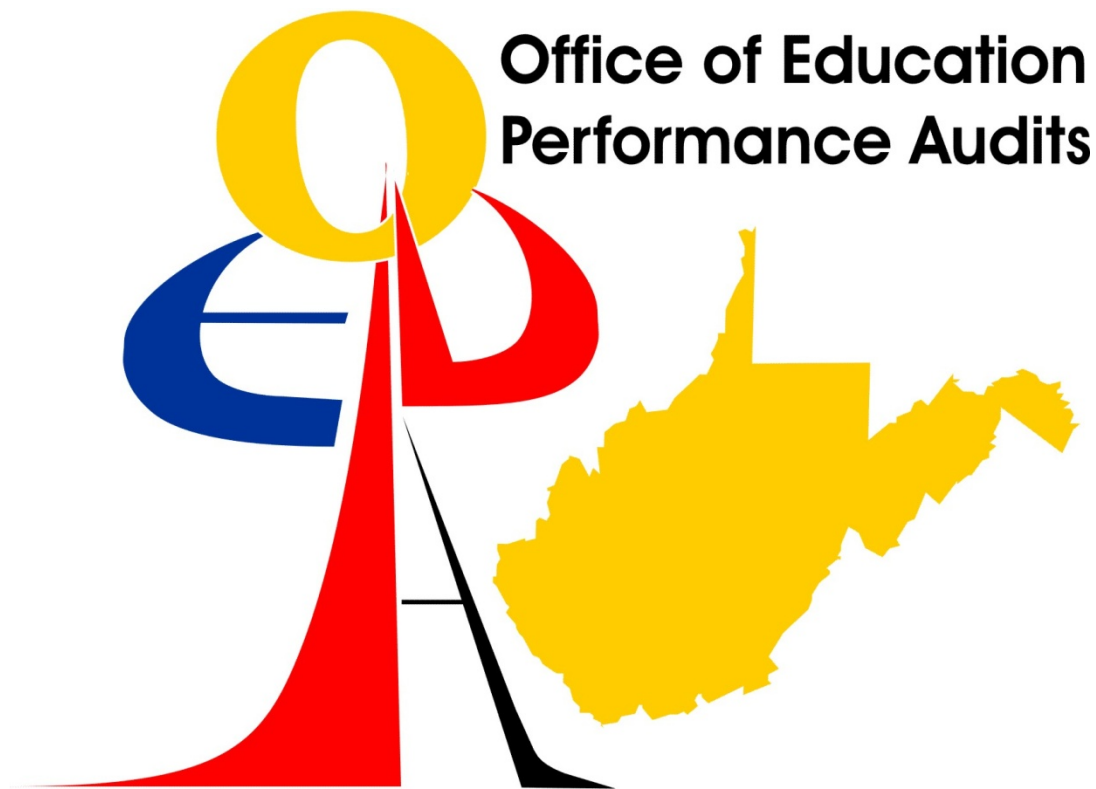


May 2009



**Office of Education
Performance Audits**

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

MAY 2009

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

- At the direction of the West Virginia Board of Education the Office of Education Performance Audits conducted an on-site review of the Lincoln County School System from September 27 to October 1, 1999. A *Preliminary Education Audit Report for Lincoln County Schools* was presented to the State Board on October 8, 1999.
- Due to the seriousness of the Lincoln County report, the State Board declared that 1. extraordinary circumstances existed in the Lincoln County System, 2. the Lincoln County School System was issued Nonapproval status, 3 a state of emergency existed in the Lincoln County School System, and 4. the State Board decided to meet with the Lincoln County Board of Education on October 15, 1999, at 3:30 p.m. in Charleston.
- In accordance with West Virginia Code §18-2E-5, whenever nonapproval status is given to a school system, the state board appointed a team of improvement consultants to make recommendations for correcting the emergency. The State received the *Improvement Consultant Team Recommendations for Lincoln County* at the November 4, 1999 meeting.
- A Progress Evaluation Team returned to Lincoln County at the end of the six months improvement period to evaluate progress in correcting the emergency. The Team evaluated Lincoln County May 8 - 12, and the week beginning May 15, 2000.
- At the West Virginia Board of Education June 2000 meeting, the West Virginia Board of Education continued the Nonapproval status and intervened in the operation of the Lincoln County School District.
- An Education Performance Audit was conducted of the Lincoln County School District March 30 – April 2, 2009. The Office of Education Performance Audits conducted the review to determine progress of the county in meeting conditions for return or partial return of control. This report examined conditions precedent to the West Virginia Board of Education intervention of the operations of the county as well as the Lincoln County Board of Education's disposition to assuming authority of the school system.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

Office of Education Performance Audits Team Chair – Dr. Donna Davis, Deputy Director

NAME	TITLE	COUNTY	CATEGORY
Monica Beane	Assistant Director	WV Department of Education Office of Instruction	AYP/Five Year Strategic Plan/High Quality Standard
Barbara Brazeau	Director of Personnel	Putnam County Schools	Hiring
Bill Elswick & staff	Executive Director	WV Department of Education Office of School Facilities	Facilities
Shawn Hawkins	Coordinator, Teacher Quality	WV Department of Education Office of Professional Preparation	Certification
Bernard Hott	Board President	Hampshire County Schools	Administration/ Leadership
Edward Lovitch	Treasurer/Finance Officer	Mingo County Schools	Finance
John Lyonett	Assistant Superintendent	Brooke County Schools	Policies/Administration
Carroll Staats	Board Member	Jackson County Schools	Evaluation

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Education Performance Audit Team reported that Lincoln County had undertaken initiatives for achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The prominent initiatives and activities included the following.

1. **7.1. Curriculum.** The Team interviewed the Lincoln County Curriculum Team and visited each of the nine county's schools. The Team commended the county's focus on curriculum and the strong coordination with curriculum and instruction between the county and its schools. All school personnel interviewed attributed the county superintendent for establishing this direction and making an enduring effort that all schools are moving on the same course. Three schools have been involved in Learning Focused training each year, with the final three schools beginning training this summer (2009). Principals and teachers participated in extensive training to apply the Learning Focused curriculum which aligns with the West Virginia 21st Century Content Standards and Objectives.
2. **7.1.1. Curriculum based on content standards and objectives.** The Team found the Lincoln County School District central office staff had done extensive data analysis with WESTEST, ACT/SAT, ACT PLAN/EXPLORE, and Benchmark data. The central office devised a plan to analyze (a period of three years) trend data. The data analysis was extended from the central office to the building level administration. A day in August was dedicated to analyzing data in grade level teams down to the student level. From this data analysis procedure, teachers used the information to correlate Benchmark Assessments and (formative) classroom assessments for learning. Accrued instructional time was utilized for grade level team planning to analyze Benchmark data. Professional Development for deconstruction of the 21st Century Contents Standards and Objectives (CSOs) had been conducted in all schools.
3. **7.1.11. Guidance and advisement. 7.2.2. Counseling Services.** Lincoln County secured a grant to employ six additional counselors for the county's schools. This allowed them to add a third counselor at Lincoln County High School in addition to a social worker. Each school has their own daily counseling services provided by licensed counselors. This is the first year for this grant including elementary schools, and future data are expected to show a lower student dropout rate.

The additional support personnel were being used to decrease the dropout rate, provide early intervention, and provide career guidance.

4. **7.2.1. County and school electronic strategic improvement plans.** The county's strategic improvement plan reflected qualities of highly effective schools, conveyed what the county is trying to accomplish, and was central to goal and objective development. Each school had a copy of the county strategic plan and

principals were knowledgeable about and applying the county's three goals. The school plans were aligned with Lincoln County's strategic plan and the administrators and teachers monitored their plans.

The Five-Year Strategic Plan addressed the declining mathematics and reading achievement scores. Goals 1 and 2 were specific to student achievement. The plan of action and professional development activities were in line with research based instructional strategies.

5. **7.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback.** The Team reviewed lesson plans at all schools in the county. Lesson plans reviewed were based on the 21st Century content standards and objectives (CSOs) and the principals had provided relevant written feedback on the plans. Teachers in the classrooms observed were applying their plans in instructing students.
6. **7.2.4. Data analysis.** Lincoln County had thoroughly reviewed the developed priorities from their data analysis. A descriptive narrative existed in the Lincoln County Five-Year Strategic Plan that clearly showed an understanding of the data presented for Lincoln County. Data conclusions were specific enough to prioritize exact interventions housed in the county's goals. Each school had analyzed available data sets, i.e., Dibels assessments, WESTEST, ACT-EXPLORE, ACT-PLAN, and other relevant data. The schools and county regularly reviewed data drawn from the analyses to gauge student and school progress and plan interventions.
 - West Virginia Department of Education conducted a training session with principals and special education teachers in the summer regarding effective assessment data analysis. Training was conducted with special education teachers last year (2007-2008) because the special education subgroups evidenced declining WESTEST scores. Currently, one full day is dedicated to analysis of WESTEST data (drilled to the student level). The county office shared trend data with principals and principals shared data with teachers on the first day of school. Teachers then worked in grade level teams to break down data to plan instructional strategies targeted to improve student achievement.
 - June 12-14, 2009 ACT Alignment. Teachers and administrators will come together to align the curriculum to the ACT PLAN EXPLORE to "plug in the WV CSO" that matches the ACT item.
 - Currently, Lincoln County was not using Acuity for benchmarking. Since Acuity was not ready in early fall, Lincoln County decided to use a benchmark assessment created by ETS. They were using the state diagnostic test data from the Acuity Office in conjunction with Learning Focus Units. They were filling in any gaps with Acuity items when necessary.

