

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



DRAFT EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

BLUEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

JULY 2005

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Bluefield High School in Mercer County was conducted on May 12, 2005. 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 persistently 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 Unified School 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 – Allen Brock, Coordinator

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Michael Kees, Coordinator, Office of Instructional Services

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

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Catherine Thompson, Coordinator, Office of Instructional Services

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
Don Bower	Elementary School Principal	Beale Elementary Mason County
Dr. Mary Harris-John	Assistant Professor	Marshall University
Bruce Kolsun	Elementary School Principal	Midland Elementary Randolph County
Marcel Malfregeot	Director of Instruction	Harrison County
Mark Skaggs	Junior High School Principal	Richwood Junior High Nicholas County
Karen Talbert	Assistant Middle School Principal	Spencer Middle 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
502 BLUEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL - Needs Improvement
Joseph Turner, Principal
Grades 09 - 12
Enrollment 655

Group	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Enrolled on April 20	Number Tested	Participation Rate	Percent Proficient	Met Part. Rate Standard	Met Assessment Standard	Met Subgroup Standard
Mathematics								
All	130	135	131	97.04	53.90	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
White	93	97	93	95.88	61.53	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	37	38	38	100.00	35.13	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	68	71	69	97.18	40.90	Yes	No	✗
Spec. Ed.	31	31	30	96.77	10.00	NA	NA	NA
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading/Language Arts								
All	130	135	131	97.04	72.65	Yes	Yes	✓
White	93	97	93	95.88	78.02	Yes	Yes	✓
Black	37	38	38	100.00	59.45	NA	NA	NA
Hispanic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Low SES	68	71	69	97.18	59.09	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	31	31	30	96.77	23.33	NA	NA	NA
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

FAY -- Full Academic Year
* -- 0 students in subgroup
** -- Less than 10 students in subgroup

Passed
Graduation Rate = 87.5%

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
10	135	130	131	128	97.04	15.63	30.47	35.16	9.38	9.38	53.91

Reading											
Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished	Proficient
10	135	130	131	128	97.04	4.69	22.66	42.97	15.63	14.06	72.66

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

Other Relevant Performance Data

Statewide Writing Assessment Student Frequency and Percentage by Score

Grade 10

4.0		3.5		3.0		2.5		2.0		1.5		1.0		N		Total Freq.
Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
2	2%	4	3%	23	19%	12	10%	59	48%	11	9%	4	3%	8	7%	123

Note: Eighty-one percent (81%) of the students scored at or above 2.0 on the Statewide Writing Assessment.

Freq. - Frequency - Number of students
% - Percentage of students

Physical Assessment – Presidential Physical Fitness Test Passage Rate

Percentage of Students	School Year
38.51%	2003-04
56.82%	2002-03
52.69%	2001-02

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Below Standard

5.1.1. Achievement.

Bluefield High School failed to achieve adequately yearly progress (AYP) in one or more subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. One subgroup designated in 5.1.1. Achievement, included economically disadvantaged students (SES). In accordance with Section 9.5 of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320, *A Process for Improving Education: Performance Based Accreditation System*, the West Virginia Board of Education issued the school Temporary Accreditation status at the September 10, 2004 State Board meeting.

The school revised its Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) to improve performance and progress on the standard and the West Virginia Board of Education upgraded Bluefield High School to Conditional Accreditation status with a May 31, 2007 Date Certain to achieve AYP.

Bluefield High School achieved AYP in the economically disadvantaged (SES) subgroup in reading/language arts and the all students (AS) subgroup in mathematics by application of the confidence interval and may have an achievement deficiency if remediation and interventions have not been emphasized. Additionally, students in the racial/ethnicity black (B) and the special education (SE) subgroups were not considered in AYP because of the number (N) less than 50 in these subgroups. Achievement of students in the B subgroup in mathematics and SE subgroup in reading/language arts and mathematics was substantially below the State's proficiency level. Mercer County curriculum staff and school staff must monitor the achievement of these students and promote instructional strategies and activities that are designed to close the achievement gap.

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) information by class data showed that 30.47 percent of Grade 10 students were below mastery in mathematics. This provides an implication for the Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) and school improvement programs.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

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

6.1.3. **Learning environment.** The Team observed that the school and staff provided a safe and nurturing environment. The students were helpful, mannerly, and polite. The

teachers reported very few disciplinary incidents and the students and staff indicated that they felt safe at the school.

