virginia Board of Education Policy 3233 and is being monitored by three separate individuals for accuracy and integrity.
- The latest audit for fiscal year ended June 30, 2008, did not cite any deficiencies in the internal control.
- The audit reflected that RESA 4 failed to hold at least one half (½) of its regular meetings during hours other than the regular school day (WV Code §18-2-26). RESA 4 submitted a corrective action plan for addressing this criterion.

6.5. The agency has an approved system of internal controls over personnel, compliance with State regulations applicable to RESAs, compliance with fiscal agent, and compliance with requirements of federal assistance administered by the RESAs.

- RESA 4 developed procedures that require a hierarchy of authority and lines of communication and approval within the agency and its relationship with the fiscal agent.
- RESA 4 Personnel Policy 1.02 specifies that all employees are assigned a supervisor who evaluates their performance on an annual basis through goal setting and monitoring. Part of that monitoring process is assuring that State and federal regulations and requirements of other agencies are met.

Capacity Building

Challenges Identified at RESA 4.

1. The current funding cap on the state foundation allowance for RESAs has placed limitations on capacity building, program implementation, and available personnel.
2. RESAs do not have access to county or school WESTEST data. The RESAs contact the county superintendent for this information. Immediate access to WESTEST data would enable a more efficient response time for providing technical assistance to counties and schools.
3. RESAs design and deliver programs and offer them to schools and county school districts. However RESAs do not have the statutory or policy authority to compel schools and/or county school districts to accept these services. For example, some schools in RESA 4 have been trained in programs such as tobacco prevention, but some schools did not follow-up on the program.

Recommendations to Increase Service.

1. Specialized special education services, i.e., speech therapist, physical therapist, audiologist, etc., were not provided to counties and schools within the region. The Team recommended that RESA 4 survey the school districts and schools for specialized special education services needed from the regional level and determine if any needed specialized services would require additional funding and/or personnel.
2. Cooperative food purchasing was not undertaken by RESA 4. RESA 4 presented the cooperative food purchase service to the council which turned it down. Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties indicated they could purchase food more cost effective than the RESA. The other county school districts did not indicate interest in pursuing cooperative food purchase. However, some counties indicated that they participate in cooperatives with other counties. RESA 4 indicated they would provide the cooperative food purchasing if the counties desired to participate in the service.
3. The Team recommended that RESAs be allowed to set up statewide computers instead of paying outside vendors.

Summary Conclusion

RESA 4 appears to be accomplishing its mission and operating within the parameters of laws and policies governing RESA operation. The programs and services that are being provided appear to be delivered in an economical and effective manner. One county superintendent interviewed stated that the county would have a hard time delivering services to children without the RESAs services.