7. **7.5.1. Parents and the community are provided information.** Schools, communities, and local businesses developed meaningful partnerships that supported teaching and learning. Examples of community and parent involvement included the following.
- Ranger Elementary. The Chancellor of West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission reads to the 4th grade students once a month and the Director of WVPASS (WV Partnerships to Assure Student Success) reads to Kindergarten students at the same time. The Chancellor has taken the school's students on field trips to Marshall University last year (2007-08) and to the Clay Center this year (2008-09). Last school year, he purchased a Tree House book for each child.
 - Harts Middle School. A parent coordinator was recently hired and the substitute principal said that the school was working on encouraging and increasing parent involvement.
 - Guyan Valley Middle School. This school has a partnership with the Clay Center in which music instruments are on loan to students in the music program. Students who complete the program are given the instruments. The Clay Center also provides a musician one day to give individual music lessons.
 - Hamlin PK-8. First Lady of West Virginia read to 1st grade students. A local board of education member participated in Read to Me Day at West Hamlin Elementary and volunteers at other schools participating in reading to students.
 - West Hamlin Elementary School has a partnership with Tri Rivers Transportation and Lincoln County Wellness. Students are transported to aerobics classes through these partnerships.
8. **7.7.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations.** The Team observed all schools and talked to principals and staffs. All entry doors throughout schools in Lincoln County were locked and entry was gained only by pressing a buzzer at the main entrance and identifying the purpose of being at the school. Cameras also monitored this area.
- Without exception, schools operated efficiently and effectively. A review of WVEIS discipline reports and Lincoln County Board of Education meetings, school and county office operations, and interviews with staff at all levels verified that school rules, procedures, expectations and the Safe Schools' requirements had been thoroughly communicated and were being followed.

May 2009

- The Team member was at Midway Elementary School as students were leaving at the end of the day. Dismissal was orderly, bus transportation was organized, and the process of parents' picking up children was also carefully orchestrated. Several teachers were assisting in this process to assure safe student departure. Teachers assisted students in waiting cars, making sure the proper person picked them up, and even fastened seat belts. This was an extraordinary staff.

COUNTY PERFORMANCE

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

This section presents the Annual Performance Measures for Accountability and related student performance data. It also presents the Education Performance Audit Team's findings.

5.1. ACCOUNTABILITY.

5.1.1. Achievement.

Adequate Yearly Progress

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) data for the 2007-2008 school year identified that Lincoln County did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP). Chart 1 shows the grade span/assessment and subgroup(s) that did not make AYP. It also shows the percent proficient for each grade span/assessment and subgroup.

Chart 1

WESTEST		
GRADE SPAN/ASSESSMENT	SUBGROUP	2007-08 PERCENT PROFICIENT
Mathematics – Middle	Special Education (SE)	32.5%
Mathematics – Middle	Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	60.1%
Reading – Middle	All Students (AS)	70.9%
Reading – Middle	White (W)	70.9%
Reading – Elementary	Special Education (SE)	44.4%
Reading – Middle	Special Education (SE)	34.1%
Reading – Middle	Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	64.2%

Lincoln County failed to make AYP at the middle level in mathematics for the special education (SE) and economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroups and in reading/language arts for the all students (AS), racial/ethnicity white (W), special education (SE), and economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroups. Furthermore, the elementary level was below AYP in reading for the special education (SE) subgroup. The data in the chart suggest that the middle level grades are problematic for Lincoln County's Schools.

Charts 2 through 7 provide a comparative analysis of Lincoln County School District's and West Virginia's 2007-2008 WESTEST percent proficient. It also shows the 2006-2007 WESTEST percent proficient.

An examination of Lincoln County School District's elementary mathematics percent proficient (Chart 2) revealed a measurable improvement from the 2006-2007 school year to the 2007-2008 school year in all four subgroups. A comparison of the Lincoln County School District's 2007-2008 and State's 2007-2008 percent proficient showed the county performed slightly lower than the state in the all students (AS) and racial/ethnicity white (W) subgroups and the county performed measurably higher than the state in the special education (SE) and economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroups.

A comparison of the school district's middle level mathematics achievement (Chart 3) was not available. Lincoln County performed measurably lower than West Virginia in all subgroups. Lincoln County's high school level mathematics percent proficient (Chart 4) for 2007-2008 was also substantially lower than West Virginia's percent proficient.

An examination of Lincoln County School District's elementary reading/language arts percent proficient (Chart 5) revealed an increase from the 2006-2007 school year to the 2007-2008 school year in all subgroups. However, the 2007-2008 data showed the county achieved below the state in all subgroups.

A comparison of the school district's middle level reading/language arts percent proficient (Chart 6) was not available. Lincoln County performed measurable lower than West Virginia in all subgroups. Lincoln County high school level reading/language arts percent proficient (Chart 7) was marginally lower than West Virginia in the all students (AS) and racial/ethnicity white (W) subgroups and was 3.5 percent higher than the state.

It is noteworthy that the elementary and high school levels have experienced improved WESTEST percent proficiency over the past two years. The county and its schools are focused on achievement and the requisite, sustained professional development to increase student performance, and Lincoln County curricular staff consistently monitors schools to this end. Principals and teachers are similarly focused and monitor student achievement through periodic benchmarking.

Chart 2

ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS				
Subgroup	2007-2008 District Percent Proficient	2007-2008 State Percent Proficient	2006-2007 District Percent Proficient	2006-2007 State Percent Proficient
All Students (AS)	76.2%	77.9%	69.4%	79.7%
White (W)	76.0%	78.3%	69.4%	80.2%
Special Education (SE)	58.3%	51.8%	53.6%	54.9%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	74.3%	70.8%	65.5%	72.7%

Chart 3

MIDDLE MATHEMATICS				
Subgroup	2007-2008 District Percent Proficient	2007-2008 State Percent Proficient	2006-2007 District Percent Proficient	2006-2007 State Percent Proficient
All Students (AS)	65.6%	76.2%	NA(S)	75.4%
White (W)	65.5%	76.7%	NA(S)	75.9%
Special Education (SE)	32.5%	37.6%	NA(S)	37.0%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	60.1%	67.7%	NA(S)	66.7%

Chart 4

HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS				
Subgroup	2007-2008 District Percent Proficient	2007-2008 State Percent Proficient	2006-2007 District Percent Proficient	2006-2007 State Percent Proficient
All Students (AS)	61.4%	68.3%	*51.24%	68.5%
White (W)	61.4%	69.1%	*51.24%	69.2%
Special Education (SE)	NA(S)	23.1%	*12.82%	24.1%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	53.9%	58.2%	*46.56%	58.6%

*Data derived from Individual School Report (New School).

Chart 5

ELEMENTARY READING/LANGUAGE ARTS				
Subgroup	2007-2008 District Percent Proficient	2007-2008 State Percent Proficient	2006-2007 District Percent Proficient	2006-2007 State Percent Proficient
All Students (AS)	73.5%	80.9%	70.0%	81.3%
White (W)	73.2%	81.1%	70.0%	81.7%
Special Education (SE)	44.4%	47.2%	44.0%	48.4%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	69.6%	74.1%	65.4%	74.4%

Chart 6

MIDDLE READING/LANGUAGE ARTS				
Subgroup	2007-2008 District Percent Proficient	2007-2008 State Percent Proficient	2006-2007 District Percent Proficient	2006-2007 State Percent Proficient
All Students (AS)	70.9%	81.6%	NA(S)	81.4%
White (W)	70.9%	81.9%	NA(S)	81.7%
Special Education (SE)	34.1%	40.3%	NA(S)	39.9%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	64.2%	74.1%	NA(S)	73.9%

Chart 7

HIGH SCHOOL READING/LANGUAGE ARTS				
Subgroup	2007-2008 District Percent Proficient	2007-2008 State Percent Proficient	2006-2007 District Percent Proficient	2006-2007 State Percent Proficient
All Students (AS)	72.9%	74.4%	*51.24%	75.1%
White (W)	72.9%	74.9%	*51.24%	75.7%
Special Education (SE)	NA(S)	26.7%	*12.82%	28.1%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	68.5%	65.0%	*52.36%	66.0%

*Data derived from Individual School Report (New School).

