



INITIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

ATHENS SCHOOL

MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

MARCH 2011

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Athens School in Mercer County was conducted January 11, 2011. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the review was to investigate the reasons for performance and progress that are below standard and to make recommendations to the school and school system, as appropriate, and to the West Virginia Board of Education on such measures as it considers necessary to improve performance and progress to meet the standard.

The Education Performance Audit Team reviewed the Five-Year Strategic Improvement Plan, interviewed school personnel and school system administrators, observed classrooms, and examined school records. The review concentrated on the declining student achievement.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

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

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Linda Bragg, Coordinator, Office of Title II, III, and System Improvement

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
Ruth Bland	Elementary/Middle School Principal	Green Bank Elementary/Middle School Pocahontas County
Dorothy Becky Smith	Elementary School Principal	Cranberry-Prosperity Elementary School Raleigh County
Doris Weekley	Assistant Superintendent	Roane County

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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

51 MERCER COUNTY

Dr. Deborah S. Akers, Superintendent

201 ATHENS SCHOOL – Passed

Terry Quesenberry, Principal

Grades PK - 08

Enrollment 544 (2nd month 2008-2009 enrollment report)

WESTEST 2008-2009

Group	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Enrolled on Test Week	Number Tested	Participation Rate	Percent Proficient	Met Part. Rate Standard	Met Assessment Standard	Met Subgroup Standard
Mathematics								
All	358	378	378	100.00	57.26	Yes	Yes	✓
White	349	368	368	100.00	57.59	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Spec. Ed.	33	34	34	100.00	9.09	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	150	162	162	100.00	48.00	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading/Language Arts								
All	358	378	378	100.00	68.43	Yes	Yes	✓
White	349	368	368	100.00	69.05	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Spec. Ed.	33	34	34	100.00	12.12	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	150	162	162	100.00	56.00	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

FAY -- Full Academic Year

* -- 0 students in subgroup

** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

Passed

Attendance Rate = 95.4%

51 MERCER COUNTY
Dr. Deborah S. Akers, Superintendent
201 ATHENS SCHOOL – Needs Improvement
Terry Quesenberry, Principal
Grades PK - 08
Enrollment 539 (2nd month 2009-2010 enrollment report)

WESTEST 2009-2010

Group	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Enrolled on Test Week	Number Tested	Participation Rate	Percent Proficient	Met Part. Rate Standard	Met Assessment Standard	Met Subgroup Standard
Mathematics								
All	351	377	377	100.00	36.46	Yes	Yes	✓
White	344	369	369	100.00	36.91	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Multi-Racial	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Spec. Ed.	32	37	37	100.00	3.12	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	164	182	182	100.00	24.39	Yes	No	✗
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading/Language Arts								
All	351	377	377	100.00	40.74	Yes	Yes	✓
White	344	369	369	100.00	41.27	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Hispanic	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Asian	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Multi-Racial	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Spec. Ed.	32	37	37	100.00	6.25	NA	NA	NA
Low SES	164	182	182	100.00	31.09	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

FAY -- Full Academic Year

* -- 0 students in subgroup

** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

**Passed
Attendance Rate = 95.7%**

ATHENS SCHOOL

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Information by Class

Mathematics											
Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished	Proficient
03	41	37	41	37	100.00	16.22	48.65	27.03	5.41	2.70	35.14
04	47	45	47	45	100.00	24.44	37.78	26.67	8.89	2.22	37.78
05	49	44	49	44	100.00	31.82	20.45	25.00	20.45	2.27	47.73
06	73	70	73	70	100.00	38.57	34.29	18.57	8.57	0.00	27.14
07	88	79	88	79	100.00	35.44	24.05	31.65	8.86	0.00	40.51
08	79	76	79	76	100.00	46.05	19.74	18.42	13.16	2.63	34.21

Reading											
Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished	Proficient
03	41	37	41	37	100.00	40.54	13.51	27.03	13.51	5.41	45.95
04	47	45	47	45	100.00	31.11	28.89	28.89	11.11	0.00	40.00
05	49	44	49	44	100.00	34.09	25.00	15.91	13.64	11.36	40.91
06	73	70	73	70	100.00	37.14	28.57	21.43	8.57	4.29	34.29
07	88	79	88	79	100.00	22.78	36.71	30.38	6.33	3.80	40.51
08	79	76	79	76	100.00	26.32	28.95	19.74	25.00	0.00	44.74

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

The following charts show the actual number of students proficient and not proficient in mathematics and reading/language arts out of the number enrolled for the full academic year (FAY).

