



INITIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

BUFFALO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LOGAN COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

JUNE 2014

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An unannounced Education Performance Audit of Buffalo Elementary School in Logan County was conducted April 23, 2014. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the review was two-fold. The primary purpose was to investigate performance and progress as they relate to the standards outlined in Policy 2320. Secondly, the purpose was to make recommendations to the school, school system, as appropriate, and West Virginia Board of Education on such matters as it considers necessary to improve performance and progress to meet the standard.

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

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

Office of Education Performance Audits Team Chair – Charlene Coburn, Coordinator

West Virginia Department of Education, Technology – Mark Moore, Coordinator

West Virginia Department of Education, Professional Preparation - Lori Buchanan, Coordinator

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	County
Dr. William E. Chapman	Director Federal Programs	Roane County
Lexi Damous	Principal – Poca Elementary School	Putnam County
Alvin James	Principal – Daniels Elementary School	Raleigh County

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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

45 LOGAN COUNTY

Phyllis Doty, Superintendent

203 BUFFALO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – PRIORITY

Debra Holly, Principal

Grades PK-04, Enrollment 246

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 Buffalo Elementary School a Priority school. The school was among the lowest performing in the state based on the number of students at or above mastery on the WESTEST2. West Virginia identified a number of Priority schools in 2013, those falling among the bottom five percent of Title I school performance, based on proficiency rates for the prior three years with a greater emphasis on 2011-2012 assessment data. Priority schools are those with the lowest performance on the state's general and alternate assessments.

Priority schools, due to their significant need, will not be eligible to exit Priority status until the end of the third year. A school must meet the following criteria to exit Priority status.

1. The school is no longer among the bottom 5 percent of Title I school performance.
2. The school demonstrates successful implementation of school turnaround strategies.
3. The school must demonstrate for the two most recent years that students in the all subgroup are meeting the Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO) or students in the all subgroup are demonstrating adequate growth in the distance between observed growth and target growth.

Designation Status for Buffalo Elementary School.

Designation:	PRIORITY	Next Year's Target:	30.2918
Index Score:	37.1348	Met at least 50% of targets in Mathematics and Reading:	YES
Index Target:	22.8958	Met Participation Rate Indicator:	YES
Met Index Target:	YES		

Supporting Data

Proficiency (95% of the index score)	32.30
Achievement Gaps Closed (0% of the index score)	NA
Observed Growth (0% of the index score)	NA
Adequate Growth (0% of the index score)	NA
<u>Attendance Rate (5% of the index score)</u>	<u>4.84</u>
Total Accountability Index (out of 100)	37.13

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 elementary schools in West Virginia reaching 74.6679 by 2020. Proficiency targets are set at 75 percent for all students in all subgroups by 2020.

Buffalo Elementary School achieved the Accountability Index Target for the 2012-2013 school year. When considering the index target of 30.29 for 2014, if the school continues to improve performance at the current rate, it will be on a trajectory to meet the proficiency target of 75 percent by 2020.

- Buffalo Elementary School earned 37.13 of the 100 points possible for the West Virginia Accountability Index (WVAI) for the 2012-2013 school year. (The target was 22.89 for 2013 and is 30.29 for the 2014 school year.)
- At least 50 percent of the subgroups at Buffalo Elementary School met the targets in mathematics and reading.
- Achievement gaps closed, observed growth, and adequate growth results were not represented for Buffalo Elementary School (K-3). Schools must have one prior consecutive WESTEST2 score in order to measure growth.
- Buffalo Elementary School acquired 4.84 points of the 5 points for attendance as indicated by the 2013 WVAI.

**BUFFALO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Grade-Level Proficiency Data
School Year 2013**

Grade-Level and Subgroup		Mathematics			Reading/Language Arts		
Grade	Group	Participation	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Participation	Non-Proficient	Proficient
3	White	94.59%	68.57%	31.43%	94.59%	48.57%	51.43%
3	Special Education	> 95%	81.82%	18.18%	> 95%	72.73%	27.27%
3	Total	94.59%	68.57%	31.43%	94.59%	48.57%	51.43%

Attendance Rate = 96.80%

The chart, Grade-Level Proficiency Data for School Year 2013, depicts participation, non-proficient, and proficient percentage rates by grade level and subgroup for mathematics and reading/language arts.

Mathematics.

- Grade 3 did not meet the participation rate (94.59).
- Grade 3 students - 31.43 percent proficient.
- Grade 3 white subgroup (31.43 percent proficient) was followed in performance by the special education subgroup (18.18 percent proficient).