SAT/ACT Assessment Results

Chart 8 shows the Lincoln School District's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) results. The SAT math mean score showed an increase in percent of students taking the SAT in 2006-2007 from the 2002-2003 data. The Math Mean score also increased by 50 points during this same period.

ACT trend data showed the percent of test takers decreased from 2005-2006 to 2007-2008 and the ACT Composite increased in 2007-2008 to the 2005-2006 level.

Chart 8

SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST (SAT)						
County	2002- 2003	2003- 2004	2004- 2005	2005- 2006	2006- 2007	2007- 2008
SAT Takers (%)	1.3	0.5	1.1	0.0	4.5	NA
SAT Math Mean Score	000	0	435	0	485	NA
SAT Reading Score	NA	---	480	---	504	
SAT Writing Score	NA	---	NA	---	482	
AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING (ACT)						
ACT Takers (%)	55.6	47.8	49.5	61.2	59.1	54
ACT Composite	18.3	18.7	18.6	19.3	19.1	19.3

Source: State, County and School Data, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 West Virginia Report Cards, West Virginia Department of Education. ACT (2007-2008) data were provided by the county.

ACT EXPLORE Assessment Results

According to the 2007-2008 8th Grade ACT EXPLORE results in Chart 9, Lincoln County students demonstrated incremental gains in all subgroups assessed (English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and in the composite score. Lincoln County School District achieved below West Virginia in all academic areas and the composite; however, the Team noted that the gap was diminishing.

Chart 9

ACT EXPLORE RESULTS				
Grade 8				
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
English WV	14.2	14.3	14.2	14.3
English Lincoln	12.9	12.6	13.0	13.7
Mathematics WV	14.2	14.5	14.5	14.7
Mathematics Lincoln	13.1	13.1	13.8	14.4
Reading WV	13.8	13.9	13.9	13.9
Reading Lincoln	12.5	12.2	12.7	13.3
Science WV	15.8	15.9	15.9	16.0
Science Lincoln	14.9	14.8	15.1	15.2
Composite WV	14.6	14.8	14.8	14.9
Composite Lincoln	13.5	13.3	13.7	14.2

ACT PLAN Assessment Results

Based on the 2007-2008 10th grade ACT PLAN results in Chart 10, Lincoln County test takers improved modestly during the past two assessment cycles in English and mathematics and performed at the same level in reading, science, and the composite score.

Chart 10

ACT PLAN RESULTS				
Grade 10				
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
English WV	16.7	16.8	16.7	16.3
English Lincoln	15.5	15.0	15.3	15.4
Mathematics WV	16.4	16.5	16.6	16.3
Mathematics Lincoln	15.3	14.9	15.2	15.4
Reading WV	16.5	16.6	16.5	16.5
Reading Lincoln	15.4	15.0	15.3	15.3
Science WV	17.7	17.8	17.7	17.5
Science Lincoln	17.2	16.7	16.5	16.5
Composite WV	17.0	17.1	17.0	16.8
Composite Lincoln	16.0	15.5	15.7	15.7

5.1.2. Participation rate. A minimum of 95 percent in the current or a two or three year average of all students enrolled in a public school/county school district/state at the time of testing, including students in each subgroup as required by *NCLB* must participate in the statewide assessment WESTEST or the West Virginia Alternate Performance Task Assessment (APTA) in reading/language arts or mathematics. Students with a significant medical emergency may be exempt by appeal from the calculation of participation rate for AYP provided that the county superintendent has proper documentation. (Policy 2340; Policy 2419; Policy 2510)

Lincoln County School District met the participation in both mathematics and reading in all applicable subgroups.

5.1.3. Attendance rate (Elementary/Middle). The student attendance rate for elementary and middle schools is at or above 90 percent or the percentage of students meeting the attendance rate show improvement from the preceding year. The student attendance rate will be adjusted for students excluded as a result of the Productive and Safe Schools Act (W.Va. Code §18A-5-1a) and school bus transportation interruptions (W.Va. 126CSR81), West Virginia Board of Education Policy 4110, *Attendance Policy*, (hereinafter Policy 4110). Additional exclusions include excused student absences, students not in attendance due to disciplinary measures, and absent students for whom the attendance director has pursued judicial remedies to compel attendance to the extent of his or her authority. For the AYP determination, the attendance rate calculation will be used for accountability at the public school/LEA/SEA levels, but will not be calculated for each subgroup. However, for schools/LEAs that use the safe harbor provision to meet AYP for the achievement indicators, the attendance rate standard must be met by the subgroup/s not meeting AYP.

Chart 11

ATTENDANCE RATE	
Year	Attendance Rate
2004-2005	96.8%
2005-2006	96.6%
2006-2007	93.2%
2007-2008	95.5%

Chart 11 indicated the Lincoln County School District attendance rate has remained above the State 90 percent requirement for the last four reporting years.

5.1.4. Graduation rate. The student graduation rate is 80 percent or the percentage of students meeting the student graduation rate shows improvement. The graduation rate is calculated according to the high school completer formula recommended by the NCES with the additional condition that graduates include only those students who receive a regular diploma in the standard number of years and does not include students receiving the GED. For the AYP determination, the graduation rate calculation will be used for accountability at the public school/LEA/SEA levels, but will not be calculated for each subgroup. However, for schools/LEAs that use the safe harbor provision to meet AYP for the achievement indicators, the graduation rate standard must be met by the subgroup/s not meeting AYP.

Chart 12 showed that the Lincoln County School District graduation rate did not meet the State requirement of 80 percent for the last two reporting years.

Chart 12

GRADUATION RATE	
Year	Graduation Rate
2004-2005	82.6%
2005-2006	83.9%
2006-2007	79.3%
2007-2008	79.0%

The Team found the central office staff had made considerable effort to increase the graduation rate at Lincoln County High School. A grant was secured to employ an additional guidance counselor (making three counselors) and a social worker at Lincoln County High School to concentrate on issues that affect students dropping out of school.

A committee was formed to address the dropout/graduation rate at Lincoln County High School. Students who plan to drop out must first have a discussion with one of two central office staff members. These individuals explore options to dropping out of school (Homebound, Credit Recovery, GED program) during this meeting. After this meeting county staff conducted home visits to provide students further encouragement and support to continue their education and graduate.

The committee considered each student individually and attempted to address their particular circumstance. The committee was also reviewing county policies for issues that might cause dropout rate increases and will recommend revisions to these policies if warranted.

The credit recovery program was currently offered in the summer months and the committee was exploring Nova Net (a credit recovery program) which could be offered during the school year. An activity bus is available which could also be used for after school credit recovery options.

A rotation of 10th grade students through career/technical programs occurred this year (2008-2009). This was to motivate students and to maintain interest in school. When asked about the main cause of the high school dropout rate, the response was, "We need to look at reducing our 9th grade class sizes. When we have 15 students in advanced placement (AP) classes and 30 plus in English 9, it is hard to meet the needs of all students." School staff believed additional staff and courses would enhance student interest.

The General Education Development (GED) program in Lincoln County surveyed all dropouts to determine reasons students drop out of school. The data collected was being shared with the counselors and the dropout/graduation committee.

SECTION II

DATA ANALYSIS

Chart 13 demonstrated the three advanced placement (AP), two honors courses, and five college credit courses offered at Lincoln County's High School.

Lincoln County High School staff said that four AP courses were offered, but not enough students enrolled in AP Biology to teach the class. The Team recommended that low incidence AP classes be provided through Virtual School. Virtual classes were not available at Lincoln County High School.

Chart 13

NUMBER OF ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP), HONORS, AND COLLEGE COURSES OFFERED 2008-2009			
High School	Number of AP Courses	Number of Honors Courses	Number of College Credit Courses
Lincoln County High	3	2	5

Chart 14 lists the AP, honors, and college credit courses taught at Lincoln County High School during 2008-2009.

Chart 14

Course #	Course Title	Enrollment
		2008-09
AP	Calculus AB	18
AP	English Language & Composition	23
AP	English Literature & Composition	14
Honors	English 9	53
Honors	English 10	42
Dual Credit	English 12	18
Dual Credit	Speech I or II	7
Dual Credit	Chemistry II	4
Dual Credit	State and Local Government	16
Dual Credit	Introduction to Psychology	11

Chart 15 showed the percent of Advanced Placement (AP) test takers for Lincoln County High School for the 2006-2007 school year. The charts illustrates the number of AP examinations taken by course name and the number of students and percentage of students scoring three or higher. The Team recommended that teachers review the curricula for the AP classes and work on increasing the number of students taking the AP exams and the percent scoring 3 or higher.

Chart 15

Test Advanced Placement (AP) Scores 2006-07		
Exam Title	Number of Exams Taken	# and % scoring 3+
AP Literature	16	0
AP Language	35	4/8.75%
AP Calculus	12	0
AP Biology	3	0
AP Economics	3	1/33%

The overall college going rate for Lincoln County (Chart 16) at 41.5 percent was lower than the State's rate at 57.5 percent.

