

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



DRAFT EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

ROBERT L. BLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

LEWIS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

JANUARY 2005

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Robert L. Bland Middle School in Lewis County was conducted on November 17, 2004. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the review was to investigate the reasons for performance and progress that are persistently below standard and to make recommendations to the school and school system, as appropriate, and to the West Virginia Board of Education on such measures as it considers necessary to improve performance and progress to meet the standard.

The Education Performance Audit Team reviewed the Unified School Improvement Plan, interviewed school personnel and school system administrators, observed classrooms, and examined school records. The review was limited in scope and concentrated on the subgroups that failed to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

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

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Nathan Estel, Coordinator, Office of Professional Preparation

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Bruce Hollis, Coordinator, Office of Technical and Secondary Program Improvement

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
John Bennett	Principal	Gilmer County High Gilmer County
William Chapman	Principal	Spencer Middle Roane County
Larry Dalesio	Principal	Cameron Elementary Marshall County
Lesla Hines	Director	Gilmer County
Mary Alice Kaufman	Board Member	Mercer County
Dr. Jack Kaufman	Professor of Education (Retired)	Mercer County
Thomas Wood	Assistant Principal	John Marshall High Marshall County
Connie Young	Principal	Cameron High Marshall County

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

This section presents the Annual Performance Measures for Accountability and the Education Performance Audit Team’s findings.

41-301 ROBERT L. BLAND MIDDLE - Needs Improvement

LEWIS COUNTY

Mary Grace Tallhamer, Principal
Grades 05-08
Enrollment 880

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	849	877	875	99.77	63.04	Yes	Yes	✓
White	841	869	867	99.77	63.05	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	453	469	468	99.79	54.20	Yes	No	✗
Spec. Ed.	196	198	198	100.00	19.89	Yes	No	✗
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading/Language Arts								
All	849	877	874	99.66	69.42	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
White	841	869	866	99.65	69.84	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Indian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	453	469	467	99.57	60.84	Yes	No	✗
Spec. Ed.	196	198	198	100.00	21.42	Yes	No	✗
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

FAY -- Full Academic Year

* -- 0 students in subgroup

** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

Passed

Attendance Rate = 95.9%

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Information by Class

Mathematics											
Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished	Proficient
05	238	229	237	228	99.58	10.53	31.14	46.93	10.53	0.88	58.33
06	219	213	218	212	99.54	11.79	32.55	41.98	10.85	2.83	55.66
07	221	216	221	216	100.00	8.33	22.22	47.69	19.91	1.85	69.44
08	199	191	199	191	100.00	9.95	20.42	51.83	15.18	2.62	69.63

Reading											
Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished	Proficient
05	238	229	237	228	99.58	7.02	32.89	44.30	15.35	0.44	60.09
06	219	213	218	212	99.54	12.26	25.47	44.34	14.15	3.77	62.26
07	221	216	220	216	99.55	4.63	14.81	49.07	25.93	5.56	80.56
08	199	191	199	191	100.00	6.28	17.80	38.74	29.84	7.33	75.92

Enr. - Enrollment
FAY - Full Academic Year
Part. - Participation

Statewide Writing Assessment Student Frequency and Percentage by Score

Grade 7

4.0		3.5		3.0		2.5		2.0		1.5		1.0		N		Total Freq.
Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	N	
0	0%	1	0%	7	3%	21	10%	157	73%	16	7%	5	2%	9	4%	216

Note: Eighty-six (86%) of the students scored at or above 2.0 on the Statewide Writing Assessment.

Frequency - Number of students
% - Percentage of students

**Physical Assessment – Presidential Physical Fitness Test
Passage Rate**

Percentage of Students	School Year
44.62%	2003-04
51.06%	2002-03
53.717%	2001-02

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Below Standard

5.1.1. Achievement.

Robert L. Bland Middle School failed to achieve adequately yearly progress (AYP) in one or more subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. Two subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement, included: Economically disadvantaged students (SES) and special education students (SE). In accordance with Section 9.5 of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320, *A Process for Improving Education: Performance Based Accreditation System*, the West Virginia Board of Education issued the school Temporary Accreditation status at the September 10, 2004 State Board meeting.

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

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Education Performance Audit Team reported that Robert L. Bland Middle School had undertaken initiatives for achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The prominent initiatives and activities included the following.