Mathematics			
	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Proficient	Number Not Proficient
All	351	128	223
White	344	127	217
Special Education	32	1	31
SES	164	40	124

Reading/Language Arts			
	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Proficient	Number Not Proficient
All	351	143	208
White	344	142	202
Special Education	32	2	30
SES	164	51	113

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Achieved Standard.

5.1.1. Achievement.

This is the 1st year that Athens School failed to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) in one or more subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. Athens School failed to achieve AYP in the economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroup in mathematics. Athens School achieved AYP in the SES subgroup in reading/language arts only by application of the confidence interval. The county curriculum staff and school staff are urged to address these subgroups in the county and school Five-Year Strategic Plans and apply interventions to improve achievement of all students.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Information by Class indicated scores below mastery and novice in both mathematics and reading: Grade 3 – 64.86 percent in mathematics and 54.05 percent in reading; Grade 4 – 62.22 percent in mathematics and 60.00 percent in reading; Grade 5 – 52.27 percent in mathematics and 59.09 percent in reading; Grade 6 – 72.86 percent in mathematics and 65.71 percent in reading; Grade 7 – 59.49 percent in mathematics and 59.49 percent in reading; Grade 8 – 65.79 percent in mathematics and 55.26 percent in reading. These scores have implication for the Five-Year Strategic Plan and school improvement.

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

1. Marshall Reading and Mathematics Cohort.
2. Respect and Protect/Positive School Climate.
3. What Does 21st Century Education Look Like?
4. Project Based Learning.
5. Everyday Math (K-05).
6. Impact Math (6-8).
7. Beyond Data.
8. Schoolwide Collaboration/Data Analysis.
9. West Virginia Writes/EdLine.
10. Acuity/DIBELS.
11. SIPPS Phonemic Awareness Training.
12. Five-Year Strategic Plan.
13. Student Responders Training with Acuity.
14. Number Worlds Training.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress.

7.1. Curriculum

- 7.1.5. Instructional strategies. Staff demonstrates the use of the various instructional strategies and techniques contained in Policies 2510 and 2520. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)**

At least 75 percent of the classes the Team observed employed mainly teacher-directed instruction. A greater variety of instructional strategies was needed to ensure higher student interest levels and active involvement in learning.

- 7.1.6. Instruction in writing. Instruction in writing shall be a part of every child's weekly educational curriculum in grades K through 12 in every appropriate class. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)**

While teachers were conducting writing at least one time per week, a formal writing approach or program was not being used. Additionally, the teachers could not talk about a writing rubric used in developing students' writing skills to prepare for the writing section of the WESTEST2. Through teacher interviews, the Team found that the writing assignments, in many cases, did not address the student needs based on the WESTEST2 or the fundamental student writing skills that need to be developed.

- 7.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application. The application of technology is included throughout all programs of study and students have regular access to library/educational technology centers or classroom libraries. (Policy 2470; Policy 2510)**

While teachers were using technology on a regular basis, over half the students interviewed indicated that they rarely get to use technology. The Team observed minimal numbers of students using technology on the day of the Education Performance Audit.

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

Grades K and 5 did not have the minimal number of required instructional minutes. According to the school handbook, the dismissal time stated 2:40pm; however, in practice the dismissal time was 2:25pm. The school and county needed to look at instructional time in terms of improving student achievement.

7.2. Student and School Performance

- 7.2.4. Data analysis. Prior to the beginning of and through the school term the county, school, and teacher have a system for analyzing, interpreting, and using student performance data to identify and assist students who are not at grade level in achieving approved state and local content standards and objectives. The county, principal, counselors, and teachers assess student scores on the American College Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test and develop curriculum, programs, and/or practices to improve student and school performance. (Policy 2510)**

While data disaggregation for the whole class had been completed, there was no evidence that teachers had or used it for individual students. When questioned about individual student data, at least four teachers stated that they did not have individual student data. Student data needed to be connected to classroom instruction and used to measure class and individual student skill mastery.

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 following certification issue was noted at the school.