Chart 16

ESTIMATED COLLEGE GOING RATE FALL 2007		
	Number of High School Graduates 2006-07	Overall College Going Rate Percentage
State	17,914	57.5%
Lincoln	176	41.5%

Source: West Virginia College Going Rates By County and High School Fall 2007, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

Lincoln County School District percent of students enrolled in developmental mathematics was 20.6 percent higher than West Virginia's average. The county percent of students enrolled in Developmental English was 7.2 percent higher than the state's percent and the county's enrollment in any developmental course was 22 percent higher than the state.

The Team recommended that Lincoln County High School increase the rigor of classes and decrease the percent of students taking developmental courses in colleges. It is noted that current data are not available for graduates of Lincoln County High School.

The 2005 data are reflected data from the four previous high schools which have been closed as high schools.

Chart 17

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ENROLLED IN WV PUBLIC COLLEGES FALL 2005			
	% in Developmental Mathematics	% in Developmental English	% in Any Developmental Course(s)
State	30.3%	15.6%	34.1%
Lincoln	50.9%	22.8%	56.1%

Source: Performance of High School Graduates Enrolled in Public Colleges and Universities, Fall 2005. (December 2006) West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

SECTION III

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

7.1. CURRICULUM.

7.1.9. Programs of Study. Programs of study are provided in grades K-12 as listed in Policy 2510 for elementary, middle, and high school levels, including career clusters and majors and an opportunity to examine a system of career clusters in grades 5-8 and to select a career cluster to explore in grades 9 and 10. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)

The Team found that Lincoln County High School was not delivering the minimum course requirements in Policy 2510. The following information details the content areas not meeting requirements.

Mathematics - No Algebra III course was taught last school year (2007-2008) or this school year (2008-2009). Policy 2510, Chart VI (B) Adolescent (9-12) Electives (Effective July 1, 2008) states, "These courses must be offered at least in alternating years. (Effective 2004-2005)."

Science - No Physics course was identified.

Foreign Language - A third level of a foreign language was not taught last school year (2007-2008) or this school year (2008-2009).

Subsequent to the review, the county produced information that showed Algebra III and Spanish III were offered; however, the number of students enrolling in these classes was limited and not enough to provide the classes. The WVEIS course code for physics was incorrect and the Team was shown that physics was being taught.

Recommendations.

- The Team found that the issue of class size could potentially be addressed by encouraging more students to register for and enroll in honors, Advanced Placement (AP) and dual credit courses. Data from the ACT Explore to identify students for advanced courses was currently practiced, but a proactive "formal" approach should be established.
- The Team recommended that Virtual School be available to provide higher level low incidence classes to students.
- The Team recommended that the West Virginia Office of Information Systems provide Lincoln County High School technical assistance in correcting the WVEIS course codes at the school.

7.1.14. Alignment with job market opportunities. The technical and adult programs in the school are aligned with first local, and then state, then national job market opportunities. (Policy 2510)

One of the Lincoln County School District board members expressed that a need existed for more career/technical programs to meet the students' needs. This was reiterated by an assistant principal at the high school who stated, "Some students are not college material we need to offer more technical courses for those students to be prepared for the workforce upon leaving high school."

Based upon Lincoln High School data, approximately 40 technical courses were being offered to students. Students in Grade 10 were being rotated through the career/technical courses for a sample of opportunities available to encourage them to stay in school and graduate.

The school lost the CAD program because the teacher left and the vacancy had not been filled. The Team reviewed numerous posting positions that showed the county attempted to fill the position. In addition, the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) position was eliminated due to decreased student enrollment, and the PROSTART position was reduced to ½ time.

On a positive note, a 13th year PROSTART student placed in national SKILLS USA competition.

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)

1. Finance

The Team reviewed the four improper accounting practices noted in the October 1999 Office of Education Preliminary Report for Lincoln County Schools. The narrative lists the prior OEPA finance findings followed by the March 30, 31, April 1, and 2, 2009 review.

Prior OEPA Findings.

Finding Number 1. Audits were being performed by a staff member who worked weekends and evenings to complete them. Reports were rushed and several items on the checklist were not adequately addressed. Currently, the West Virginia State auditor's office performs the annual individual school audits.

March/April 2009

The following were findings from the June 30, 2008 individual school audits.

Duval Pre-K - 8.

- No Profit (Loss) statements for several fundraising activities.
- Two expenditures for gift cards for which no "student list" was provided.
- Principal did not date bank statements when he signed them.

Hamlin PK - 8.

- August 2006 bank statement was not available for review.
- One teacher's cash receipt summary for \$300 could not be traced to a receipt or a deposit.
- One receipt was written two weeks after deposit of the funds.
- Numerous receipts were issued in out-of-date order.
- Two receipts could not be traced to the deposit ledger (\$2,324).
- Fund raising reports were not available for four events.

- Ticket sellers' reports were not properly completed.
- Receipt numbers were not listed on ticket sales reports.
- Nine expenditures of the 15 sampled did not have supporting documentation.
- Six purchase orders were not signed by the principal or his designee.

Midway Elementary

- One minor finding.

Ranger Elementary

- Four minor findings.

West Hamlin Elementary

- Unable to locate a receipt for revenue received from a commission statement \$172.86.

Harts Primary

- Two minor findings.

Guyan Valley Middle School

- One invoice paid more than a year after the invoice date and the purchase order was confirming (written after the obligation was incurred).
- Three Ticket Sellers' Reports did not agree with the amount deposited.
- Cheerleaders' sub-account had a deficit balance of \$443.76.
- Three other minor findings.

Harts Intermediate School

- Two receipts could not be traced to the deposit book.
- Three ticket sellers' reports were not properly completed.
- Profit (Loss) and Fundraising statements were not available for all concessions and fund raisers.
- All bank interest had not been receipted.
- Seven other minor findings.

Lincoln County High School

- Profit (Loss) statements were not available for all concession activity except soccer.
- Profit (Loss) statements were not available for 14 fund raising events.
- Seven other minor findings.

Conclusion. The Lincoln County Board of Education complied with West Virginia Board of Education regulations concerning the annual audit of the Board's individual schools. The findings in a majority of the schools were not serious and careful monitoring and follow-up should correct most of them. Hamlin PK - 8 School needed

special attention. Some of the findings, especially in the receipt cycle, raised a red flag and needed to be carefully monitored.

Finding Number 2. Two incidents were noted in which individual schools had written receipts for monies received from the Lincoln County Board of Education. With the exception of Faculty Senate allocations, funds are not to be distributed to schools for them to expend.

The Team obtained copies of all of the Detailed Receipt Reports for all schools for the period of July 1, 2008 through February 28, 2009. A review of the reports did not disclose any disbursement of funds to the Board's individual schools for expenditure, other than Faculty Senate allocations. The Lincoln County School District complied with West Virginia Board of Education regulations.

Finding Number 3. Lincoln County School District did not require schools to complete a bank reconciliation and financial statement for the months of July and August. According to the *Accounting Procedures Manual for the Public Schools in the State of West Virginia*, both must be prepared monthly.

The Team reviewed monthly individual school financial reports and reported the following.

Midway Elementary

- Nothing noted.

Ranger Elementary

- September bank balance and ISAAC balance did not agree (\$0.68).
- September Monthly financial report had not been signed by the preparer.
- October Monthly financial report had not been signed by the preparer.
- November Monthly financial report had not been signed by the preparer.
- December Monthly financial report had not been signed by the preparer.
- Did not make a deposit during the month of December. Deposit in transit (\$382.35).
- Did not make a January Deposit until 1/10/09.
- January Monthly financial report had not been signed by the preparer.
- February Monthly financial report had not been signed by the preparer.

West Hamlin PK-5

- Secretary had not signed financial statements.
- Did not make a deposit in January until the 13th.

Harts Primary PK-3

- Only made two deposits in January on the 9th and 26th.

Guyan Valley

- High Cheerleader sub-account had deficit balance in July.
- Showed deposits in transit of \$0.07 in July and September, did not have a receipt for that amount.
- Varsity Boys Basketball had a deficit balance of \$1,050 in August/ September/ October.
- Junior High Girls basketball had a deficit balance of \$199.13 in October
- Deposits in transit \$36.12 in October; only \$28.00 could be traced to detailed receipt listing.
- Varsity Boys Basketball had a deficit balance of \$600.56 in November.
- Junior High Boys Basketball had a deficit balance of \$32.35 in November.
- Junior High Girls Basketball had a deficit balance of \$373.73 in November.
- Ending November deposits in transit \$10.12 could not be traced to the detailed receipt listing.
- Varsity Football had a deficit balance of \$863.09 in December.
- Varsity Boys Basketball had a deficit balance of \$450.95 in December.
- Junior High Boys Basketball had a deficit balance of \$422.35 in December.
- Junior High Girls Basketball had a deficit balance of \$615.73 in December.
- Varsity Boys Basketball had a deficit balance of \$450.95 in January.
- Junior High Football had deficit balance of \$2,132.94 in January.
- Junior High Girls Basketball had a deficit balance of \$615.73 in January.
- Varsity Boys Basketball had a deficit balance of \$450.95 in February.

