



**Office of Education
Performance Audits**

**FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT
FOR
SOUTH BRANCH CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTER
GRANT, HARDY AND PENDLETON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

APRIL 2010

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of South Branch Career and Technical Center in Grant County was conducted on February 21, 2008 and March 6, 2008.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of South Branch Career and Technical Center in Grant County was conducted March 3, 2010. 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."

24-701 South Branch Career and Technical Center

Randy Whetstone, Principal

**PERFORMANCE DATA
2006-2007**

This section presents the school performance data.

6.1.8. Job Placement rates for vocational programs.

- Students completing occupational concentrations – 118.
- Student placed (employed, continuing education, military) – 116 (98 percent).
- Eight-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 South Branch Career and Technical Center's performance in placement was excellent. The percentage of students employed in field and continuing education in field exceeded the State standard (60 percent).

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

The state standard for End-of-Course career/technical tests for 2006-2007 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
477	370	77.57%

South Branch Career and Technical Center attained 77.57 percent, which placed them in the Exemplary Accreditation status.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

No end-of-course CTE assessments were administered in 2008-09 due to piloting Global 21 CTE Performance Assessments.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

A comparison of the End-of-Course (EOC) Tests results between first semester 2007 and first semester 2008 indicates:

- Six courses performed significantly lower than 1st semester 2007.
 - Health Care Fundamentals (Substitute in Class)
 - Concepts of Health Care (Substitute in Class)
 - Business Computer Applications II (Substitute in Class)
 - Automotive Brakes
 - Fundamentals of Automotive Technology
 - Finish Carpentry

- Three courses performed approximately the same.
 - Accounting Principles I
 - Bricklaying
 - Fundamentals of Masonry

- Five courses showed significant improvement.
 - Shielded Metal Arc Welding
 - Fundamentals of Welding Technology
 - Fundamentals of Building Construction
 - Fundamentals of Electricity
 - Introduction to Business and Marketing

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

Refer to 6.1.9 – No Testing in 2008-09.

However, the school did increase the total number of proficiency standards met by 12% between 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Graduate placement in jobs or postsecondary education in 2009 was 95%.

NONCOMPLIANCES

7.1. Curriculum.

7.1.3. Learning environment. School staff provides a safe and nurturing environment that is conducive to learning. (Policy 2510)

The school environment was reported to be stressful, hostile, confrontational, and unsafe. Both the teachers and the administration reported verbal threats. The administrator reported a physical battery against him by a teacher which is currently being investigated by legal authorities. Reportedly, students participated in two walk-outs earlier in the year and the administrator reported that a teacher sick-out occurred. The relationship between the teachers and administration is plagued with grievances and alleged retaliation and confrontations between the administrator and several staff members.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

The school environment is safe and positive for both students and staff. The administration communicates well with staff, students and the community and public perception is positive.

7.1.6. Instruction in writing. Instruction in writing shall be part of every child's weekly educational curriculum in grades K through 12 in every appropriate class. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)

Writing in all classes was not occurring on a weekly basis.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

Writing is occurring in all classes on a regular basis.

7.1.7. 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)

Many teachers were utilizing up-to-date technology equipment specific to their respective areas. Other 21st Century teaching technologies utilizing computers, whiteboards, and the technology laboratory were observed to be underutilized.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

The use of technology was prevalent throughout the school. Considerable investment has been made in both technology and support infrastructure.

7.1.8. Instructional materials. Sufficient numbers of approved up-to-date textbooks, instructional materials, and other resources are available to deliver curricular content for the full instructional term. (Policy 2510)

A few faculty members reported delays in receiving teaching materials earlier in the year. The purchasing procedures have been modified as the year progressed. The purchasing of supplies needs to be more efficient with a shorter turnaround and with more communication relative to program budgets. Ten year old textbooks were being utilized in the health occupations program.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

All teachers have up-to-date textbooks and instructional materials, including online resources.

Supply and equipment purchases are completed in a timely manner utilizing revised protocols.