Teacher	Courses Assigned	Certification	Issue	Recommendation
Educator	30043F (Deaf & Hard of Hearing)	Counselor English 7-12 Voc. Home Econ. 7-12 SLD BD MI Reading Specialist	Courses coded with 6 th position exceptionality F require Hearing Impaired endorsement	Coded incorrectly, should have been coded LD, BD, MI, not corrected

**No Title I Reading or Math courses were coded, the county/school will need to verify the coding of these courses.

- 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)**

One teacher was on the observation and evaluation cycle. The Team noted little feedback provided by the principal on the observation and evaluation forms. The Team believed that the lesson planning and curriculum delivery needed to be strengthened. It is imperative that instructive feedback appear on the observation and evaluation forms where applicable.

- 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)**

While one new teacher and mentor were meeting as required, the principal was not involved in any of these meetings. The principal must take an active role in the teacher/mentor meetings and provide evidence of this role.

RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1.3. Learning environment.** The Team recommended that the following issues regarding learning environment be corrected.

1. Urinals in a male rest room were openly visible from the hallway in the middle school section on the lower level of the building. A method to ensure privacy needed to be put into place.
2. The rest room adjacent to the food storage room was under construction and a deep hole was dug into the floor. This rest room was not secured while the maintenance personnel were not in the building and the hole presented a safety hazard.
3. Custodian closets that contained cleaning chemicals were unsecured. All custodian closets must be secured throughout the school day to prevent student access to cleaning chemicals.

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 Athens School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Mercer 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 Mercer County or the accreditation status of the schools.

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

The high level of teacher-directed instruction concerned the Team. Students must be given the opportunity to work individually and in small groups with peers. Technology must also become more predominate in instructional delivery.

Over the past seven years, three principals and one interim principal have served the school. Yet another principal was scheduled to take the position two days after the Education Performance Audit as the current principal has been hired to open the new Pikeview Middle School. This turnover of administrators has been detrimental to the learning environment and student achievement.

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 Athens School in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

- 18.1. Capacity building is a process for targeting resources strategically to improve the teaching and learning process. School and county electronic strategic improvement plan development is intended, in part, to provide mechanisms to target resources strategically to the teaching and learning process to improve student, school, and school system performance.**

The Mercer County Central Office provides excellent support for each of their schools and the Team believed that with the assistance from the central office, the new administrator will have the capacity to correct the deficiencies found at the school. Consistency in the position of principal must be a high priority of the central office.

The Team recommended that the Mercer County School System Superintendent and the school administrator contact Mr. Charles Heinlein, Executive Director, Office of School Improvement at 304-558-3199 to arrange a School Support System for correcting the deficiencies and improving student and school performance.

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 school site was not 11 usable acres and the site was not large enough for future expansion.
- 19.1.5. Library/media and technology center.** On-line periodical indexes were not available.
- 19.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art facility did not have display facilities or black-out areas. The music facility did not have music chairs with folding arms or acoustical treatment. The physical education facility did not have a data projector or a 50 inch screen monitor, network connection, or Internet access.

- 19.1.11. Grades 6-12 science facilities.** The science facilities did not have AC or DC current, compressed air, ventilation fume hood, demo table, sufficient laboratory workspace, fire extinguisher, blanket, emergency shower, first aid kit, darkening provisions, or main gas shut-off.
- 19.1.14. Food service.** A locker or dressing room was not provided.
- 19.1.15. Health service units.** A health service unit of adequate size was not available. There were no small rooms with cots, toilet, or lavatory.

Early Detection and Intervention

One of the most important elements in the Education Performance Audit process is monitoring student progress through early detection and intervention programs.

Varied instructional practices must be a high priority of the teachers. Teachers will need to deliver curriculum that supports 21st century learning skills and the needs of diverse learners. Technology must be fully incorporated buildingwide and the principal must seek assistance from the Mercer County Central Office. Individual student data is a critical aspect for teachers to analyze and interpret to make the curriculum relevant and to support student learning.

The School Support System presented under the Capacity Building Section will be an invaluable resource in guiding school improvement.

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team identified eight high quality standards necessary to improve performance and progress.

They include the following:

- 7.1.5. Instructional strategies.
- 7.1.6. Instruction in writing.
- 7.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.
- 7.1.13. Instructional day.
- 7.2.4. Data analysis.
- 7.6.2. Licensure.
- 7.6.3. Evaluation.
- 7.6.4. Teacher and principal internship.

The Team presented one recommendation (7.1.3. Learning environment), noted an indicator of efficiency, offered capacity building resources, and noted an early detection and intervention concern.

Athens School's Education Performance Audit concentrated on the 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 Athens School in improvement efforts.

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 Athens School and Mercer 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.