Harts 4-8

- Junior High Cheerleaders sub-account had deficit balance of \$181.15 in August.
- Office sub-account had a deficit balance of \$5.96 in August.
- A sub-account had a deficit balance of \$14.47 in August/September.
- Community Collaborative sub-account had a deficit balance of \$213.95 in September.
- Junior High Cheerleaders sub-account had a deficit balance \$637.15 in September.
- Receipt 408 had negative receipt for \$83.20 notation "money lost".
- November meal receipts were not receipted from the 7th thru the 13th. All daily receipts for those dates were on one receipt dated the 14th.

Lincoln County High School

- Six sub-accounts had deficit balances in July.
- Athletics Primary account had a deficit balance of \$25,508.30 in August 2008.
- Athletics Primary account had a deficit balance of \$18,064.6 in September 2008.
- Athletics Primary account had a deficit balance of \$9,092.72 in October 2008.
- Concession receipts were not receipted until October 22nd for events from October 1st thru October 21st, 2008.
- Athletics Primary account had a deficit balance of \$3,503.26 in November 2008.
- Athletics Primary account had a deficit balance of \$9,119.76 in December 2008.

- Monthly December Financial statements had not been signed by the preparer.
- Three sub-accounts had deficit balances in the General Primary Account in January.
- Athletics Primary account had a deficit balance of \$7,865.41 in January.
- Three sub-accounts had deficit balances in the General Primary Account in January.
- Athletics Primary account had a deficit balance of \$7,660.90 in January.
- Financial reports had not been signed by the preparer in February.

Conclusion. Schools are required to send their financial statements and bank statements every month. The treasurer maintained a schedule to assure they are being sent in a timely manner and she also reviews the reports. The Lincoln County School District complied with West Virginia Board of Education regulations that required bank reconciliations be done for every month during the fiscal year.

Finding No. 4. Lincoln County Schools was the recipient of a 21st Century Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. An approved copy of the grant agreement signed by the U.S. Department of Education could not be provided; therefore, a thorough review of the grant could not be performed during the OEPA visit.

The Team obtained a copy of the Lincoln County Schools Project Worksheet and traced all previous grant awards to a copy of the signed grant award for each project.

Conclusion. The Team traced all 26 of this year's 2007-2008 applicable grant awards to a signed grant award. The Lincoln County School District complied with West Virginia Board of Education regulations.

During the audit the Team received a phone call from an individual who said that the Lincoln County Board of Education was not paying their utility bills in a timely manner. The Team reviewed every electric and gas utility invoice from July 1, 2008 through the end of March 2009. A total of 61 invoices had been processed and all but one had been paid in a timely manner (all before their due date). Through inquiry of the Board's Treasurer the Team was told that the person that processed utility invoices had had a death in the family and had set the invoice aside and it did not get processed. This issue was resolved toward the end of November and the invoice was paid in the amount of \$1,840.19.

2. Facilities

Duval Elementary/Middle School

Duval Elementary was relocated to this site in modular units due to a flood. There is a partial access safety plan in place. Due to current traffic patterns and the modular units some of the exterior doors had to remain unlocked. The doors in the middle school section of the facility did not have view panels. There was no exhaust for the dishwasher steam and the band room storage rooms needed attention with stained tiles

and missing lights. Science room number 212 was missing the pull chain on the emergency shower.

The art room for this facility was not an adequate size and did not contain two sinks or a kiln. The music room for this facility was not an adequate size. There was not a teachers' dining area of adequate size. With the elementary students located completely in the added modular units, the classrooms were not adequate in size. Several residential style thermostats were in the classrooms that contained mercury switches encased in glass bulbs. If and when the glass bulbs are broken, the spilled mercury will create a hazardous environment and require a very costly cleanup process.

The current asbestos certifications had to be faxed to the school from the county offices. All other regulatory reports were present.

Guyan Valley Middle School

Original construction of this facility was completed in 1926 with additions in 1952, 1963, and 1978. A partial access safety plan was in place. Due to current traffic patterns in the building, some of the exterior doors had to remain unlocked. The facility did not have central air conditioning. Window air conditioners were installed. The existing mechanical system did not provide mechanical ventilation. A few stained tiles existed throughout the facility. The rest rooms needed to be painted and updated. A few areas of the building could benefit from some new paint. Some areas of the main building had minor floor deflection. The gymnasium was detached from the main facility with no covered walkway between the main building and gymnasium. The weight room and locker facility were dated and needed attention. The electrical panels located in the hallway needed to be locked to prevent student access.

Several updates and improvements had been made to this facility. The exterior of the building had been power washed. Some new drop ceilings had been installed. Much of the fluorescent lighting had been updated to the more efficient T8 lighting. A new roofing membrane had been installed on part of the facility. New boilers and limited DDC control had been installed. New windows had been installed in the main building. The school was also trying to replace the old lockers. The first replacement section had been ordered. The section of old lockers to be replaced had been removed from the facility.

Hamlin PK-8

Original construction of this facility was completed in 1956 with additions in 1971, 1980, 1983, and 1992. Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) renovation had occurred and the main building had new windows installed. A partial access safety plan was in place. Due to current traffic patterns in the building some of the exterior doors had to remain unlocked. The 3rd floor rest rooms in this facility were not being used and appeared to be used for storage. The second floor rest rooms needed to be updated and thoroughly cleaned. A few stained ceiling tiles existed throughout the facility. Electrical panels throughout the facility were unlocked and accessible to

students. A breaker box in the gymnasium had a missing breaker. The box was not accessible to students/staff without a ladder. The maintenance department installed a breaker the following day to make the box compliant. A few mercury thermostats were in use at this facility that needed to be updated. The classrooms were not numbered with permanent signage. The teachers were using the HVAC units as storage platforms. Staff members reported an ongoing sporadic odor they associated with the first floor rest rooms. A few electrical panels were obstructed by storage items. The band classroom was housed in a remote building. The walkway between the band classroom and the main building was not covered. Numerous stained tiles were in the band classroom. The band classroom had a residential furnace. The existing unit did not provide outside air as required by West Virginia Board of Education Policy 6200.

The HVAC and window updates were significant improvements in this facility. However, several areas on campus needed a thorough cleaning and maintenance. These areas made the building feel old and dirty. Several areas in the building would greatly benefit from a thorough cleaning and fresh paint. This is an older facility that will require an aggressive maintenance and housekeeping schedule to sustain the building and educational environment.

Harts Intermediate School

Original construction of this facility was completed in 1954 with additions in 1960, 1964, 1976, and 1980. Indirect gas-fired furnaces located in the classrooms and several roof top units accomplish the heating system at this facility. Window air conditioners were present in various classrooms for cooling. Most of the HVAC systems at this facility did not have outside air capabilities and did not provide the required outside air ventilation. West Virginia Department of Education Policy 6200 Section 1101.07-A prohibits the use of open flame, fuel-burning heaters in occupied spaces. There were no carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in classrooms or boiler rooms. West Virginia Department of Education Policy 6200 Section 1101.07-C requires electrically powered carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in the all areas that produce combustion gases to prevent accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. Both heating and cooling systems were very noisy and produced sound levels well above the acceptable limits. Carbon dioxide levels in all classrooms were elevated due to a lack of outside air ventilation. Temperature control issues existed in multiple classrooms that share a common thermostat. Classroom 101 is normally a fully occupied classroom while classroom 103 rarely has more than a few occupants and contains the temperature control thermostat for both rooms. A similar issue exists for classrooms 105, Success Lab and the Media Center. The majority of the HVAC controls at this facility are local controls and have no energy saving strategies. There is a proposal to combine this facility and Harts Primary School into a new facility in the near future.

The site area did not meet the minimum size requirement for Grades 5 – 8 school facilities. The site was not easily accessible or conveniently located. This site was not large enough for future expansion. This site was not located away from undesirable noise and traffic. This site did not have adequate parking for staff and visitors. The

counselor's office did not insure privacy. The media center did not have all listed materials. The art facility, at 966 sq. ft., was not adequate in size and did not have counter space or mechanical ventilation. The music room did not have acoustical treatment. The physical education facilities did not have network or Internet access. The science rooms, at 832 sq. ft., were not adequate in size and were not located with easy access to outdoor activities or isolated to keep odors from the remainder of the building. The auditorium did not have acoustical panels, broadcasting, or controlled illumination. The food service area lacked a teachers' dining area and locker/dressing rooms for the kitchen staff. The health services unit was not adequate in size and lacked curtained or small rooms with cots, toilets and lavatories.

An access control system had been installed at this site; however, the rear door of the cafeteria and the exterior door to the mechanical room were unsecured and allowed unrestricted access to the facility.

