



**Office of Education
Performance Audits**

INITIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

MEMORIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

MARCH 2009

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Memorial Primary School in Mercer County was conducted on February 11, 2009. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. Section 4.5.2 of Policy 2320 discusses accountability of Kindergarten through Grade 2 schools. "The accountability of public schools without grades assessed (i.e., K-2 schools) will be based on attendance and test scores from the feeder school unless the West Virginia Board of Education specifically directs an on-site review of such schools which would substitute for AYP for a three (3) year period."

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.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

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

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Sarah Lyons, Coordinator,
Instructional Technology

TEAM MEMBERS

| Name | Title | School/County |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Alvin James | Elementary School Principal | Daniels Elementary School Raleigh County |
| Ann Smith | Elementary School Principal | White Sulphur Elementary School Greenbrier County |
| Leatha Williams | Elementary School Principal | Rupert Elementary School Greenbrier 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

213 MEMORIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Steve Hayes, Principal

Grades K - 02

Enrollment 201 (2nd month 2007-2008 enrollment report)

DIBELS RESULTS

| SCHOOL LEVEL (% BENCHMARK) | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| | BOY | MOY | EOY | % GROWTH |
| 2005-2006 | 56 | 55 | 59 | 3 |
| 2006-2007 | 43 | 54 | 79 | 36 |
| 2007-2008 | 54 | 56 | 69 | 15 |
| 2008-2009 | 64 | 80 | NA | NA |

| KINDERGARTEN (% BENCHMARK) | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| | BOY | MOY | EOY | % GROWTH |
| 2005-2006 | 54 | 56 | 62 | 8 |
| 2006-2007 | 28 | 42 | 89 | 61 |
| 2007-2008 | 36 | 56 | 88 | 52 |
| 2008-2009 | 42 | 90 | NA | NA |

| FIRST GRADE (% BENCHMARK) | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| | BOY | MOY | EOY | % GROWTH |
| 2005-2006 | 61 | 47 | 49 | -12 |
| 2006-2007 | 62 | 62 | 77 | 15 |
| 2007-2008 | 71 | 51 | 60 | -11 |
| 2008-2009 | 93 | 80 | NA | NA |

| SECOND GRADE (% BENCHMARK) | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| | BOY | MOY | EOY | % GROWTH |
| 2005-2006 | 56 | 63 | 66 | 10 |
| 2006-2007 | 41 | 59 | 70 | 29 |
| 2007-2008 | 53 | 60 | 58 | 5 |
| 2008-2009 | 57 | 68 | NA | NA |

BOY - Beginning of Year

MOY - Middle of Year

EOY - End of Year

NA - Not Available

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

1. Reading First.
2. DIBELS and Literacy.
3. Differentiated Instruction.
4. Explicit Phonics Instruction.
5. WV Reading Association.
6. Basic Reading Inventory.
7. Ashlock Strategies.
8. Phonemic Awareness.
9. Vocabulary.
10. Reading Research Symposium.
11. Vocabulary and Comprehension.
12. Oral Language Development.
13. Six Syllable Patterns.
14. Response to Intervention (RTI).

DIBELS Results (percent growth) for the 2007-2008 school year showed low percentages of growth for the school level, a negative percentage growth for Grade 1, and a low percentage growth for Grade 2. These growth results are a compelling indication for Mercer County to immediately provide and seek support to Memorial Primary School.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress.

7.1. Curriculum

- 7.1.1. Curriculum based on content standards and objectives. The curriculum is based on the content standards and objectives approved by the West Virginia Board of Education. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)**

It was not evident that all teachers were using the 21st Century Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) in an effective manner. One teacher was using the old CSOs and had not been trained for the new ones. Another teacher was not aware of the CSOs to be used.

- 7.1.3. Learning environment. School staff provides a safe and nurturing environment that is conducive to learning. (Policy 2510)**

While the Grade 2 teachers had implemented a new classroom management plan and student behavior was excellent, all three Grade 1 teachers and one Kindergarten teacher had inadequate classroom management. The Team observed the following student behaviors: Students talking during instruction, students out of seats and in the floor, students off task and not redirected by the teacher, and students not engaged.

- 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)**

Three teachers stated that feedback on writing occurred bi-weekly or monthly. Students must receive written feedback at least once per week.

7.2. Student and School Performance

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

Some lesson plans had not been signed by the principal at least once per quarter. In light of classroom management issues noted in 7.1.3. above and negative percent growth in First Grade and low percentage growth in Second Grade DIBELS, lesson plans and instruction needed to have greater principal feedback to improve instruction.

7.6. Personnel

- 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 principal had not conducted personnel observations or evaluations as required by W.Va. Code §18A-2-12 and West Virginia Board of Education policies.

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)

Due to the nature of deficiencies found at Memorial Primary School, the Team determined that the Mercer County Central Office administration, the West Virginia Department of Education, and RESA I needed to assist the building principal in guiding the school's curriculum and develop leadership skills in managing and operating the school.

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 Memorial Primary 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.

Classroom management in the Grade 1 classrooms and one Kindergarten classroom must be a priority of the school administrator. Disruptive behavior impedes educational programs and practices and impedes student achievement.

All teachers must be using the 21st Century Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs) and the principal must ensure that proper staff development is provided on the use of these new CSOs and monitor their implementation and effectiveness.

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 Memorial Primary 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 Team determined that Memorial Primary School and Mercer County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies. However, the capacity must be developed in the Grade 1 and one Kindergarten classroom on classroom management techniques. The Team recommended that the principal engage the Professional Development Director at RESA I and the West Virginia Department of Education in developing the school's capacity to improve the classroom management in these classes.

The Team recommended that the Mercer County School System Superintendent and the school administrator contact Dr. Karen Huffman, Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Division of Special Projects – Superintendent's Center for 21st Century Schools at 304-558-7010 ext. 53319 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 five acres, plus one acre for each 100 students over 240. The site was not large enough for future expansion.
- 19.1.5. Library/media and technology center.** Newspapers were not available for student use. (Did not adversely affect curriculum and instruction.)
- 19.1.7. K classrooms.** A sink and hot and cold water was not available in the Kindergarten classrooms. (Impeded the Kindergarten program.)
- 19.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The music facility did not have acoustical treatment. (Did not adversely affect curriculum and instruction.)
- 19.1.15. Health service units.** Curtained or small rooms with cots and a refrigerator with locked storage were not available. (Impeded health services.)

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.

Mercer County should actively pursue assistance from RESA I, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the West Virginia Center for Professional Development to assist with school improvement efforts pertaining to classroom management and usage of the 21st Century Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs), and improving achievement.

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 six high quality standards – necessary to improve performance and progress. They include the following.

- 7.1.1. Curriculum based on content standards and objectives.
- 7.1.3. Learning environment.
- 7.1.6. Instruction in writing.
- 7.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback.
- 7.6.3. Evaluation.
- 7.8.1. Leadership.

The Team noted an indicator of efficiency, offered capacity building resources, and noted an early detection and intervention concern.

Memorial Primary School's Education Performance Audit was limited in scope to 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 draft report to guide Memorial Primary School in improvement efforts. Pursuant to W.Va. Code §18-2E-5, the school and county have until the next accreditation cycle to correct deficiencies noted in the report.

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 Memorial Primary 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.