



FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

WIDMYER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MORGAN COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

JULY 2014

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Widmyer Elementary School in Morgan County was conducted February 12, 2013.

A Follow-Up Education Performance Audit was conducted March 28, 2014. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the follow-up review was to verify correction of the findings identified during the original Education Performance Audit. The review was in accordance with West Virginia Code §18-2E-5 and West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320 which specify that a school that meets or exceeds the performance and progress standards but has other deficiencies shall remain on full accreditation status and a county school district shall remain on full approval status for the remainder of the accreditation period and shall have an opportunity to correct those deficiencies. The Code and policy include the provision that a school “. . . does not have any deficiencies which would endanger student health or safety or other extraordinary circumstances as defined by the West Virginia Board of Education.”

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

Office of Education Performance Audits Team Chair – Carroll Staats

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress.

7.1. Curriculum

- 7.1.2. High expectations. Through curricular offerings, instructional practices, and administrative practices, staff demonstrates high expectations for the learning and achieving of all students and all students have equal educational opportunities including enrichment and acceleration. (Policy 2510)**

Instruction during the day of the Education Performance Audit was at the very basic level throughout the school. Minimal instruction required students to think using higher level thinking skills. Basic recall instruction was predominant schoolwide.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. Staff participated in county-based professional development opportunities focusing on instruction using higher level thinking skills and increasing instructional rigor via technology, higher order questioning, and best instructional practices for student engagement. The Team interviewed staff and observed classrooms and verified improved instructional practices regarding higher level thinking skills and student engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1.3. Learning environment.** While the Team observed instruction throughout the building and the West Virginia 21st Century content standards and objectives (CSOs) were being addressed, the Team did not see enthusiasm in the students and staff. The overall instructional approach was conducted in a general business manner and students and staff were very matter-of-fact. The Team recommended that the staff encourage student enthusiasm and increase student engagement to improve achievement.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. Based upon classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers, the Team determined the school climate had improved.

7.1.12. Multicultural activities. While students were learning about a variety of countries for the multicultural activities, teachers could not talk about tolerance and diversity being addressed when interviewed by the Team. The Team recommended that tolerance and diversity be included in the school's approach to multicultural education.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. Staff at Widmyer Elementary School was proactive in addressing the absence of tolerance and diversity lessons in the school's formal Multicultural Plan. Teachers and the administrator revised the plan to reflect activities dealing with tolerance and diversity. Teachers were incorporating concepts of diversity and tolerance for others in classroom lessons.

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 Widmyer Elementary School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Morgan 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 Morgan 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.

While the staff provided a safe and nurturing learning environment, the overall area of higher order thinking skills needed to be addressed. Students must be challenged to use the higher Depths of Knowledge levels to expand their knowledge and increase achievement.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

Staff at Widmyer Elementary School participated in professional development regarding instructional strategies targeting higher Depth of Knowledge levels and were using the strategies in instructing students.

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 Widmyer Elementary 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 believed that Widmyer Elementary School has the capacity to increase the rigor and relevance for all students. The Morgan County Central Office must be involved, along with RESA 8, the West Virginia Center for Professional Development, and the West Virginia Department of Education to provide high quality, research based professional development to aid teachers in the areas of higher order thinking skills and higher Depth of Knowledge levels.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The Team determined the staff at Widmyer Elementary School worked diligently to address the deficiencies identified during the Education Performance Audit conducted February 12, 2013. Professional development targeting rigor and relevance of instruction for students was provided by the Director of Elementary Education for Morgan County School System and RESA 8. The West Virginia Center for Professional Development provided Widmyer Elementary School staff training in the new personnel evaluation system.

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.

19.1.5. Library/media and technology center. Computer work stations, capacity for on-line research, on-line periodical indexes, and copying equipment were not provided. (May adversely impact or impair the delivery of a high quality educational program.)

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

Two laptop computers with capacity for on-line research were placed in the library. Copying equipment for staff use was located in the staff workroom.

19.1.9. Grades K-12 remedial. One remedial classroom was not located adjacent to general instructional areas. (Does not adversely impact or impair the delivery of a high quality educational program.)

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The classroom for remedial education was moved to the middle of the second grade classroom wing.

19.1.10. Specialized instructional areas. The art facility did not have access to natural light, one deep sink, a ceramic kiln, or black-out areas. The music facility was not located away from quiet areas of the building and did not have music chairs with folding arms, music stands, or acoustical treatment. The physical education facility did not have a data projector or a 50 inch screen monitor. (Does not adversely impact or impair the delivery of a high quality educational program.)

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

No change.

19.1.15. Health service units. The school did not have a health service unit of adequate size, curtained or small rooms with cots, locked storage, or a work counter. (Does not adversely impact or impair the delivery of a high quality educational program.)

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The health service unit was moved into the space that formerly housed the remedial education classroom and now has adequate space, cots, and locked storage.

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.

The principal and assistant principal had worked extensively with the staff to disaggregate student data and investigate reasons for weaknesses in student achievement. The principal had elicited assistance in a variety of areas for professional development; however, more assistance is necessary in the area of high expectations, particularly instruction that engages and motivates students.

The Office of Education Performance Audits advises the Morgan County School District to seek intervention assistance from the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Early Learning. The contact for this assistance is Clayton Burch, Executive Director, at (304) 558-9994 extension 53212, or wburch@access.k12.wv.us.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The Widmyer Elementary School principal contacted the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Early Learning, and staff received valuable assistance to strengthen instructional weaknesses and improve student achievement. Morgan County School District was also helpful in providing professional development that targeted the instructional weaknesses. The school staff implemented many new strategies gained from the professional development sessions in their classrooms.

Education Performance Audit Recommendation

Based upon the results of the Final Education Performance Audit, it is recommended and a motion is requested to approve the report.