Harts Primary School

Original construction of this facility was completed in 1955 with additions in 1963, 1971 and 1981. Indirect gas-fired furnaces, located in the classrooms and several roof top units accomplished the heating system at this facility. Window air conditioners were present in various classrooms for cooling. Most of the HVAC systems at this facility did not have outside air capabilities and did not provide the required outside air ventilation. West Virginia Department of Education Policy 6200 Section 1101.07-A prohibits the use of open flame, fuel-burning heaters in occupied spaces. There were no carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in classrooms or boiler rooms. West Virginia Department of Education Policy 6200 Section 1101.07-C requires electrically powered carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in the all areas that produce combustion gases to prevent accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. Both heating and cooling systems were very noisy and produced sound levels well above the acceptable limits. Carbon dioxide levels in all classrooms were elevated due to a lack of outside air ventilation. Temperature control issues existed in multiple classrooms that share a common thermostat. The majority of the HVAC controls at this facility was local controls and did not have energy saving strategies. Several residential style thermostats in the classrooms contained mercury switches encased in glass bulbs. If and when the glass bulbs are broken the spilled mercury will create a hazardous environment and require a very costly cleanup process.

A very pungent urine odor was present in the boys' rest room, indicating an exhaust fan failure and/or poor housekeeping. Three remote buildings at this site were being used for instructional areas. These building also lacked proper ventilation and HVAC units exceeded sound levels in the classroom when operating. Two of the three remote building were unlocked and accessible while students were at lunch. The security of these facilities should be addressed for both the occupied and unoccupied times due to their proximity to the parking lot and main road. There is a proposal to combine this facility and Harts Intermediate School into a new facility in the near future.

The site area did not meet the minimum size requirement for K – 4 school facilities. The site was not easily accessible or conveniently located. This site was not large enough for future expansion. This site was not located away from undesirable noise and traffic. The site did not have stable, well-drained soil free from erosion. This site did not have adequate parking for staff and visitors. The administrative personnel were not provided sufficient workspace or privacy. There was no space dedicated for a counselor to use. The media center did not have all required materials listed. The ceiling height in the physical education facility was 14 feet, which did not meet the requirement of 24 feet. The food service area lacked adequate food and non-food storage, a teachers' dining area, and locker/dressing rooms for the kitchen staff. A health services unit did not exist.

Midway Elementary School

Original construction of this facility was completed in 1951 with additions in 1963, 1980, 1998 and modular units added around 1999 or 2000. The original section of this facility used window air conditioning units. These units did not provide adequate ventilation. The doors in this section did not have view panels. Exit windows in the newer addition did not have exit ladders to reach the ground level. The Health Services unit was also the Special Education classroom. This space did not have a refrigerator with locked storage or curtained areas with cots. The mechanical room was unlocked and accessible to students during the visit. Areas of mold were on the caulking behind the tray return in the kitchen. Several residential style thermostats in the classrooms contained mercury switches encased in glass bulbs. If and when the glass bulbs are broken, the spilled mercury will create a hazardous environment and require a very costly cleanup process.

The modular units have exceeded their usable life. The floor surrounding the rear exit doors in Portable D/E has failed. Repeated water infiltration in this area has weakened the floor and requires immediate repair. There is no two-way intercom to the modular units. A new system is to be installed summer 2009.

The site area did not meet the minimum size requirement for K - 4 school facilities. The site was not large enough for future expansion. The current asbestos certifications had to be faxed to the school from the county offices. All other regulatory reports were present.

Ranger Elementary School

Original construction of this facility was completed in 1958 with additions in 1990. Indirect gas-fired furnaces located in the classrooms, one wall hung packaged unit, and several roof top units accomplished the heating system at this facility. Window air conditioners were present in various classrooms for cooling. Most of the HVAC systems at this facility did not have outside air capabilities and did not provide the required outside air ventilation. West Virginia Department of Education Policy 6200 Section 1101.07-A prohibits the use of open flame, fuel-burning heaters in occupied spaces. There were no carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in classrooms or boiler rooms. West

Virginia Department of Education Policy 6200 Section 1101.07-C requires electrically powered carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in the all areas that produce combustion gases to prevent accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. Both heating and cooling systems were very noisy and produced sound levels well above the acceptable limits. Carbon dioxide levels in all classrooms were elevated due to a lack of outside air ventilation. Temperature control issues existed in multiple classrooms that shared a common thermostat. The majority of the HVAC controls at this facility was local controls and had no energy saving strategies. Several residential style thermostats in the classrooms contained mercury switches encased in glass bulbs. If and when the glass bulbs are broken, the spilled mercury will create a hazardous environment and require a very costly cleanup process.

The site area did not meet the minimum size requirement for K – 4 school facilities. The site was not large enough for future expansion and was not located away from undesirable noise and traffic. There was no space dedicated for a teachers' workroom. There was no area dedicated as a media center. The kindergarten classroom areas were not adequate in size. There was no area dedicated for an art room. There was no area dedicated as a music room. The multipurpose room served as the physical education facility. The food service area lacked a teachers' dining area and locker/dressing rooms for the kitchen staff. The health services unit was not adequate in size and lacked curtained or small rooms with cots, toilets, lavatories, and a refrigerator with locked storage.

West Hamlin Elementary

This facility was constructed in 2000. The facility appeared to be clean and well maintained. The art classroom had an office partition installed in the classroom. This partition needed to be removed to open the classroom floor space. The art room also contained a small kiln. There should be some means of mechanical ventilation for the kiln. During the annual School Building Authority (SBA) facility review of this facility, it was noted that a few of the classrooms had elevated carbon dioxide levels.

Countywide

The energy manager of this county instructed school staff members to set the controls on the HVAC systems of the classrooms in the AUTO mode during occupied hours. This conflicts with the ventilation requirements needed for classrooms. The supply fans must run continuously on HVAC units having outside air capabilities while students are present. During unoccupied periods the HVAC controls should be placed in the AUTO mode to conserve energy but not at the expense of the children's health. The energy efficiency on all schools having residential grade thermostats would be greatly improved by replacing the thermostats with programmable seven day scheduling thermostats or a building automation system, if possible. All mercury containing devices such as thermostats, thermometers, relays, etc., should be removed from all facilities and disposed appropriately.

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 Team reviewed personnel hiring procedures and practices; interviewed staff responsible for personnel/licensure, other central office staff, and members of the Lincoln County Board of Education; and reviewed information regarding personnel hiring and licensure. This report presents some procedures and practices that are inconsistent with W.Va. Code and W.Va. Board of Education policy. Lincoln County has shown great progress in personnel practices since the initial audit. However, the Team found that deviation of law and policy was due to process and not deliberate action as occurred at the time of the original Education Performance Audit.

Due to the complexities of personnel, the Team found that the individual assigned this responsibility has a number of administrative duties that handicap him from a total application of the intricacies of personnel laws, policies, procedures, superintendent's interpretations, court cases, etc. This individual is in charge of curriculum, federal programs, evaluating all administrators, professional development, etc. The county superintendent is urged to examine these multiple level responsibilities and reorganize/reassign responsibilities so that the person responsible for personnel has the time to concentrate on personnel, hiring, licensure, etc.

Implementation of appropriate laws, policies and procedures related to personnel was somewhat of a concern with two main issues that contributed to this concern. First, there appeared to be a lack of knowledge and experience on the part of the individuals assigned the responsibility for personnel matters. In discussing some of the findings with the Assistant Superintendent who held much of this responsibility, it was apparent that he was unfamiliar with many of the laws, policies, and procedures that impact personnel decisions. The second major concern was the assignment of two secretaries to complete the matrix to determine the most qualified candidate for professional positions. In many instances, professional judgments were stated that associate personnel should not be put in the position to make. The Personnel Secretary, who was relatively new to her position, indicated that she has had little or no training related to this duty. It appeared that the same is true for the Certification Secretary, who was also responsible for completing a portion of the matrix. Due to the inconsistencies noted below, it was difficult to determine if the most qualified candidate was hired for each position.

The Team reviewed matrices for several professional positions and offered the following observations.

Professional Personnel

- All applicants' credentials, including those of the applicants who did not hold appropriate licensure for the position, were assessed. The secretary responsible for completing the matrices was unaware that she should exclude candidates who did not meet the first criterion (appropriate certification or licensure).
- There were inconsistencies in how the candidates were assessed. In some cases when a regular employee was part of the applicant pool, the second set of criteria established in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a was correctly used. In other instances the regular employees were assessed using the second set of criteria while the other candidates for the same job were assessed using the first set of criteria. In this second situation the evaluator would not be making comparable assessments.
- In reviewing credentials under the second set of criteria, any degree was accepted for "degree level in the required certification area". For example, a physical education vacancy was posted and a candidate with a masters degree in educational leadership was given credit for this higher degree even though it was not in the required certification area (physical education).
- In some cases, salary classifications (BA+15, MA+15, etc.) were used to compare the candidates' degree level.
- When multiple positions were listed on one posting, only one matrix was completed to compare the candidates' credentials. For example, 6½ counseling positions were included in one posting. Rather than completing one matrix for all of these positions, a new matrix should have been completed for each successive position by excluding the successful candidate for the previous job and comparing only the qualifications of the remaining candidates.
- Although no specialized training was included in the job posting, some candidates were given credit for this criterion. For example, two candidates who applied for a physical education position were given credit under "specialized training" for holding the appropriate endorsement. It should be understood that specialized training is training directly related to the performance of the job and is in addition to appropriate certification.