Reading/Language Arts.

- Grade 3 did not meet the participation rate (94.59).
- Grade 3 students - 51.43 percent proficient.
- Grade 3 white subgroup (51.43 percent proficient) was followed in performance by the special education subgroup (27.27 percent proficient).

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY - ANALYSIS

Analysis of the data indicated that Buffalo Elementary School made progress as indicated by reaching the student performance index target for 2012-2013 and by surpassing the index target for 2013-2014. The school demonstrated more growth in reading/language arts, while mathematics scores were significantly lower. A significant gap existed between the special education subgroup and the total subgroup.

The following professional development and/or training opportunities were provided as reported by the principal.

1. Leader in Me.
2. Designing the Classroom for Learning.
3. Math and Science Arts and Bots.
4. Third and Fourth Grade Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Reading.
5. Burst Reading Intervention for Title I, Special Education and Interventionists.
6. Family Rights Educational Act, Health Insurance and Portability Act, Policies, Fire Safety, Child Abuse and Parent Involvement for Preschool Staff.
7. Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next for New Teachers.
8. Kindergarten West Virginia Early Learning Scale for Kindergarten Teachers.
9. Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Writing for Kindergarten and Grade 1 Teachers.
10. Electronic Document Filing for Monitoring for Title I Teachers.
11. Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for Grades 3 and 4.
12. Math and Science Ethics of Excellence Implementation Debrief on Full Option Science System (FOSS).
13. Children's Innovation for Pre-school and Kindergarten.
14. Comparing and Scaling for Grades 1 and 2.
15. Measurement for Grades 3 and 4.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

COMMENDATIONS

The Education Performance Audit Team reported that Buffalo Elementary School had undertaken positive school improvement initiatives. The prominent initiatives and activities included the following.

7.1.3. Learning Environment. The Team commended the school for the clean, bright, learning environment conducive to learning. Quality student work was displayed and staff interaction with students was positive. Professional learning community (PLC) meeting agendas indicated attention to students' best interest was included in decisions made for the school. The *Leader in Me* program was in place and encouraged students to interact respectfully with each other.

7.1.4 Instruction. The Team commended the staff for implementing the Burst Reading Literacy Intervention Program. Teachers provided the foundational skills students needed to read independently and become successful learners. The staff received on-going professional development and support in implementing the program.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress.

7.6. PERSONNEL.

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)

The West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Professional Preparation, reviewed professional educators' licensure. The results involved eight different teachers. The following issues were identified:

1. Eight teachers did not hold the certification for the subjects(s) in which they provided instruction.
2. Six teachers did not hold the appropriate endorsements on their long-term substitute permits.
3. One teacher was on a short term substitute permit.
4. One teacher did not have an elementary content exam on the electronic file at West Virginia Department of Education.
5. Six teachers were not highly qualified.

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 Buffalo Elementary School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Logan 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 Logan County or the accreditation status of the schools.

None identified.

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 Buffalo Elementary School in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

Building Capacity - Priority

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 and learning process to improve student, school, and school system performance.

For those schools identified as Priority schools, the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) will provide targeted support that promotes schoolwide efforts aligned to the Turnaround Principles and West Virginia's Standards for High Quality Schools which include the following.

1. Establishing a positive climate and cohesive culture.
2. Building capacity and supporting effective school leadership.
3. Aligning instruction with standards-focused curriculum and assessments.
4. Building infrastructure for student support services and family/community Connections.
5. Developing and maintaining educator growth and development.
6. Building the infrastructure to support efficient and effective management.
7. Building a culture of continuous improvement.

With continued assistance from the WVDE, Office of School Improvement, and Logan County Central Office staff, the Team believed the new principal has the capacity to foster continued improvement and correct the one deficiency found at Buffalo Elementary School.

The Team determined for the school to maintain a level of growth in academic achievement, support will be needed to improve the delivery of the West Virginia Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives. The Team recommended the school leadership team, with support from central office staff, develop a plan specific to Buffalo Elementary School to support improved delivery of the standards that includes higher order/deeper thinking opportunities for students.

The Team noted evidence that the principal implemented suggestions provided by the WVDE, Office of School Improvement coordinator. This was demonstrated by the distributed leadership process that was in place, the positive climate and culture, and the use of professional learning communities (PCLs) to analyze data for improved instruction.

