

**OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS**



**FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR**

**MILL CREEK INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**

**BERKELEY COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**APRIL 2005**

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

The West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits conducted an Education Performance Audit of Mill Creek Intermediate School in Berkeley County on May 12, 2004.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Mill Creek Intermediate School in Berkeley County was conducted March 15, 2005. 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."

## EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

### NONCOMPLIANCES

#### 5.1.1. Achievement

This is the 1st year that Mill Creek Intermediate School did not attain AYP in one or more subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. Two subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement, included: (SES) economically disadvantaged and (SE) special education students. In accordance with Section 10.5 of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320, *A Process for Improving Education: Performance Based Accreditation System*, the school was notified of any subgroup that initially did not make AYP in one year on any indicator. Mill Creek Intermediate School and Berkeley County were encouraged to revise the school and county Unified Improvement Plans when a subgroup is identified in any one year.

The Team determined that the Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) had been revised to address 5.1.1. Achievement.

### FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

**NONCOMPLIANCE.** The school improved and achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the economically disadvantaged students (SES) subgroup but did not achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the special education students (SE) subgroup.

#### 7.1 Curriculum

7.1.3. **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 educational opportunities including reteaching, enrichment, and acceleration. The content standards and objectives in each grade level and in each subject must all be taught. (Policy 2510)

The Team reported a need for high expectations for the learning and achieving of all students evidenced by the following observations. 1. Special education classrooms did not demonstrate reteaching consistently. Time-on-task in special education classes was not consistently practiced. The Team emphasized that reteach be incorporated along with other classroom instructional strategies to encourage achievement for special education students. Time-on-task and classroom schedules should be monitored and enforced. 2. Seven of the nine special education classrooms were grouped in the same area and away from the general student population.

### FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

**COMPLIANCE.** Teaching strategies in the special education classrooms demonstrated reteaching, preteaching, and other effective strategies. Classroom schedules and time-on-task were being monitored by the principal through classroom visits and lesson plan reviews.

**Three of the special education rooms had been relocated throughout the building. The school is part of a reorganization that will take place before the beginning of next school year and all special education rooms will be relocated throughout the building at the time of this reorganization.**

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

Not all special education and Title I teachers were part of a grade level teaching team during common planning which would ensure collaboration to improve achievement. The Team recommended that the administration assign special education and Title I teachers to a grade level team and ensure their common planning time to improve students performance and progress in the economically disadvantaged (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups.

While varied instructional strategies were observed in several classrooms, only direct instruction was observed in some classrooms. The Team recommended that staff development on varied instructional strategies be presented and implemented to improve performance and progress of the SES and SE subgroups.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE. The teachers' schedules had been constructed so the special education teachers had a planning period concurrent with the grade level teaching team.**

**Several staff development sessions, including follow-up sessions, have been provided on instructional strategies. Two literacy coaches worked with classroom teachers on instructional strategies one day a week.**

**7.1.8. 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)**

Students had limited access to educational technology due to the high number of inoperable computers. In one four-teacher team, only 11 of 22 classroom computers were functioning. Work orders had been submitted to the central office according to teachers and administration. The Team recommended that the repair of the computers be a central office priority and that repairs be completed by the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year. The Team also recommended that more updated Internet-connected computers be made available for classroom use.

### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE.** The principal reported that all computers were repaired within two weeks after the visit by the Education Performance Audit Team.

The school worked with its business partners to acquire 78 computers for distribution to the classrooms that have been made Internet ready and the computers are now connected to the Internet.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**5.1.1. Achievement.** The 2002-2003 assessment data indicated that the percentage of students scoring in the 1st quartile in the special education (SE) subgroups was over 25 percent. The percentage of students scoring in the top two quartiles in the economically disadvantaged students (SES), and special education (SE) subgroups was below 50 percent. The Team recommended that a concerted effort be made and strategies and programs be used to increase the percentage of all students achieving in the upper two quartiles.

### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

#### **RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.**

**6.1.4. Presidential Physical Fitness Test.** The Presidential Physical Fitness Test (PPFT) results at 31.57 percent for 2002-03 were quite low but showed improvement from the previous year's results (12.28 percent). The Team observed classes and found instruction to be consistent with the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) for physical education; however, the class was taught on a rotating schedule. It was the Team's opinion that the student performance would be higher if the teacher had more time with the students. Therefore, the Team recommended that the county and school review the school's schedule and provide more time for delivery of physical education.

### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.** The staff organized team activities for students participating during recess. The school hopes to add additional physical education time in the schedule next year.

**7.1.4. Learning environment.** The Team presented the following recommendations to enhance the learning environment.

1. Students from other schools were brought to this school to finish their day and wait for buses. The Team recommended that county transportation officials seek another solution in transferring students from their school to home.

2. The Team observed minimal examples of student-produced displays throughout the building. The Team recommended that more student created displays be placed throughout the school to create a more personalized learning environment.
3. Word-rich environments were not present in all classrooms. The Team recommended that the administration explore staff development sessions to create literacy enhancing classrooms.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION PARTIALLY FOLLOWED.**

- 1. The students must still wait at this school to transfer to other buses.**
- 2. Students' work is displayed throughout the building.**
- 3. Staff development has been provided.**

**7.1.8. Library/educational technology access and technology application.**

The library and computer laboratory spaces were small in relation to the number of students needing access. The Team recommended that the administration explore enlarging the spaces to provide more access to the facilities.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION BEING FOLLOWED. More space will be available when the school reorganizes next year.**

- 7.2.4. Lesson plans and principal feedback.** While lesson plans were reviewed by the administration, not enough detailed feedback was provided to encourage thorough planning. The Team recommended that the administration utilize a review instrument to provide detailed feedback. In view of the particular needs of the SES and SE subgroups, the Team further recommended that the principal consistently monitor curriculum and instruction.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.**

- 7.10.3. Staff development.** Even though staff development was provided through the county office, according to staff members, individual school needs were not sufficiently addressed. The Team recommended that the county provide site-based staff development based upon the school's needs assessment.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.**

## **BUILDING CAPACITY TO CORRECT DEFICIENCIES**

- 17.1. Capacity building is a process for targeting resources strategically to improve the teaching and learning process. School and county Unified 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 Mill Creek Intermediate School and Berkeley County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies. Assistance from RESA VIII and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) in the form of various programs and practices may be considered to improve student achievement.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

**The county and school have worked with RESA VIII and the West Virginia Department of Education to provide services and staff development to the school staff that are designed to improve student achievement. Student achievement has improved in the economically disadvantaged student (SES) subgroup to the point this group achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the 2003-2004 school year. Work remains to be done for the special education (SE) subgroup to achieve AYP.**

## 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.

**18.1. 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.**

- 18.1.4. Counselor's office.** The counselor's office did not have adequate space (100-125 square feet).
- 18.1.9. Grades K-12 remedial.** The location of the remedial areas was not adjacent to the general instructional areas.
- 18.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art facility area did not have a ceramic kiln or blackout areas. The music facility area did not have acoustical treatment. The physical education facility did not have a display case.
- 18.1.14. Food service.** The food service seating area did not accommodate one-third of the student body. Equipment and space were not adequate.
- 18.1.15. Health service units.** The health services unit did not contain curtained or small rooms with cots, toilet, lavatory, and a work counter.

**FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

**The county is currently constructing a new school building that will take part of the students from Mill Creek Intermediate School next school year. This should provide sufficient space to address the facility resource needs.**

## **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 Mill Creek Intermediate School must make a concerted effort to address the achievement of the economically disadvantaged students (SES) and special education students (SE). The Berkeley County curriculum staff, RESA VIII staff, and the West Virginia Department of Education are valuable resources to assist the staff of Mill Creek Intermediate School.**

### **TEAM SUMMARY**

**The administration and staff of Mill Creek Intermediate School, the Berkeley County central office staff, RESA VIII staff, and staff from the West Virginia Department of Education have and are making a concerted effort to address the achievement of the economically disadvantaged students (SES) and special education students (SE) subgroups. These efforts have allowed the SES students to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) during the 2003-2004 school year. The effort is continuing to help the special education students and all students to achieve at a high level.**

**SCHOOL SYSTEM APPROVAL AND 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 System and continue the Conditional Accreditation status of Mill Creek Intermediate School with a May 31, 2007 Date Certain to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).**