6.1.4. Instruction. The Increasing Student Achievement, Advancing Communities (ISAAC) Project was based on assisting students to be more successful in the classroom and increasing their basic skills. Students stay after school to work with tutors in reading, mathematics, help with homework, technology skills, and physical recreation. This program was operated four days per week and students were given the option to participate in all five programs or just one. Community programs work with the after-school program for career awareness and community service. This program was made available through RESA VII and a 21st Century Grant.

6.1.5. Instructional strategies. National Standards based mathematics instruction was being integrated throughout the building. This program is designed to enrich the mathematics lessons and increase student achievement. Teachers appeared to have readily accepted the instructional practices of the strategies.

The Team observed evidence of varied instructional strategies in several curricular subjects. Students were observed to be on task and engaged in instruction throughout the day of the audit. Teachers employed a variety of instructional techniques which were educational and interesting to students.

- 6.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.** Given the limitations of the facility, the creative uses of available technology across the curriculum were highly commendable. The Team interviewed teachers and students and reported that students regularly utilized technology in the curriculum and were comfortable in its general use.
- 6.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.** The Robert L. Bland Middle School Technology Team wrote a grant to obtain a Technology Integration Specialist to work with teachers, students, and parents. This grant's purpose is to focus on integrating technology in the classroom and across the curriculum for all students and teachers. Parents and teachers were able to access grades online and lesson plans for the classes of teachers who choose to publish them using Edline. Parents had been trained to access their individual child's grades from home. Within this grant, the school has purchased a wireless lab of 30 computers for students and teachers to use in the classroom to assist in technology integration.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress to Meet the Standard (5.1.1. Achievement – SES/SE)

6.1. Curriculum

- 6.1.2. 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. (Policy 2510)**

Approximately 60 percent of the students in one science class, were not making adequate progress. An interview with the Special Education Aide in the classroom revealed that none of her special education students were passing the course.

- 6.1.4. Instruction. Instruction is consistent with the programmatic definitions in Policy 2510. (Policy 2510)**

Generally, instructional strategies employed by teachers were many and varied. However, some of the science teachers did not meet the 50 percent investigation, inquiry, and experimentation requirements of Policy 2510. This may be attributed to the lack of properly equipped laboratories.

- 6.1.11. Guidance and advisement. Students are provided specific guidance and advisement opportunities to allow them to choose a career major prior to completion of grade 10. (Policy 2510)**

There was no evidence that Developmental Guidance was being taught. Interviews with teachers and students indicated that character education was being discussed on Mondays, but no other component was addressed. The Team recommended that the guidance counselors be rescheduled to provide instruction of Developmental Guidance.

- 6.1.13. Instructional day. Priority is given to teaching and learning, and classroom instructional time is protected from interruption. An instructional day is provided that includes a minimum of 315 minutes for kindergarten and grades 1 through 4; 330 minutes for grades 5 through 8; and 345 minutes for grades 9 through 12. The county board submits a school calendar with a minimum 180 instructional days. (W.Va. Code §18-5-45; Policy 2510)**

Advisory time did meet the requirements of instructional time. Instructional time must be supported with Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) or a waiver by the local school board. Homework; tutoring; and community projects, although good activities, did not have Content Standards and Objectives and did not meet the definition of instruction. If this is included, the school does not meet the requirements of 330 minutes of instruction for a school day.

The Advisory time was considered in the 330 minutes required daily instruction. Activities during this time, i.e., homework, tutoring, and community projects are not instruction. Therefore, the school did not meet the required 330 minutes of instruction.

6.2. Student And School Performance

- 6.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback. Lesson plans that are based on approved content standards and objectives are prepared in advance and the principal reviews, comments on them a minimum of once each quarter, and provides written feedback to the teacher as necessary to improve instruction. (Policy 2510; Policy 5310)**

Through interviews with the staff, the Team found that one teacher did not have written lesson plans, nor could it be explained that the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) were being covered. It is imperative that lesson plans be developed by all teachers and that the CSOs be covered to assure student achievement. Given the performance of the economically disadvantaged (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups, it is particularly important that lesson plans be prepared in advance and the principal review and comment on them for instructional relevance.

