

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

VALLEY VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BERKELEY COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

DECEMBER 2004

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits conducted an Education Performance Audit of Valley View Elementary in Berkeley County on April 25, 2003.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Valley View Elementary School in Berkeley County was conducted on October 15, 2004. 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."

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

This section presents the performance measures and the Follow-up Education Performance Audit Team's findings. The high quality educational standards and performance measures were investigated through the examination of documents; observation of practices; and interviews with personnel, students, and parents.

04-213 VALLEY VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - Passed

Fred Johnson, Principal
Grades K - 03
Enrollment 503

Group	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Enrolled on April 20	Number Tested	Participation Rate	Percent Proficient	Met Part. Rate Standard	Met Assessment Standard	Met Subgroup Standard
Mathematics								
All	157	164	164	100.00	76.43	Yes	Yes	✓
White	141	147	147	100.00	77.30	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	55	60	60	100.00	83.63	Yes	Yes	✓
Spec. Ed.	20	22	22	100.00	60.00	NA	NA	NA
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading/Language Arts								
All	157	164	164	100.00	78.34	Yes	Yes	✓
White	141	147	147	100.00	79.43	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	55	60	60	100.00	76.36	Yes	Yes	✓
Spec. Ed.	20	22	22	100.00	40.00	NA	NA	NA
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

FAY Full Academic Year

* 0 students in subgroup

** Less than 10 students in subgroup

Passed

Attendance Rate = 98.1

NONCOMPLIANCE

4.1a/b. Student Achievement. A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the school's students in grades 3 through 11 perform at or above the 3rd quartile in total basic skills; and no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the students perform within the 1st quartile, or the percentage of students performing within the 1st quartile is decreased based on two (2) of the most recent three (3) years. (Education Goal 3)

Fewer than fifty percent (50%) of the students performed at or above the 3rd quartile in total basic skills on the Stanford-9 Achievement Test (SAT-9). More than fifteen percent (15%) of the students performed within the 1st or bottom quartile in total basic skills on the Stanford-9 Achievement Test (SAT-9). This level of student achievement indicates a need to implement curriculum and instructional strategies to improve student achievement. Improving student performance may necessitate restructuring the curriculum and aligning instruction with the West Virginia Board of Education Content Standards and Objectives. Goals, time lines, and activities in the Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) must be followed and completed by a June 30, 2003 Date Certain.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. Valley View Elementary meets adequate yearly progress (AYP) for 5.1.1. Achievement.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

NONCOMPLIANCES

5.1 Curriculum

5.1.3. 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. All the content standards and objectives in each grade level and in each subject must be taught. (Policy 2510)

The Team observed the following practices that did not support high expectations for all students.

- Students had only 40 minutes per week in the computer laboratory to practice Basic Skills.
- Not all classroom computers were equipped with Basic Skills, Accelerated Reader, or other educational software.
- Teacher interviews indicated that some teachers perceived family background as the reason for student performance.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

5.1.4. Learning environment. School staff fosters an environment conducive to learning. (Policy 2510)

The following conditions distracted from learning.

- The Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system was excessively loud.
- Classrooms did not have walls.
- Access to some classrooms was through two or three other classrooms.
- Teachers reported that some assemblies, while educational, interrupted learning.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

PARTIAL COMPLIANCE. The Team observed that walls had not been constructed and classrooms were designated by the use of portable dividers and bookcases.

5.1.8. Library/educational technology access and technology application. 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)

All students did not have regular and equitable access to all library/technology resources.

- Some classrooms did not have Accelerated Reader software.
- Some classrooms did not have Compass.

- Numerous library books were not available for circulation. In the circulation desk area, the Team counted 27 stacks of books, some with more than 30 books.
- Students had limited research resources.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.7. Instruction in writing. The Team observed that displays of student writing were limited to copies of other author's products. The Team recommended that staff professional development be provided on instruction in writing and that teachers incorporate strategies that teach the mechanics of writing in the context of students' own creative writing.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

5.7.5. Parents and the community are provided information and opportunities for involvement. The Team observed that parents were provided information and that the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was active. However, many parents were not involved in helping students learn nor were they involved in school decision-making. No parents were listed as participants on the Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP). The Team recommended that more parents be provided opportunities to be actively involved in their child's education.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

5.1.1. Leadership. The Team recommended that plans be developed to enhance the following indicators of strong leadership skills at the school district, school, and/or classroom level.

- The school plant and equipment operate efficiently and effectively.
- Family involvement in school decision-making.
- Technology used effectively to analyze data to guide daily practice.
- The principal serves as mentor and coach for staff. Teachers requested that the principal review more lesson plans and classroom observations, instead of the assistant principal, as has been the practice.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

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.

15.1. 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.

15.1.3. Teachers' workroom. The teachers' workroom is adequate. (Policy 6200 §301.04)

The teachers' work area did not have access to communication technology.