7.4. Regulatory Agency Reviews.

- 7.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews.** Determine during on-site reviews and include in reports whether required reviews and inspections have been conducted by the appropriate agencies, including, but not limited to, the State Fire Marshal, the Health Department, the School Building Authority of West Virginia, and the responsible divisions within the West Virginia Department of Education, and whether noted deficiencies have been or are in the process of being corrected. The Office of Education Performance Audits may not conduct a duplicate review or inspection nor mandate more stringent compliance measures. (W.Va. Code §§18-9B-9, 10, 11, 18-4-10, and 18-5A-5; Policy 1224.1; Policy 8100; W.Va. Code §18-5-9; Policy 6200; Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 §104.22 and §104.23; Policy 4334; Policy 4336)

Finance

A recent financial audit for the 2006-2007 school year reported several findings. The following are currently under investigation: A missing/deleted data files, destroyed documents, computers, and hard drives missing.

According to Section 17.3.2 of Policy 2320, the Team examined Compliance with policies and laws affecting student, school and school system performance and progress.

- 1. Finding:** The center had not been submitting monthly and annual financial statements to the chief county school business official of their fiscal agent.

Criteria: The *Accounting Procedures Manual for the Public Schools in the State of West Virginia* provides the official policies regarding financial management and operations of schools. Specific procedures were not followed in FY 2006-07 in filing financial statements. The Team reviewed a School Financial Review Checklist provided as Appendix E, pp. 125 to 133 in the Accounting Procedures Manual to assure compliance with West Virginia Board of Education policies. Several other items were checked noting they were in noncompliance. A recent financial review by the Fyffe Jones Group dated September 23, 2007 also found similar findings and provided recommendations for corrective action. A preliminary draft of the Single Agency Audit for Grant County (including South Branch Center) for FY 2006-07 listed several questioned costs and lack of internal controls.

- 2. Finding:** The Faculty Senate did not fully prepare and approve a detailed budget for Faculty Senate Funds for Fiscal Year 2007-08. They did not address carryover funds or funds allocated for a position that was not filled during the current year. However, it was noted that due to a lack of prior year records, the finance office did not provide the information regarding

carryover funds. Some records were located that provided carryover balances. The Team recommended that the Faculty Senate review this information and prepare a detailed budget in the prescribed format issued by the West Virginia Department of Education.

- 3. Finding:** The center did not comply with policies regarding the inventory of equipment and other sensitive items. The inventory of equipment and sensitive items did not correctly list the unit cost and purchase date of several items. It was also noted that a computer scanner was given to a former employee. A computer system was sold to an employee upon retirement.

Criteria: According to the Accounting Procedures Manual, page 111, expenditure of funds may not be used to provide service awards and other awards to recognize employees. Also, according to The Handbook for School Finance in West Virginia, disposition of equipment must follow established procedures.

Observation: Upon review of the postings for the Financial Secretary/Accountant, the Team noted that the original notice listed that experience was needed in the area of WVEIS operations. The posting of October 3, 2007 did not list such a requirement.

Recommendation: Due to the lack of experience in the use of WVEIS, several purchasing operations, budgeting and transfers of funds have been delayed. The Team recommends that future personnel hired for the financial secretary position shall have one or more years of experience of using school accounting and WVEIS software.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

The West Virginia Department of Education has provided on-site financial management technical assistance on a regular basis since the takeover. All financial audit findings have been resolved.

7.5. Administrative Practices and School-Community Relations.

7.5.2. Codes of conduct. The county and schools implement, investigate, and monitor the code of conduct for students and the code of conduct for employees. (W.Va. Code §18-2E-5; Policy 4373; Policy 5902)

Numerous Code of Conduct violations for both students and professional staff were reported. A breakdown in professional conduct with reported verbal and physical confrontations between the teachers and the administrator were reported. Criticism of the director by staff has been openly reported in the press. The director reported to the Team that he thought many of the staff had a “thug mentality”. Taped recordings of a student walk-out revealed inappropriate demeanors from students. Evidence existed that some students were solicited for written reports of run-ins with the administration.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

All code of conduct violations have been resolved with the exception of two grievances filed by the secretarial staff. These grievances are at Level III.

7.6. Personnel.

7.6.1. Hiring. County boards follow hiring practices set forth in W.Va. Code. (W.Va. Code §§18A-4-7a, 18A-4-8, and 18-2E-3a)

The posting for the Lead Teacher position was vague and did not include required information relative to the amount of pay and the employment days. The pay and employment period was established at a later date by the administrative council. The position appears quasi-administrative rather than lead teacher. The duties for administration by the lead teacher were reported by teachers to interfere and reduce the amount of time available to operate the remedial laboratory.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

All postings are in compliance with code and policy. All certifications and job assignments are consistent with policy.