The Team noted the following additional concerns during the review.

- The county policy regarding critical need and shortage of substitute teachers was not in compliance with W.Va. Code §18A-2-3. State law requires that the policy identify the specific areas of certification in which there are insufficient teachers to meet the projected need. The Lincoln County Schools policy did not list any specific areas of certification. The law also mandates that the policy must be approved by the West Virginia Board of Education. Typically, a letter is sent to the county superintendent after the policy has been approved by the West Virginia Board of Education. There was no evidence that such action was taken by the West Virginia Board of Education.

- The Team recognized that Lincoln County Schools has a difficult time attracting fully certified teachers to serve as substitutes for the school system. Many of the teachers on the substitute list were either retirees or individuals who were not trained educators and secured a substitute permit through RESA training. By law, retirees are to be used in a critical need and shortage area on an expanded basis only when no other substitute teacher with the appropriate certificate is available. Limited documentation was available to support that other substitute teachers had been called before the retirees for the long-term assignments.
- Job postings continued to be sent to the schools via the U. S. Postal Service. The postings are mailed one day prior to the effective date of the posting. However, there is no guarantee that all schools receive them on the effective date and have them posted for the mandatory five days.
- Job postings were not placed on the West Virginia Department of Education website. It is not clear in W.Va. law that this is a requirement for professional personnel; however, due to the county's difficulty recruiting certified individuals and filling posted positions this is something for the county to consider in recruiting professional personnel. Postings were placed only on the Lincoln County Schools' site. Lincoln County may be losing prospective candidates for this reason. In addition, there have been problems using the county vacancy hotline to advertise positions when there is a lengthy posting list. Consequently, the hotline was not always being used.
- Vacancies held by retirees were not continually posted as mandated by law. A language arts position vacated by the regular teacher on 1/26/09 and a math position vacated by the regular teacher on 1/15/09 had been posted only once. Retirees had been in these positions since the regular teachers departed.
- There was no way to determine who conducted the interviews for particular jobs because the interviewers did not sign their rating sheets.
- Long-term substitute assignments that the county knows will extend beyond 90 days were not advertised; consequently, the substitute is ineligible to receive health benefits. It would be advantageous for the county to provide these benefits in order to attract substitutes to work in the county (W.Va. Code §18A-1-1).

Service Personnel.

It appeared that service employees met the qualifications for their classifications. However, the Team had some concerns regarding the reclassification of service personnel and recognition of post-secondary training.

It was unclear who is ultimately responsible for the annual review of service employee credentials to determine if they should be reclassified. It appeared that the Finance Secretary may have assumed this responsibility. However, the Personnel Secretary indicated that these reclassifications are usually found when the certified report is being

reviewed. In addition, there was no specific action approving the reclassification of such personnel or any documentation in the personnel file to reflect when this reclassification occurred.

The Finance Secretary was apparently responsible for determining if a service employee qualifies for additional pay based on post-secondary training. In discussing this matter with her, it appeared that the only training currently accepted is college credit or post-secondary training at a career/technical institute. Eligible service employees may not be receiving the appropriate salary based on this limited interpretation of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5301. A multitude of other post-secondary training existed that could potentially be accepted (i.e., cosmetology school, volunteer firefighter training through the W.Va. Extension Service, etc.).

Recommendations

- The Team recommended that intensive training be provided to the personnel staff to ensure that they understand the personnel laws, policies, and procedures.
- The Team recommended that roles and responsibilities of personnel officials be clearly delineated to ensure consistency.
- The Team recommended that professional personnel assume the responsibility for making the professional judgments regarding applicants' credentials. The associate staff did not have the background or expertise to make such judgments.
- The Team recommended that long-term substitute assignments that will extend for more than 90 days be posted so that the substitute can be provided benefits. This benefit may attract additional educators to serve as substitutes in the county.
- The Team recommended that the county hotline recording time be extended so all postings can be placed on the hotline.
- The Team recommended that the county consider an alternative to sending job vacancies through the U.S. Postal Service to ensure that all job sites receive and post them on the effective date of the postings. If this is not possible, the county may want to consider sending them to the sites via e-mail and ensure that they are received in a timely fashion.
- The Team recommended that the interview sheet be revised to include the signature of the interviewer.

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-3-2; Policy 5202)

Chart 18 explains the certification issues the Team observed through a detailed review of the certified list, WVEIS Master Course Schedule, and the WVDE Certification Database.

Chart 18

School	School Name	Educator	Current Assignment	Current Endorsement(s)	Correction(s)
043-101	Duvall PK-8	Educator	Social Studies	Long-term substitute permit endorsed for Business Education and Math 5-AD	County needs to request a waiver for content or have social studies added to substitute certificate
043-102	Hamlin PK-8	No certification issues			
043-212	Midway Elementary	No certification issues			
043-214	Ranger Elementary	No certification issues			
043-215	West Hamlin Elementary	No certification issues			
043-217	Harts Primary	No certification issues			
043-301	Guyan Valley Middle	No certification issues			
043-302	Harts Intermediate	No certification issues			
043-506	Lincoln County High School	Educator	3021-T 6011-T 6021-T 8015-2 COLTCH	Multi-Subjects K-8	Application for Multi-categorical denied 3/24/2009.
		Educator	76533C 76533U	Elementary MI	No courses coded with a K,

			76373T	Out-of-Field Severe Disabilities	why on Severe Disabilities permit? U and T in the sixth position requires First-Class/Full-Time Permit for Autism, Visually Impaired and Multi-Categorical. As of 4/20/2009, application for Permit in Autism pending.
		Educator	176332 ELEC FUND 178732 ELECTRN DD 1694E3 NET TECH 179532 ELTRN WIRING 1688E2 COMP FORENS 178332 ELECTRN AC	PE	These courses require a Vocational Certificate. Professional teaching certificate in area not covered, county needs to request a waiver.
		Educator	303132AP CALC	Math	Not approved by College Board to teach AP. Teacher states applied to College Board in February 2009.
		Educator	40093T 48213T 70103T 76363C	Long-term substitute for Math, Biology, General Science and Oral Communications	Special education areas not covered by long-term substitute permit; county needs to request a waiver.

		Educator	76373U	Multi-Subjects SLD BD excluding autism	Course requires an Autism endorsement. U in the sixth position requires First-Class/Full- Time Permit for Autism. As of 4/21/09, no pending application.
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7.6.3. Evaluation. The county board adopts and implements 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; Policy 5314)

The Team reviewed personnel files of professional and service personnel to verify that the evaluation of personnel was being administered as required by West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310 and the Lincoln County Evaluation Policy for Service Personnel.

The Team reviewed 11 evaluation files for teachers. Nine of the teacher evaluations met all the requirements of State Board Policy 5310 and two of the teacher evaluations did not meet the requirements of State Board Policy 5310. One teacher (Harts Middle School) evaluation file contained one completed observation but no evaluation for the 2007-2008 year. Another teacher (Hamlin PK8) evaluation file contained only one evaluation and since this was a first year teacher, two evaluations were required.

The Team reviewed five evaluation files for professional support personnel (psychologists, speech therapists, counselors, etc.) and all complied with State Board Policy on personnel evaluations.

The Team reviewed a sample of seven coaches' evaluations from several schools. Six of the coaches' evaluations complied with the evaluation policy. One coach, (Lincoln County High School Volleyball Coach) did not have an evaluation during the 2007-2008 school year.

The Team reviewed a sample of five administrators' evaluations, including evaluations for principals and central office administrators. All evaluations reviewed were complete and complied with the requirement of State Board and Lincoln County policies on administrators' evaluations.

The Team reviewed evaluation files for 23 service personnel from many classifications including: Secretaries (4), mechanic (1), maintenance (1), bus operators (5), aides (5), cooks (4), and custodians (3) for compliance with the Lincoln County policy on service personnel evaluations. Nine of the service personnel evaluations had some problem. The policy requires service personnel with more than five (5) years of experience be evaluated every three (3) years. Five of the service personnel reviewed who fell into this group did not have evaluations in the past three years. (Secretary, Harts Intermediate; Aide, Harts Intermediate; Aide, Hamlin PK-8; Aide, Lincoln County High School; and Custodian, Guyan Valley 6-8). The evaluation policy requires two evaluations per year for service personnel with 1-3 years of service. Four service personnel reviewed in this group (Bus Operator, Cook, Hamlin PK-8; Cook, Duval K-8; and Cook, Lincoln County High School) had been evaluated during the 2007-2008 year, but they only had one evaluation rather than the two evaluations required.

