



**Office of Education
Performance Audits**

FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

MARLOWE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BERKELEY COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

JULY 2014

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Marlowe Elementary School in Berkeley County was conducted February 13, 2013.

A Follow-Up Education Performance Audit was conducted March 31, 2014. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the follow-up review 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.”

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

Office of Education Performance Audits Team Chair – Carroll Staats

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT
HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress.

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)

Science was not being instructed with 50 percent minimum investigation, experimentation, and hands-on activities in the Kindergarten classes. West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2520.3 – 21st Century Science K-8 Content Standard and Objectives for West Virginia Schools, states, “Students will engage in active inquiries, investigations, and hands on activities for a minimum of 50 percent of the instructional time to develop conceptual understanding and research/laboratory skills.” No specific reason was given for this lack of instruction, only that the level was not to the 50 percent mark.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The county school system provided additional funding to purchase instructional materials for investigation, experimentation, and hands-on science activities. Through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and lesson plan reviews the Team determined science instruction was high quality and included at least 50 percent investigation, experimentation, and hands-on activities. Students were actively engaged in the lessons presented.

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 Marlowe Elementary School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Berkeley 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 Berkeley 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 principal provided high quality building leadership and the teachers provided high quality classroom leadership. Through the observation and interview process, the Team determined that all staff were knowledgeable of the students' needs based on data, had very high expectations for all students, and utilized the high quality staff development provided to ensure classroom curriculum delivery methods that challenged and engaged students.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The Team observed strong leadership throughout the school and high quality classroom instruction in all classrooms. High expectations for all students were evident and students were actively engaged in learning activities.

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 Marlowe Elementary 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 administration and staff of Marlowe Elementary School demonstrated the capacity to achieve and provide a safe and educationally stimulating atmosphere. High quality professional development was provided and applied that was specific to the school's Five-Year Strategic Plan and student needs.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The administration and staff continued to provide a safe and educationally stimulating school atmosphere. The school revised the Five-Year Strategic Plan and was implementing the plan's action steps.

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*)

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.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

19.1.10. Specialized instructional areas. The music facility did not have music chairs with folding arms or acoustical treatment.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

No change. The staff has searched for music chairs with folding arms that would fit students in Grades Preschool through 2, but have not found any such chairs that would physically fit these students.

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.

The administration and staff of Marlowe Elementary School disaggregated and utilized student data to guide the classroom curriculum and instruction. The staff was proactive in avoiding areas of student weakness and eliminating those areas in a timely manner.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

Staff continued to disaggregate student data and work together to address student weaknesses. Teachers were trained in the West Virginia Next Generation Standards and used them to guide the school curriculum.

Education Performance Audit Recommendation

Based upon the results of the Final Education Performance Audit, it is recommended and a motion is requested to approve the report.