



INITIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

ELKINS MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

JUVENILE INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

NOVEMBER 2011

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

An announced (five days in advance) Education Performance Audit of the Elkins Mountain School, a Juvenile Institutional Education Program under the governance of the West Virginia Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools, located in Randolph County was conducted on October 12, 2011. The purpose of the review was to verify compliance with Policy 2325, *High Quality Standards for Institutional Juvenile Education Programs*, and to make recommendations to the West Virginia Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools on such measures of the procedures manual and current Policy 2325 to effectively assess juvenile institutional education programs.

The Education Performance Audit Team reviewed the Five-Year Strategic Improvement Plan, interviewed school personnel and host agency staff as available, observed classrooms, and examined school records.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

Office of Education Performance Audits Team Chair – Allen D. Brock, Coordinator

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Jared Hughes, Coordinator,
Office of Institutional Education Programs

Team Member – William DesRochers, Principal, Barboursville School and Robert L.
Shell Juvenile Center

JUVENILE INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

ELKINS MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

J.P. Tenney, Principal

OVERVIEW

Elkins Mountain School is an on-campus school operated under the direction of the West Virginia Department of Education in collaboration and cooperation with the Department of Health and Human Services. The facility serves neglected and delinquent youth ages thirteen to seventeen. The facility is a fifty-nine bed facility serving fifteen males at the Oak Ridge Level II campus and forty-four males at the Elkins Mountain Level III campus. All education classes occur at the Elkins Mountain campus. Student characteristics include: at risk for incarceration, self-harm, or harm to others if behaviors aren't modified. The residents are often impulsive and easily agitated, and often have a history of drug or alcohol issues. They are generally below grade level due to numerous factors.

The educational programs afford opportunities for students to acquire an individualized education tailored to their particular learning needs and ambitions. Upon intake, students are given a battery of assessments to enable teachers to design the educational path to meet their individual needs. Through transcript evaluation and standardized assessments to determine learning styles, skill strengths, skill gaps, and career interests, teachers develop an individualized instructional plan to serve in the students' best interest for success. According to the data acquired through surveys, assessments, intake, and teacher formative assessments, over 75 percent of our students arrive at least one grade level + below in math and more than 50 percent of our students arrive at least one grade level + below in reading.

The Transition Specialist and the School Counselor begin the transition process from the date of the student's arrival. Each student's schedule is established to the best of the facility's ability to meet the graduation needs of his home county. Students are given extra time and extra support through tutoring offered for one hour twice per week and morning work time provided for forty-five minutes four days per week. During tutoring and morning work students with identified deficiencies, particularly in Math and Reading, are provided support to bridge skills gaps. Deficiencies are recognized primarily through the Scholastic Reading Inventory and TABE benchmark testing. With assistance of the Transition Specialist, students' post-release needs are focused upon including re-articulation into their home high schools, high school graduation, GED preparation and completion, affective re-structuring of their attitudes toward school and post-secondary career opportunities.

Elkins Mountain School is a Title I school and as such is able to provide reading support for all students through a Title I reading program. Mathematical support for students is provided by a part-time Math Interventionist and through the Title I tutoring plan. Students are given opportunities for physical activity, writing across the curriculum,

Positive Behavior Support activities, multi-cultural education, interdisciplinary lessons and incorporation of the fine arts in each class on at least a weekly basis collectively. Through the innovation of customized lesson plans and the support of 21st Century technology (Acuity, West Virginia Writes, TechSteps, onTarget West Virginia, Thinkfinity, READ 180, Carnegie, etc.) instructors are able to provide targeted individualized instruction for each student.

The Elkins Mountain School is an example of a successful collaboration between the school and the host agency. The Elkins Mountain School provides school program aides to assist in the day to day school operation. The cooperative efforts of both the school staff and the Elkins Mountain staff make this unique dynamic program successful.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

COMMENDATIONS

- 3.2.2. High expectations.** The Team observed high expectations in all classrooms and noted evidence that high expectations were in place throughout the facility. All students were treated respectfully and were guided to attain their highest achievement by proper modeling by teachers and administration. The staff provided challenging and interesting instruction and instilled confidence in the students that they could achieve.
- 3.2.3. Learning environment.** The Team commended the school's learning environment. The classrooms were clean, orderly, and provided an atmosphere that fostered high achievement. Interesting and educational materials were posted and the classrooms were positive and educationally stimulating.
- 3.2.4. Research based instructional strategies.** The co-teaching between the general educators and the special educators was high quality. The co-teachers were effective in whole class instruction and in working one-on-one with individual students. The rapport between the general educators and the special educators fostered the delivery of high quality instruction.
- 3.8. Leadership.** The principal provided a high level of leadership that inspired staff and students to perform at their highest levels. The principal was organized and knowledgeable of the school's overall needs and what was needed to assist the staff and students in their daily education.

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 the schools and how those impact program and student performance.

3.4.1. Facilities are safe, free of hazards and adequate to meet the needs of students and provide an environment conducive to learning.

Section 3.4. Regulatory Agency Reviews of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2325 governing accountability for juvenile institutional education programs for public school age students establishes standards for safe and adequate facilities for learning.

A host agency provides and maintains all facilities for the 10 juvenile institutional education programs in West Virginia. The West Virginia Board of Education through the State Superintendent of Schools and the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Institutional Education Programs provides the education programs in these facilities. Such provision of adequate services compels interagency collaboration and cooperation regarding adequate facilities for juvenile institutional education programs.

The Office of Education Performance Audits Team found that the equipment, materials, and staff were available at Elkins Mountain School to provide high quality education. The facilities provided a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team presented four commendations.

Based upon the results of the Education Performance Audit, the Office of Education Performance Audits recommends that the West Virginia Board of Education approve the Elkins Mountain School's Education Performance Audit Report.