The Team recommended that county office personnel carefully check that all evaluations are conducted according to State Board and county policies.

7.6.4. Teacher and principal internship. The county board develops and implements a beginning teacher internship program and a beginning principal internship program that conform with W.Va. Code and West Virginia Board of Education policies. (W.Va. Code §18A-3-2b and 2d; Policy 5899; Policy 5900)

The Team interviewed principals at all schools regarding the mentor program for beginning teachers. The principal at Harts Primary School said that one first year teacher (Kindergarten) did not have a mentor because no one applied for the position. However, the other two kindergarten teachers guide and lead this teacher. Additionally, the kindergarten teachers meet every two weeks and unofficially mentor this teacher. The reading coach also provides the teacher support and guidance. While the mentoring program does not specifically meet the requirements of W.Va. Code and West Virginia Board of Education policy, the procedure seems effective.

The mentoring program at West Hamlin PK – 8 was also lacking. Staff indicated that the Grade 3 first year teacher’s mentor was a preschool teacher and not a good fit for mentoring. According to the assistant principal, the mentor “hasn’t been there too often.” However, the Grade 3 team supports this new teacher.

7.7. SAFE, DRUG FREE, VIOLENCE FREE, AND DISCIPLINED SCHOOLS.

7.7.2. Policy implementation. The county and schools implement: a policy governing disciplinary procedures; a policy for grading consistent with student confidentiality; policies governing student due process rights and nondiscrimination; the Student Code of Conduct policy; the Racial, Sexual, Religious/Ethnic Harassment, and Violence policy; an approved policy on tobacco use; an approved policy on substance abuse; and an approved policy on AIDS Education. (W.Va. Code §18A-5-1 and §18-8-8; Policy 2421; Policy 2422.4; Policy 2422.5; Policy 4373; Policy 2515)

W.Va. Code §18A-1-12a (17) states, “All official and enforceable personnel policies of a county board must be written and made available to its employees.”

The Team interviewed the assistant superintendent and the county superintendent about the development and revision of policies. The assistant superintendent stated that Lincoln County hired a company (NEOLA) to help achieve the county goals of having all policies revised and updated by July 1, 2009.

The assistant superintendent explained that they were implementing local policies and West Virginia Board of Education policies affected that were directed or guided by W.Va. Code. The superintendent stated that he plans to develop one comprehensive policy manual rather than separate policy books that currently exist. The superintendent also stated that in June 2009 all principals and administrative staff will come together for one week to work exclusively on policy development and revisions which will be followed by the Board approval process.

The Team reviewed the Lincoln County Policy Manual and noted that from September 4, 2007 to March 10, 2009, 12 policies had been revised or adopted. The policies included: Alternative Education, Transportation, Attendance, Emergency Management, Graduation Policy, etc. The superintendent explained that when a group gets together to revise or develop a policy the responsible staff is directly involved in that particular area. For example, the transportation policy was developed and revised with the transportation director directly involved. The attendance policy utilized the principals and the attendance director. Through NEOLA, who utilizes the services of Bowles, Rice, McGraff and Love; they are assured that each policy is up-to-date with W.Va. Code. The superintendent stated that all current policies are online and are sent to all principals to review by e-mail before the local Board of Education considers and approves them.

All policies being revised or updated were sent to the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) who then forwarded the policy to the legal office for review. Once that task has been completed, the policy is then submitted by Lincoln County for a 30 day public review. After the review period has expired, the policy is sent back to the West Virginia Department of Education for a final review by legal counsel and then the policy is passed by the Lincoln County Board of Education.

The Team reviewed the entire policy manual and some outdated policies were contained in the manual. However, the county had carefully inspected 18 policies, 12 had been revised or developed and Board approved since September 2007. Progress was being made.

- * September 4, 2007 – Revised Policy 6-12.00 – Alternative Education.
- * March 4, 2008 – Revised Policy 7-13.00 – School Volunteers.
March 17, 2008 – Adoption/New 3-08.00 – Energy Management.
June 2, 2008 – Revised 7-26.00 – Credit Card Policy.
- * August 4, 2008 – Revised 11-1.00 – Attendance Policy.
August 21, 2008 – Adoption 7-26.00 Credit Card Policy.
September 15, 2008 – Revisions/adoptions 12-00.00 Transportation.
October 6, 2008 – Revisions/adoptions 11-27.00 Wellness Policy.
January 5, 2009 – Adoption 7-09.01 Pandemic Influenza.
- * February 17, 2009 – Revisions Policy 1-4.02 Graduation Policy.
March 10, 2009 – Revision Policy 8-01.023 Annual Supplement
March 10, 2009 – Revision Policy 8-01.024 Experience Pay.

The superintendent's goal to revise or update all policies by July 1, 2009 is very positive. Incorporating NEOLA, who utilizes Bowles Rice McDavid Graff and Love LLP, is a very positive step. All involved individuals are able to see and review policies online, including the principals, which again is a very positive step. The superintendent is very confident that all policies will be updated by July 1, 2009. Lincoln County was in process of making all policies complete with forms, comprehensive, and posting them online in a way that will be user friendly. The Team indicated that progress was being made in policy development.

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)

W.Va. Code §18A-2-12a (1) provides “The effective and efficient operation of the public schools depends upon the development of harmonious and cooperative relationships between county boards and school personnel.”

The Team interviewed all Lincoln County Board of Education members and the county superintendent and reviewed board of education meeting minutes. All sources indicated cordial and professional board and superintendent relations. Board members expressed that they have a good relationship with the current superintendent. Members stated that the superintendent always listens to them, demonstrates respect to the board, follows-up on board issues, and seeks board input. Board members further indicated that the superintendent was achievement driven. One member stated that the board and superintendent were able to get along without comprising principles.

From July 2008 to the present, meetings of the Lincoln County Board of Education have been conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order. Prior to that, some minutes indicated that some board meetings were out of control. This seems to have been resolved with the appointment of the current county superintendent. The board has seemingly demonstrated a willingness to work with the State Superintendent of Schools and the West Virginia Board of Education.

The Team noted that while the Lincoln County Board of Education appeared cooperative, it was not apparent that the board as an entity was working as a team. It was reported some members would do things individually before bringing such matters to the full board

Lincoln County is doing many good things now. Board members are participating in training on personnel and what the board can and cannot do. It is essential that the board communicate to the public that when local control is returned, the board will function according to laws and regulations.

The county is moving forward in curriculum and is operating effectively and efficiently. For example, the county is moving forward with a well planned and organized curriculum. Some board members expressed opposition to this curriculum. The Learning Focused curriculum has involved extensive and sustained professional development and support. To discontinue this program would involve starting over and is not in the best interest of student performance. Through interviews, it was apparent that the board was divided and if total control is returned without specific provisions, Lincoln County has the potential to revert to its previous state.

Furthermore, some board members expressed specific desires to control personnel and hiring procedures. A member talked openly about personnel interviews and family members not being hired for specific jobs. This type of involvement is inappropriate for a board of education member. Another board member expressed that the characteristics of a superintendent would “Be responsive to the board of education and take direction when told to do so”

Board members have been openly vocal about wanting the removal of a central office staff member. These discussions should be limited to executive session and outcomes based on the superintendent’s and State Superintendent’s decisions. These open and public conversations are indicative that some board members have the potential to deviate from statutory rules and regulations.

SUMMARY

Lincoln County School District is moving forward and making progress. Earlier problems during the original intervention with the high school level performance and program offerings are now being addressed with noted improvements at Lincoln County High School. Other major problems cited in the earlier report (2000) have been addressed and show major improvement. It is believed that the current county superintendent is providing sound leadership and that individual schools are progressing. Concern still lingers with the current local school board that a seemingly successful program (Learning Focused) would be dropped if given a choice. Also, some of the local board members expressed strong desires to control personnel and hiring decisions with a desire to remove a specific individual, causes the Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA) to recommend that partial control be granted to the Lincoln County School Board with certain stipulations. The Office of Education Performance Audits further recommends that the following provisions be included in the State Superintendent’s motions to the West Virginia Board of Education in returning partial local control to the Lincoln County Board of Education.

1. The current appointed superintendent remain in the position for two years and continue the emphasis on curriculum (Learning Focused).
2. The West Virginia Board of Education continue intervention in personnel matters and finances specific to personnel.
3. Transfer of control of the following to the Lincoln County Board of Education with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.
 - 3.1. Curriculum with the provision that the Learning Focused program continue.
 - 3.2. Finance (except as noted above).
 - 3.3. The establishment and operation of a school calendar.
 - 3.4. Facilities.
 - 3.5. All other decision-making authorities of the local board of education according to statutory provisions and West Virginia Board of Education policies.