



**Office of Education  
Performance Audits**

**FOLLOW-UP EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR**

**HAMLIN PK-8**

**LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**APRIL 2014**

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

An announced Education Performance Audit of Hamlin PK-8 in Lincoln County was conducted October 25, 2012.

A Follow-Up Audit was conducted January 30, 2014. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the follow-up review 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 TEAM**

Office of Education Performance Audits Team Chair – Carroll Staats

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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

### 43 LINCOLN COUNTY

Patricia Lucas, Superintendent

### 102 HAMLIN PK-8 SCHOOL – FOCUS

Rebecca Ferguson, Principal  
Grades PK-08, Enrollment 553

In 2013, West Virginia received waiver approval from certain federal rules and deadlines under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). West Virginia received approval to use its own accountability system which was developed to more effectively identify struggling schools and better direct resources to these schools (2013 ESEA Results). Every public school in the state is designated as a **SUCCESS, TRANSITION, FOCUS, SUPPORT** or **PRIORITY** school.

The West Virginia Accountability Index (WVAI) designated Hamlin PK-8 School a Focus school. Focus schools are those schools with persistent and pervasive subgroup achievement/graduation rate gaps. West Virginia's methodology for identifying Focus schools differs by programmatic level. Elementary and middle schools will use the achievement gap component of the WVAI while high schools will use graduation rate gaps.

An **Elementary/Middle** school designated as a Focus school can exit this status when the school meets its academic achievement goals on the WESTEST2 student subgroups and an elementary/middle school no longer has the largest academic achievement gaps.

### Designation Status for Hamlin PK-8 School.

Designation:	FOCUS	Next Year's Target:	36.9927
Index Score:	36.2905	Met at least 50% of targets in Mathematics and Reading:	YES
Index Target:	32.3239	Met Participation Rate Indicator:	YES
Met Index Target:	YES		

**Supporting Data**

Proficiency (40% of the index score)	9.76
Achievement Gaps Closed (20% of the index score)	12.09
Observed Growth (15% of the index score)	5.62
Adequate Growth (20% of the index score)	4.00
<u>Attendance Rate (5% of the index score)</u>	<u>4.81</u>
Total Accountability Index (out of 100)	36.29

The West Virginia Accountability Index targets are set for each school to reach progressively higher performance on a defined set of data. Schools have an overall score based on multiple components of student and school performance. All schools were required to meet the same end point, thus defining school-specific trajectories requiring higher rates of improvement for lower performing schools. Targets comprised of the five components listed above are set with a goal of all middle schools in West Virginia reaching 65.0053 by 2020. Proficiency targets are set at 75 percent for all students in all subgroups by 2020.

Hamlin PK-8 School achieved the Accountability Index Target; however, considering the achievement target, a significant gap exists between the current performance of each subgroup and the target of 75 percent.

## EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

### HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

**Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress.**

#### 7.1. Curriculum

**7.1.2. 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 enrichment and acceleration. (Policy 2510)**

While instruction in Grades 6-8 was of high quality, instruction in Grades K-5 was of low level. Instruction was mainly of the lecture and basic recall strategies and many worksheets were observed to be utilized.

There was a chart that showed discipline and attendance numbers of individual students in the hallway. While individual student names were not used (individual student numbers were used), the Team believed that it would be relatively easy for students to determine to whom the number was linked. This practice did not exhibit high expectations and had the potential to open students up to peer ridicule.

### FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

**PARTIAL COMPLIANCE/PROGRESSING.** The school principal, county staff, and RESA 2 staff have provided a number of training sessions for the faculty on effective, research based teaching strategies to increase student learning. Training has been provided on data analysis (WESTEST2 and benchmark tests) to determine areas of weaknesses and plan instruction to address identified weaknesses. These strategies have been modeled in classrooms. Faculty members proficient in specific skills have provided training to other faculty members. The faculty is structured into grade level teams that meet for an hour each Wednesday morning to share ideas and plan instruction.

