



**Office of Education
Performance Audits**

INITIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

ACADEMY PROGRAMS SCHOOL

JUVENILE INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

NOVEMBER 2010

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

An announced (five days in advance) Education Performance Audit of the Academy Programs School, a Juvenile Institutional Education Program under the governance of the West Virginia Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Schools, located in Marion County was conducted on October 6, 2010. 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 – Jared Hughes, Coordinator, Office of Institutional Education Programs

JUVENILE INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

ACADEMY PROGRAMS SCHOOL

Matthew Kittle, Principal

OVERVIEW

Academy Programs, consisting of the Youth Academy and the YORE Academy is a residential and in-home treatment facility for at-risk children and their families. Academy Programs' mission is "Changing Lives through Innovative Strategies". One of the core values of Academy Programs is that "Education is the cornerstone to constructive change".

Academy Programs, a level II residential treatment facility licensed by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, provides services to both females and males from ages 12 to 17 years and transitioning adults up to age 21.

The Youth Academy is a Level II therapeutic residential program designed to treat children exhibiting behavioral and/or emotional issues that prevent them from being maintained in their home environment. The Youth Academy has a capacity to serve 12 males and 10 females. The YORE Academy serves up to 24 males and females, who have been diagnosed with co-occurring issues generally associated with substance addictive behaviors.

Educational programs with the Office of Institutional Programs (OIEP) range from middle school through college coursework. The school's focus is based on the West Virginia 21st Century content standards and objectives (CSOs). This is done while developing and encouraging the desire for lifelong learning in all students through academic opportunities for remediation and acceleration. Additionally, graduate equivalency diploma (GED) preparation is an option for some students that would be prohibited from earning a high school diploma due to age restrictions or severe credit deficits. A vocational option is available to some students through participation in the Mon Youth Build program and career experiential opportunities are available in food services and facilities maintenance.

Academic programs are offered eight periods a day. This enables students to earn eight credits per academic year toward graduation. A summer school program is also offered that enables students to earn an additional two credits. The academic program focuses on all core subjects, including English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education. Three elective periods are offered that include: Spanish, computer applications, geography, speech, life skills, forestry, and health.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

COMMENDATIONS

- 3.2.2. High Expectations.** The Team commended the staff for the high expectations demonstrated for all students. No academic time was lost and students reported that there is never 'down time' and teachers provide challenging and interesting instruction. The principal modeled high expectations for all students and teachers and expected nothing less from students and faculty. Students were recognized quarterly for their academic success with honor rolls as well as special recognition as recommended by the teachers.
- 3.2.5. Instruction.** Instruction in all classes was high quality. Although the students' achievement levels varied in each class, the teachers maintained student interest and engagement and ensured that no barriers were in place that prohibited student achievement.
- 3.3.3. Data Analysis.** The West Virginia Department of Education @ Academy Programs created a spreadsheet that displays and consequently enables education staff to monitor student performance data in up to 34 different categories. Extensive data were kept on each student and decisions were based on this data. Student educational success was monitored to identify the program's effectiveness. The last review of the students enrolled in the on-grounds schools at Academy Programs, shows that the students, before enrollment, came to the school with an overall collective GPA of 1.164 for the first semester. At the conclusion of the second semester ending in June, 2010, these same students had an overall GPA of 2.857. Academic success was also noted in the rate of the accrual of credits toward earning a high school diploma. For the second semester, the average number of credits offered to all students was 3.58. The average number of credits earned by the students was 3.48. The accrual rate of credits at 97 percent validates that the students showed improvement in their grades.
- 3.3.8. Lesson Planning.** All teachers' lesson plans were impeccable. Steps to complete the lesson of the day were clear and concise and a substitute teacher could easily follow the lesson plans.
- 3.8. Leadership.** The principal was the instructional leader of the school. He was knowledgeable of each student's needs and for the teachers' needs. The principal modeled high expectations of students, staff, and self and provided avenues and resources to allow all students to excel. The principal's command of the school and his leadership abilities were one of the major reasons for the excellent condition of the school and the high levels of student achievement.

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 Academy Programs School was extremely well equipped and provided a safe and conducive learning atmosphere for all students to excel. The relationship between the school and the host agency was one of mutual respect and the agencies operated smoothly and in the best interest of the students.

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team presented five commendations.