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-2-12; Policy 5202)

Two substitute teachers were not properly licensed\qualified for their assignments.

- ABE instructor lacked required professional development hours from an ABE peer trainer.
- Health Occupations instructor lacked certificate for the Department of Health and Human Resources.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

All licensures and certifications are consistent with code and policy.

7.6.3. Evaluation. The county board adopts and impellents 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, and Policy 5314)

Teacher evaluations and observations were not in accordance with W.Va. Code and West Virginia Board of Education policy. Timelines and required number of observations and evaluations were not met. Teachers with 1 – 3 year experience had only one observation on file.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

Teacher evaluations and observations are up-to-date and documented.

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)

Observations and reported information suggest that the teachers are not in conflict among themselves but do not trust or respect the administration. The director has a low image of many of the teachers. The director believes that the staff has and continues to lead a concerted, planned campaign to remove

him from his position. The teachers are very critical of the administration for alleged verbal assaults, intimidation, confrontations, and alleged eavesdropping. Teachers reported they have very little input into management decisions. Collaboration and team building efforts such as faculty luncheons and covered dish occasions had few reported participants and have not achieved harmony at the school. Reprimands of teachers by the director with students present were reported by teachers and students.

The local school improvement council (LSIC) defends the administration at the school and reportedly blames the administrative council for the problems at the school by not backing and supporting the director in his quest to bring accountability to the school. The director also reported that the administrative council has suppressed his efforts by asking him to “back-off”; however, nothing of that nature appears in council minutes. Although the administrative council is composed of many highly reputable and capable persons, it has not been able to stabilize and diffuse the situation at the center. In fact, leadership has failed to emerge at the teacher, administrator, or council level to resolve the conflict at the center. Unresolved and lingering issues like police investigations, file deletions, missing records, grievances, and lawsuits that must be settled by others are difficult to overcome but must not stand in the way of providing an effective environment for students.

Effective communication among staff, administration, and the administrative council is very much needed. Instead, very little information was shared with teachers or the administrative council of plans to change and eliminate programs. Surveys to determine student interest in next year’s course offerings were solicited with programs deleted prior to approval of the administrative council.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE.

The school’s climate and culture is positive and very supportive of student learning. The director’s management style is open and communicative with staff, students and the community.

The potential reinstated Administrative Council is anxious to assume control of the school and would be made up of two-thirds new membership (Superintendent and local Board Members from each of the three counties.)

Recommendations

- 7.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback.** An extended turnaround time for director’s comments on lesson plans was reported. It is recommended that comments be given to the teachers prior to the plans being utilized.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

Lesson plans are reviewed and returned to teachers in a timely manner with comments.

- 7.5.3. Statewide assessment.** The director and the LSIC reported that in past years students had been helped too much on their end-of-course tests. A new supervised monitoring process has addressed the issue starting this year. It is recommended that this issue be reported to the West Virginia Department of Education to investigate this claim.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

All testing follows a supervised monitoring process.

- 7.7.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations.** It was reported that the building security was breached on a few occasions with a locked safe being opened, offices being entered after hours and files missing from cabinets. It is recommended that locks/combinations be changed immediately or electronic keying of doors and offices be installed.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

New locks have been installed and new security protocols are in place.

- 7.7.2. Policy implementation.** Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities were reported to not be accessible to teachers. A summary of each IEP was developed and given to affected teachers. It is recommended that teachers have access (with confidentiality safeguards) to students' IEPs.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

Student IEPs are secure and accessible only to the teacher responsible for the student.

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 South Branch Career and Technical Center in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Grant 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 Grant County or the accreditation status of the school.

None identified.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

Indicators of Efficiency are in place.