The Follow-up Education Performance Audit Team visited all the elementary level classrooms to observe instruction, review lesson plans, and interview teachers. Instruction has improved as the teachers were varying the instructional activities and students were actively involved in the lessons. The Team noted the use of worksheets in several classrooms. The Team observed that instruction in the elementary part of the school has improved; however, further improvement is needed particularly in relation to heavy reliance on worksheets.

Charts displaying personally identifiable student information were not found in the hallways.

## **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.

The indicators of efficiency listed are intended to guide Hamlin PK-8 in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Lincoln 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 Lincoln County or the accreditation status of the schools.

### **8.1.1. Curriculum. The school district and school conduct an annual curriculum audit regarding student curricular requests and overall school curriculum needs, including distance learning in combination with accessible and available resources.**

High quality instruction and instructional strategies must be improved in Grades K-5. A wider variety of instructional strategies and a greater emphasis on higher level thinking skills must be made. All students must be challenged to achieve at their highest level through a challenging, research-based curriculum. The principal must ensure through classroom observations and teacher interviews that all students are kept on task and fully engaged in every class.

## **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**Instruction in Grades K-5 has improved with teachers utilizing various instructional strategies and multiple activities to engage students. The Team observed all students on task and actively involved in the class discussions and activities. Teachers were prepared and delivered instruction in ways that keep the students on task and involved. Questions asked by the teachers were presented in such a way as to require students to use higher level thinking skills. Worksheets were still prominently used in some classes.**

**The principal monitors instruction through lesson plan reviews, classroom walkthroughs, and conferences with teachers. The principal employs the techniques gained through the Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) training when conducting the classroom walkthroughs and follows up with teacher conferences to discuss improving instruction. The faculty is implementing the Common Core State Standards and anticipates improvement in student achievement this current school year (2013-2014).**

### **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 Hamlin PK-8 in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

- 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 performance.**

The Team determined that Hamlin PK-8 has the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies; however, the principal must continue to solicit assistance from the Lincoln County central office, RESA 2, the West Virginia Center for Professional Development, and the West Virginia Department of Education to aid in the implementation of the professional development provided to the teachers and to identify any areas of the curriculum that are in need of assistance.

### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

The principal reported the school has had excellent support from the superintendent and central office staff with every request. The county provided numerous professional development sessions and trainings in the Common Core State Standards. The county contracted Jan Stanley, who assisted school staff with analyzing test data and making adjustments in lesson planning to personalized instruction in the classroom. The principal stated, “Data is now guiding the curriculum.” RESA 2 provided training in the Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) process, and teachers are now using the IPI to analyze their instruction and improve their performance. RESA 2 also provided “in-house coaching” support and trained staff in using Acuity. The Center for Professional Development provided training for new teachers through the New Teachers’ Academy and also provided training for teacher mentors. The principal feels the school has received great support from all these agencies.

The faculty has made large strides in correcting the deficiencies identified in the Office of Education Performance Audit report and with continued efforts will see improvement in student learning and achievement.

### **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.**

While all teachers were knowledgeable of the needs of the school and the individual students, it was obvious that instruction in the Grades K-5 classes needed attention. The Team believed that the principal and teachers would be receptive of receiving assistance to correct this issue. All teachers appeared to have the students' best interest as the priority. The Lincoln County superintendent of schools must ensure that the proper assistance be provided to aid the principal in guiding the improvements at the school.

### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**Instruction in Grades K-5 has improved as teachers are implementing strategies learned in their training to enhance instruction in the classrooms. All faculty members the Team interviewed were pleased with the processes being used to improve instruction and thereby improve student learning. Students were actively engaged and eager to learn. The faculty appeared to work as a team with everyone doing his/her part to improve the school. Assistance has been provided by all the support agencies to help the school faculty improve instruction and student learning.**

### **Education Performance Audit Summary**

Based upon the results of the Education Performance Audit, it is recommended and a motion is requested to approve the report.