15.1.4. Counselor's office. The counselor's office is adequate. (Policy 6200 §301.10)

The counselor's office was small.

15.1.5. Library/media and technology center. The library/media and technology center meets standards. (Policy 6200 §§303; 413; 514)

The library did not have adequate tapes and recordings.

15.1.7. K classrooms. Each kindergarten classroom has sufficient space, equipment, and materials. (Policy 6200 §§402.01; 402.05)

Kindergarten classrooms were not of adequate size, did not have adequate storage, and shared a central sink.

15.1.8. Grades 1-12 classrooms. Each classroom has sufficient space, equipment and materials. (Policy 6200 §§404; 502; 602)

Classroom areas were not of adequate size, did not have adequate storage, and were not equipped with controllable lights and outlets.

15.1.9. Grades K-12 remedial. Each remedial instructional area has sufficient space, equipment and materials. (Policy 6200 §§404; 503; 603)

Remedial areas were not of adequate size, did not have storage, and were sometimes located in open areas.

15.1.10. Specialized instructional areas. Each art, music, and physical education area has sufficient space, equipment and materials. (Policy 6200 §§10; 412, 504; 509; 510; 604; 608; 609)

The music facility did not have adequate storage or acoustical treatment.

15.1.14. Food service. Food service areas are adequate. (Policy 6200 §§302; 617)

Teachers did not have an adequate dining area.

15.1.15. Health service units. Health service units are adequate. (Policy 6200 §301)

The health service area did not have a private area for toilet, lavatory, scales, refrigerator, or work counter.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The facility resource needs remained as noted in the April 2003 Draft Report.

BUILDING CAPACITY TO CORRECT DEFICIENCIES

14.3.5. Recommending priority funding from the School Building Authority based on identified needs.

The Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system at Valley View Elementary School was extremely loud. All areas of the school building are involved, but the fan is especially noisy in the Grade 2 areas. The rattle would have a negative effect on the learning of all students, particularly those with hearing disabilities or attention deficits. Staff reported that the fans seldom stopped and the Team noted that they ran the entire day of the review. Valley View Elementary School needs major Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system repair or replacement to provide an environment conducive to learning.

14.3.9. Ensuring that the need for facilities in counties with increased enrollment is appropriately reflected and recommended for funding.

Valley View Elementary School was built in an open design to accommodate half as many students as it now serves. The additional enrollment in a school with few walls between classrooms has resulted in several obstacles to teaching and learning. Classroom areas were not of adequate size for the number of students served and were divided by standing partitions, cabinets, and tables. Several classrooms were only accessible by passing through other classroom areas. Storage was limited to the shelves that were used as partitions. Space for learning centers appropriate for primary grade instruction and the displaying of student work was inadequate. Teachers reported that they had to limit instructional strategies to those that would not cause noise or movement distracting to other classes. Lighting could not be adjusted to accommodate individual classroom instructional strategies.

Berkeley County has a plan to renovate an open-classroom school building each summer; however, Valley View is not scheduled for renovation until Summer 2004. The loud Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system, inadequate space, and lack of walls limit the capacity of the school to provide a thorough and efficient education. The negative impact on student learning should not be continued for another school year. Additional resources need to be obtained from an excess levy, a bond issue, or funding from the School Building Authority. Due to the increased enrollment, Berkeley County does not have the immediate capacity to improve the facility for the number of students being served.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The Team reported that the cause of the noise from the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system had been reduced. However, the renovation to alleviate the open-classroom design had not been undertaken.

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 application.

The indicators of efficiency listed are intended to guide Berkeley County in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Berkeley County has the obligation to respond to 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.

6.1.3. Facilities. Schools are operated efficiently, economically, and without waste or duplication, and the number and location of schools efficiently serves the student population. (W.Va. Code §§18-9D-15 and 18-9D-16d)

Schools are operated efficiently, economically, and without waste or duplication, and the number and location of schools efficiently serves the student population.

Berkeley County has experienced a rapid increase in student enrollment that has adversely affected Valley View Elementary School. The school building was constructed to accommodate half as many students in an open classroom arrangement. If the school building had been designed with classroom walls, the same number of students could not have been assigned there. Without walls, teachers have been able to move the portable partitions, bookshelves, and other dividers closer together in order to decrease classroom size and make room for additional classrooms. The cramped space discourages such teaching strategies as hands-on science, learning stations, and cooperative grouping.

To further weaken the school staff's ability to provide the most effective education, the Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system is loud and operates continually.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The Follow-up Team observed that sound dampening materials had been installed in the Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system ducts that reduced the amount of noise created by the fans. The principal and teachers indicated that the learning environment had improved with the renovation to the HVAC system.

SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVAL & SCHOOL ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Office of Education Performance Audits recommends that the West Virginia Board of Education continue the **Full Approval** status of the Berkeley County School District and continue the **Full Accreditation** status of Valley View Elementary School.