6.5. Administrative Practices and School-Community Relations

- 6.5.2. 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)**

Student grades in a science classroom were posted on a bulletin board. Students were referenced by student number and only the failing grades were posted. The Education Performance Audit Team and students interviewed viewed this as a punitive action and a violation of confidentiality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1.3. Learning environment.** Student interviews revealed that an adequate number of functional rest room facilities and water fountains was not available for the student population. It was evident that this issue negatively affected the learning environment. The Team recommended that the facility be upgraded to provide appropriate facilities for the student and faculty.
- 6.1.5. Instructional strategies.** Not all teachers reported receiving appropriate training in inclusion of special education students in the regular education classrooms. This leads to inappropriate or under utilized collaboration between regular and special education teachers and aides. The Team recommended that proper training and sustained staff development be provided to encourage the development of a more effective, collaborative team approach.

- 6.1.5. Instructional strategies.** Teacher interviews indicated that appropriate modifications for special education students in the regular education environment were not being provided in all settings. The Team recommended that Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) be carefully reviewed by teachers and building administrators to assure that appropriate instruction, through modification, is being delivered to special education students in the general education classrooms.

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 Audit Team assessed as requiring more efficient and effective application.

Curriculum delivery.

Collaboration between the special educators and general educators was not effective. The Team recommended that the Lewis County Director of Special Education contact the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education, and the RESA VII Director of Special Education for assistance in collaboration and curriculum delivery.

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 Robert L. Bland Middle School in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS	RECOMMENDED RESOURCES
6.1.2. High expectations	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.1.4. Instruction	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.1.11. Guidance and advisement	West Virginia Department of Education Offices of Student Services and Health Promotion (304) 558-8830
6.1.13. Instructional day	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.5.2. Codes of conduct	West Virginia Department of Education Offices of Student Services and Health Promotion (304) 558-8830

16.1. 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 Robert L. Bland Middle School and Lewis County have the capacity with the assistance of the West Virginia Department of Education and RESA VII to correct the identified deficiencies.

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.

- 17.1. 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. The principal checked and the Team confirmed the following school facility resource needs.

- 17.1.1. School location.** The site was not 11 acres +1 acre for each 100 students over 600 and the site was not large enough for future expansion. The school was not located away from undesirable noise and traffic. The site was not suitable for special instructional needs, e.g., outdoor learning. Sidewalks were not adequate with designated crosswalks, curbcuts, and correct slope. On-site solid surface parking was not sufficient for staff, visitors, and handicapped individuals.
- 17.1.2. Administrative and service facilities.** An adequate reception/waiting area was not available.
- 17.1.3. Teachers' workroom.** An adequate teachers' work area was not provided.
- 17.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art area did not have access to natural and artificial light, hot and cold water, outlets, a ceramic kiln, or black-out areas. The music facility was not located away from quiet areas of the building and did not have music stands, podium, recording devices, microphones, stereo sound system, piano, audiovisual equipment, or acoustical treatment.

- 17.1.11. Grades 6-12 science facilities.** The science facilities were not adequate in size (40-50 square feet/student with 1000 square feet minimum). There was no AC and DC current, air vacuum, or darkening provisions.
- 17.1.14. Food service.** The food service area was not convenient to a service drive for deliveries and removal of wastes. The food service area could not accommodate 3/8s of the student body. Seating for dining and study purposes and a chalkboard and bulletin board were not available. A teachers' dining area that was of adequate size (250-300 square feet) was not available.

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.

Given the achievement levels of students in the economically disadvantaged students (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups, Robert L. Bland Middle School and Lewis County must implement curriculum and instruction that will improve achievement. Lewis County must actively pursue assistance from RESA VII, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the West Virginia Center for Professional Development to assist with school improvement efforts. Curriculum must be data-driven and instruction must be relevant to the curriculum and provide all students the opportunity to learn.

School Accreditation Status

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit High Quality Standards	Annual Performance Measures Needing Improvement	Date Certain
41-301 Robert L. Bland Middle	Temporary Accreditation	6.1.2, 6.1.4, 6.1.11, 6.1.13, 6.2.3, 6.5.2		September 1, 2005
			5.1.1 (SES/SE)	

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team identified six (6) high quality standards – necessary to improve performance and progress to meet 5.1.1. Achievement – for the economically disadvantaged (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups.

Robert L. Bland Middle School’s Education Performance Audit was limited in scope to the performance and process standards and progress related to student and school performance in the area of deficiency (5.1.1. SES/SE). The Team also conducted a resource evaluation to assess the resource needs of the school. The Team submits this draft report to guide Robert L. Bland Middle School in improvement efforts. The school and county have until the next accreditation cycle (September 1, 2005) to correct deficiencies noted in the report.