

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



DRAFT EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

WHITETHORN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

JULY 2005

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Whitethorn Elementary School in Mercer County was conducted on May 10, 2005. 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 Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP), interviewed school personnel and school system administrators, observed classrooms, and examined school records. The review was limited in scope and concentrated on student performance on the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) and the Informal Math Inventory (IMI).

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

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

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – John Putnam, Coordinator, Office of Student Assessment

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
Don Bower	Elementary School Principal	Beale Elementary Mason County
Marcel Malfregeot	Director of Instruction	Harrison County
Mark Skaggs	Junior High School Principal	Richwood Junior High Nicholas County

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

This section presents the assessment data and the Education Performance Audit Team's findings.

51 MERCER COUNTY

Dr. Deborah S. Akers, Superintendent

225 WHITETHORN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Sandra Puckett, Principal

Grades K - 02

Enrollment 167

INFORMAL MATH ASSESSMENT DATA

2003-2004

	Partial Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery
	All Students	All Students	All Students
Kindergarten	**	19	12
Grade 1	14	32	**
Grade 2	*	*	*
Special Education	**	*	*

* Data not provided by school

** Less than 10

INFORMAL READING ASSESSMENT DATA

2003-2004

COMPREHENSION

Gender Disaggregated Scores

	Mastery	Mastery	Partial Mastery	Partial Mastery
	White	Non-White	White	Non-White
Kindergarten	19	17	**	**
Grade 1	21	15	**	**
Grade 2	*	*	*	*

* Data not provided by school

** Less than 10

Ethnic Disaggregated Scores

	Mastery	Mastery	Partial Mastery	Partial Mastery
	White	Non-White	White	Non-White
Kindergarten	20	14	**	**
Grade 1	18	18	**	**
Grade 2	*	*	*	*

* Data not provided by school

** Less than 10

FLUENCY

Gender Disaggregated Scores

	Mastery	Mastery	Partial Mastery	Partial Mastery
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Grade 1	**	**	18	**
Grade 2	*	*	*	*

* Data not provided by school

** Less than 10

Ethnic Disaggregated Scores

	Mastery	Mastery	Partial Mastery	Partial Mastery
	White	Non-White	White	Non-White
Grade 1	**	**	12	15
Grade 2	*	*	*	*

* Data not provided by school

** Less than 10

Passed

Attendance Rate = 95.3%

Other Relevant Performance Data

Physical Assessment – Presidential Physical Fitness Test Passage Rate

Percentage of Students	School Year
80.12%	2003-04
70.62%	2002-03
70.99%	2001-02

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

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

- 6.1.2. **High expectations.** The special education inclusion model was exemplified at Whitethorn Elementary School. The general education classroom teachers had an exceptional rapport with the special education teachers that produced an impressive instructional team. All of the teachers worked as a cohesive unit to promote student achievement.
- 6.7.1. **School rules, procedures, and expectations.** This school exhibited an outstanding school climate. The students were well mannered and polite. Behavior issues were nearly nonexistent. Students and staff reported that they felt safe and protected. Students commented that they feel loved and protected by the staff.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress to Meet the Standard.

6.2. Student and School Performance

- 6.2.3. **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)

Several teachers' lesson plans were inadequate. The Team observed several classrooms in which lesson plans contained only page numbers without instructional directions. Some teachers commented that plans had not been checked all year.

6.7. Safe, Drug Free, Violence Free, and Disciplined Schools

- 6.7.1. **School rules, procedures, and expectations.** School rules, procedures, and expectations are written; clearly communicated to students, parents, and staff; and enforced. (Policy 2510; Policy 4373)

Classroom rules and consequences were posted on the wall of the Media Room that were numbered: 1. Verbal warning, 2. Name on the board, 3. Check beside of name and move to another seat, 4. Write the broken rule 100 times. A teacher also used a similar punishment for two students who were "shoving" in line. The discipline of

“writing the broken rule 100 times” is not an effective use of time and should be revised to apply discipline appropriate to the behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1.3. Learning environment.** Rest rooms, particularly the boys, emanated an offensive odor. Students and staff initially reported this to the Team. The Team recommended that sanitation and ventilation be improved to alleviate this problem.
- 6.1.5. Instructional strategies.** The principal performed classroom walk-throughs; however, written feedback was not provided to teachers. Teachers indicated that they did not know the results of the walk-throughs. The Team recommended that the principal share the checklists and comments to the teachers for improved instruction.
- 6.1.12. Multicultural activities.** No school or county multicultural plan was evident. Several activities were undertaken throughout the year, but these activities needed to be unified into one plan. The Team recommended that these be compiled into a schoolwide multicultural plan that unifies current multicultural activities.

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.

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

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS	RECOMMENDED RESOURCES
6.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.7.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Student Services and Health Promotions (304) 558-8830

- 16.1. Capacity building is a process for targeting resources strategically to improve the teaching and learning process. School and county Unified 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 Whitethorn Elementary School and Mercer County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies.

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.

17.1. 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 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*)

None identified.

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.

None identified.

School Accreditation Status

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit High Quality Standards	Annual Performance Measures Needing Improvement	Date Certain
51-225 Whitethorn Elementary	Full Accreditation	6.2.3; 6.7.1		

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team identified two (2) high quality standards – necessary to improve performance and presented three (3) recommendations.

Whitethorn Elementary School’s Education Performance Audit was limited in scope to the performance and process standards and progress 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 Whitethorn Elementary School in improvement efforts. The school and county have until the next accreditation cycle to correct deficiencies noted in the report.