The principal faced the challenge of working with an inexperienced staff that will require support and professional development to meet their individual needs. The teachers were willing to learn new strategies for providing the education that will meet the needs of their students. As indicated by the 2013-2014 Percent Economically Disadvantaged Age 5-17 Report, the school has a low socioeconomic rate of 60.53 percent; therefore, it is crucial the school continue implementing the turnaround strategies to foster an environment of high expectations.

The principal demonstrated capacity for change by creating a positive, nurturing environment in the short time she has been at the school. This was clearly evidenced by interviews with staff members. This quote from a teacher demonstrates the sentiment of the staff, "We have a leader now."

IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCE NEEDS

A thorough and efficient system of schools requires the provision of an adequate level of appropriately managed resources. The West Virginia Board of Education adopted resource evaluation as a part of the accreditation and evaluation process. This process is intended to meaningfully evaluate the needs for facilities, personnel, curriculum, equipment and materials in each of the county's schools and how those impact program and student performance.

19.1. Facilities, equipment, and materials. Facilities and equipment specified in Policy 6200, Chapters 1 through 14, are available in all schools, classrooms, and other required areas. A determination will be made by using the Process for Improving Education (W.Va. Code §18-2E-5) whether any identified deficiencies adversely impact and impair the delivery of a high quality educational program if it is below the West Virginia Board of Education standards due to inadequacies or inappropriate management in the areas of facilities, equipment, and materials. The Education Performance Audit Teams shall utilize an assessment instrument for the evaluation of school facilities which generally follows the requirements of Policy 6200. Note: Corrective measures to be taken in response to any identified resource deficiency will of necessity be subject to the feasibility of modifying existing facilities, consideration of alternative methods of instructional delivery, availability of funding, and prioritization of educational needs through Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plans and the West Virginia School Building Authority. This policy does not change the authority, judgment, or priorities of the School Building Authority of West Virginia who is statutorily responsible for prioritizing "Need" for the purpose of funding school improvements or school construction in the State of West Virginia or the prerogative of the Legislature in providing resources. (Policy 6200 and *Tomblin v. Gainer*)

According to the items checked in the School Facilities Evaluation Checklist, the school was below standard in the following areas. The principal checked and the Team confirmed the following school facility resource needs.

19.1.1. School location. The site did not have five usable acres plus one acre for each 100 students over 240. (Did not adversely impact the program delivery and student performance.)

19.1.3. Teachers' workroom. Teachers' work area did not provide access to communication technology. (Did not adversely impact the program delivery and student performance.)

19.1.5. Library/media and technology center. The library did not offer electronic card catalogs. (May adversely impact program delivery and student performance.)

19.1.8. Grades 1-12 classrooms. Storage was not adequate in classrooms. (May adversely impact program delivery and student performance.)

19.1.10. Specialized instructional areas. Art and music instruction was provided in the regular classroom; therefore the following resources were not available: Art facility adequate in size, access to natural and artificial light, adequate storage, two deep sinks-one minimum for small schools, hot and cold water, counter space, instructional boards, display facilities, bulletin boards, outlets, mechanical ventilation, ceramic kiln, black-out areas, music facility adequate in size, music facility located away from quiet areas of the building, adequate storage for music supplies, instructional board and bulletin board, music chairs with folding arms, music stands, podium, recording devices, microphones, stereo sound system, piano, instructional technology equipment, instructor's station, acoustical treatment, etc. (May adversely impact program delivery and student performance.)

19.1.15. Health service units. Did not include curtained or small rooms with cots. (May adversely impact student health and safety.)

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT SUMMARY

Buffalo Elementary School's Education Performance Audit examined performance and progress standards related to student and school performance. The Team also conducted a resource evaluation to assess the resource needs of the school. The Team submits this initial report to guide Buffalo Elementary School in improvement efforts.

The Team identified one high quality standard necessary to improve performance and progress.

7.6.2. Licensure.

The Team presented two commendations (7.1.3. Learning Environment and 7.1.4 Instruction) and offered capacity building resources.

Section 17.10. of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320 states:

If during an on-site review, a school or county board is found to be in noncompliance with one or more standards, the school and county electronic strategic improvement plans must be revised and shall be submitted to the West Virginia Board of Education within 30 days of receipt of the draft written report. The plans shall include objectives, a time line, a plan for evaluation of the success of the improvements, a cost estimate and a date certain for achieving full accreditation and/or full approval status as applicable.

Based upon the results of the Education Performance Audit, the Office of Education Performance Audits recommends that the West Virginia Board of Education direct Buffalo Elementary School and Logan County to revise the school's Five-Year Strategic Plan within 30 days and correct the findings noted in the report by the next accreditation cycle.