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 South Branch Career and Technical Center in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

NONCOMPLIANCES	RECOMMENDED RESOURCES
7.1.3. Learning environment.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instruction (304) 558-5325 West Virginia Department of Education Office of Technical and Secondary Program Improvement (304) 558-2389
7.1.6. Instruction in writing.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instruction (304) 558-5325
7.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Technology (304) 558-7880 West Virginia Department of Education Office of Technical and Secondary Program Improvement (304) 558-2389
7.1.8. Instructional materials.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instruction (304) 558-5325 West Virginia Department of Education Office of Technical and Secondary Program Improvement (304) 558-2389
7.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of School Facilities (304) 558-2711 West Virginia Department of Education Office of School Finance (304) 558-6300
7.5.2. Codes of conduct.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Legal Services (304) 558-3667

7.6.1. Hiring.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Professional Preparation (304) 558-7826
7.6.2. Licensure.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Professional Preparation (304) 558-7842
7.6.3. Evaluation.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Human Resources (304) 558-2702
7.8.1. Leadership.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Professional Development (304) 558-0539 West Virginia Department of Education Office of Technical and Secondary Program Improvement (304) 558-2389

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 South Branch Career and Technical Center does not have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

With the assistance of the State, South Branch Career and Technical Center has built the sustainable capacity needed to ensure quality teaching and learning.

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*)

None identified.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The necessary facilities, equipment and materials are in place.

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 school cannot continue to achieve its mission until and unless the conflicts and division between teachers and the administrators are resolved. Relationships appear to be worsening and becoming dangerous. Immediate assistance to the school is needed.

FOLLOW-UP TEAM SUMMARY

The internal conflicts and divisions have been addressed and the school is functioning well. It is recommended that the school operation be returned to the Administrative Council under a Memorandum of Understanding approved by the State Board of Education.

School Accreditation Status

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit Noncompliances	Annual Performance Measures Noncompliances	Date Certain
24-701 South Branch Career and Technical Center	Accreditation	7.1.3; 7.1.6; 7.1.7; 7.1.8; 7.4.1; 7.5.2; 7.6.1; 7.6.2; 7.6.3; 7.8.1		

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team identified ten (10) noncompliances and presented four (4) recommendations. The Team submits this draft report to guide South Branch Career and Technical Center in improvement efforts. The technical center has six months to correct deficiencies noted in the report.

Follow-up Review

The follow-up review found that the identified noncompliances had been corrected and the recommendations had been followed.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS for SOUTH BRANCH CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTER

The South Branch Career and Technical Center has a myriad of problems that need immediate attention. The school climate is tense and volatile. Relationships between teachers and administrative staff have deteriorated to the point of open conflict and confrontation of a hostile nature. Lack of building security, code of conduct violations, and the continued escalation of conflict coupled with other policy and statutory deficiencies at the school call for extraordinary circumstances and an emergency to be declared to restore a safe environment at the school.

West Virginia Code §18-2E-5 provides a process to be followed when an emergency is declared in a school. However, that process is designed primarily for schools under the control of a local board of education that has a greater infrastructure in place to resolve issues and provides needed resources in an expeditious manner. An immediate intervention by the West Virginia Board of Education appears to be the most effective way to quickly take control of the situation at the school and install a monitor with a physical presence and the authority to make administrative decisions at and for the school.

West Virginia Code §18-2B-2 states that the State Board is the “sole agency responsible for the administration of vocational education and for supervision of the administration thereof by local educational agencies and is hereby authorized and empowered to establish, operate, and maintain area vocational education programs. . . .” “The West Virginia Board of Education may delegate for such period of time as it may determine its operational authority for multi-county vocational centers to an administrative council composed of equal representation from each of the participating county boards of education, the superintendent of schools from each participating county, and the state director of vocational education or his representative.” The statute goes on to say “The administration and supervision of the area vocational educational programs shall be administered by the director of the division of vocational education.”

It is recommended that W.Va. Code §18-2B-2 be invoked, that the West Virginia Board of Education rescind its delegation of operating and maintaining South Branch Career and Technical Center from the South Branch Career and Technical Center Administrative Council and delegate it to the State Superintendent of Schools and his assistants.

Follow-up Recommendations

The South Branch Career & Technical Center has been under the control of the State Superintendent of Schools and his assistants for two years. During that period of time, all the problems, issues, and noncompliances have been addressed and corrected. It is recommended that the West Virginia Board of Education enter a Memorandum of Understanding with the South Branch Career and Technical School Administrative Council for the return of control of the center to the Administrative Council.