- 6.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.** The librarian created a comfortable, pleasant, and highly motivating media center with high expectations and superb support of her students' achievement. It was evident that the library was an integral component of the total educational program.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress to Meet the Standard (5.1.1. Achievement - SES).

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)

In numerous cases lesson plans were either incomplete or nonexistent. Often there were no indications of instructional activities. The driver education teachers produced lesson plans from 1995. Physical education, chemistry, and one English teacher failed to produce lesson plans. These plans were not reviewed by the principal and signed with any consistency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1.2 High expectations.** Several economically disadvantaged (SES) students indicated that they felt discriminated against by not being given equal opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities, citing the required participation fees. Activities included: Cheerleading, band, show choir, and athletic teams. The Team recommended that students and parents be advised of alternative methods of payments for these fees. The Team also recommended that the school seek other forms of funding these activities. The principal stated that procedures existed to accommodate these fees; however, several students were not made aware of these procedures and consequently failed to participate in the activities.
- 6.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application.** The Team observed computers in the classrooms were not being integrated into the instruction. Teachers also indicated more technology was used in the computer laboratories than inside their classrooms. Two portable wireless mobile laptop laboratories were available; however, evidence of their use was not observed. The Team recommended that the faculty explore more appropriate integration of technology. Professional development should be provided to assist with this implementation.

- 6.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews.** Surplus legacy chemicals were stored in the chemistry department. These chemicals were both organic and heavy metal in content consisting of the following: 2-butanol, cyclohexane, amyl alcohol, kerosene, gasoline, and sodium. Chemical storage cabinets were used in the classroom and some were not locked nor were the cabinets not vented. The Team recommended that these organic and heavy metal unused chemicals be properly disposed. Furthermore, proper storage of chemicals needed to be assessed. The Team recommended that the school and Mercer County evaluate the need for using mercury compounds in the Advanced Placement Chemistry program. Subsequent to the audit, the county superintendent reported that the chemicals had been removed from the school to ensure safety issues. The Team will verify this removal upon return to the school for the Follow-up Education Performance Audit.
- 6.5.4. Physical Assessment.** The student passage rate on the Presidential Physical Fitness Test (PPFT) declined from 56.82 percent in 2002-03 to 38.51 percent in 2003-04. The physical education department needs to review skill deficiencies and address curriculum as indicated to develop the skills necessary for students to perform at a higher level on the physical assessment.

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 Bluefield High 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

- 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 Bluefield High School and Mercer County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies.

- 16.3.2. Determining the areas of weakness and of ineffectiveness that appear to have contributed to the substandard performance of students or the deficiencies of the school or school system;**

Under the direction of the principal and assistant principal, Bluefield High School has begun to investigate programs to correct deficiencies in the area of economically disadvantaged students (SES). Mercer County central office staff is providing assistance and programs are being investigated that will help to increase student achievement at all levels. The Office of Education Performance Audits encourages Mercer County and Bluefield High School staff to implement programs and practices that improve achievement of all students (AS) with particular attention to the racial/ethnicity black (B) and special education (SE) subgroups that have a number (N) of 50 and are not achieving at a high level.

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*)

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.

- 17.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art facility did not have mechanical ventilation. The music facilities did not have acoustical treatment. The physical education facilities did not have a drinking fountain, provisions for two or more teaching stations, and a record player or compact disk player.
- 17.1.14. Food service.** The food service area did not have lockers.
- 17.1.15. Health service units.** A health services area of adequate size was not available. The following items were not available: Curtained or small rooms with cots, bulletin board, toilet, lavatory, scales, refrigerator with locked storage, work counter, and desk and chair.

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
51-502 Bluefield High	Conditional Accreditation	6.2.3		May 31, 2007
			5.1.1 (SES)	

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team identified one (1) high quality standard – necessary to improve performance and progress to meet 5.1.1. Achievement – for the economically disadvantaged (SES) and presented four (4) recommendations.

Bluefield High School’s Education Performance Audit was limited in scope to the performance and process standards and progress related to student and school performance in the area of deficiency (5.1.1. SES). The Team also conducted a resource evaluation to assess the resource needs of the school. The Team submits this draft report to guide Bluefield High School in improvement efforts. The school and county have until the next accreditation cycle to correct deficiencies noted in the report.