



**Office of Education
Performance Audits**

INITIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

WIDMYER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MORGAN COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

JUNE 2009

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Widmyer Elementary School in Morgan County was conducted on April 23, 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. The review was limited in scope and concentrated on a review of assessment data.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

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

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
Kimberly D. Agee	Intermediate School Principal	Mill Creek Intermediate School Berkeley County
Paula J. Athey	Primary School Principal	Wiley Ford Primary School Mineral County
Michelle Martin	Intermediate School Principal	Mountain Ridge Intermediate School Berkeley County
Kevin L. McBee	Elementary School Principal	Gerrardstown Elementary School Berkeley County

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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

58 MORGAN COUNTY
David Banks, Superintendent
207 WIDMYER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Dan Reynolds, Principal
Grades PreK – 02
Enrollment 555 (2nd month 2007-2008 enrollment report)

DIBELS RESULTS

Mathematics

SCHOOL LEVEL (% BENCHMARK)				
	BOY	MOY	EOY	GROWTH
2007-2008	152	135	145	-7
2008-2009	179	171	N/A	N/A

KINDERGARTEN (% BENCHMARK)				
	BOY	MOY	EOY	GROWTH
2007-2008	36	48	69	+33
2008-2009	58	89	N/A	N/A

FIRST GRADE (% BENCHMARK)				
	BOY	MOY	EOY	GROWTH
2007-2008	70	65	44	-26
2008-2009	62	60	N/A	N/A

SECOND GRADE (% BENCHMARK)				
	BOY	MOY	EOY	GROWTH
2007-2008	46	22	32	-14
2008-2009	59	22	N/A	N/A

BOY - Beginning of Year
MOY - Middle of Year
EOY - End of Year
NA - Not Available

Reading

SCHOOL LEVEL (% BENCHMARK)				
	BOY	MOY	EOY	GROWTH
2007-2008	277	284	278	+1
2008-2009	259	281	N/A	N/A

KINDERGARTEN (% BENCHMARK)				
	BOY	MOY	EOY	GROWTH
2007-2008	74	91	99	+25
2008-2009	81	107	N/A	N/A

FIRST GRADE (% BENCHMARK)				
	BOY	MOY	EOY	GROWTH
2007-2008	110	87	87	-23
2008-2009	97	85	N/A	N/A

SECOND GRADE (% BENCHMARK)				
	BOY	MOY	EOY	GROWTH
2007-2008	93	106	92	-1
2008-2009	81	89	N/A	N/A

BOY - Beginning of Year
 MOY - Middle of Year
 EOY - End of Year
 NA - Not Available

DIBELS Results (percent growth) for the 2007-2008 school year showed a low percentage of growth for the school level in reading and a negative percentage growth in mathematics, Grade 1 and Grade 2 also showed negative growth in both mathematics and reading. These growth results are a compelling indication for Morgan County to immediately provide and seek support for Widmyer Elementary School.

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

1. Phonemic Awareness.
2. Understanding Autism.
3. Reading Intervention Resource Development.
4. WESTEST analysis from Feeder School (Warm Springs Intermediate).
5. Blueprint Interventions.
6. Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Training.
7. Crisis Prevention Intervention.
8. Quick Problem Solving Strategies.
9. Three Tier Model for Reading.
10. Reading Symposium.
11. State Reading Conference.
12. New Principals' Academy.
13. Response to Intervention (RTI).

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

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

- 7.1.3. Learning environment.** The building was extremely clean and stimulating. A great deal of student work was displayed in the halls. The Team believed that it was a positive student centered environment. Students and staff reported that they felt safe and the atmosphere was nurturing.
- 7.1.5. Instructional strategies.** While all teachers were using a variety of instructional strategies, 10 teachers excelled in this area. Transitions were fluid from one objective to the next and instructional differentiations were used to meet the students' needs.

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)

One kindergarten teacher and one special education teacher did not keep students actively engaged in the learning process. Students were off task in both classrooms, walking around the classrooms and not redirected or reengaged in the educational process.

7.2. Student and School Performance

- 7.2.1. County and School electronic strategic improvement plans.** An electronic county strategic improvement plan and an electronic school strategic improvement plan are established, implemented, and reviewed annually. Each respective plan shall be a five-year plan that includes the mission and goals of the school or school system to improve student or school system performance or progress. The plan shall be revised annually in each area in which the school or system is below the standard on the annual performance measures.

The school's electronic Five-Year Strategic Plan did not clearly show that it was predicated on the establishment of high expectations for performance of all students in the school. The plan did not meet the needs of the school and the objectives were poorly written. Teachers could not discuss the goals and objectives of the plan. Therefore, the strategic plan was not the foundation for school and student achievement.

- 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)**

All teachers had not developed lesson plans in advance. Twelve teachers either had incomplete lesson plans or had "Snow Day" as the only item in the plans, which was indicative of not writing lesson plans in advance. Approximately four teachers' lessons plans did not have clearly stated procedures.

7.6. Personnel

- 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)**

One new teacher and mentor did not meet at least one time per week the first semester. The principal was not involved in any of the meetings that did occur.

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 number and quality of deficiencies found at Widmyer Elementary School, the Team determined that assistance in school leadership needed to be developed in the school's operations and management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1.1. Curriculum based on content standards and objectives.** The art, music, and library teachers developed lesson plans then matched them to 21st Century Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). One kindergarten teacher stated that she "tries to use the CSOs". The Team recommended that staff development be provided to guide teachers in the proper implementation of the CSOs.

7.1.12. Multicultural activities. While the school had a written Multicultural Plan, teachers could not explain the basic components of the plan. The Team recommended that the principal provide staff development on the Multicultural Plan and cover its various parts.

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.

Lesson plan development must be improved. It is imperative that all teachers maintain an up-to-date lesson plan book with lessons that have been developed in advance. The principal must ensure that all lesson plans are complete and show the steps to implement the plan of the day.

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 school's electronic Five-Year Strategic Plan had several problems. It must be completely redone to provide the foundation for curriculum and instruction. Communication and staff involvement also are essential components of the plan's development and implementation.

The Team recommended that the Morgan County School System Superintendent and the school administrator contact Dr. Karen Huffman, Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Division of Educator Quality and System Support 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 site was not five acres, plus one acre for each 100 students over 240.
- 19.1.4. Counselor's office.** The counselor's office did not have adequate space.
- 19.1.5. Library/media and technology center.** Electronic card catalogs, automated circulation capacity, on-line periodical indexes, and copying equipment were not available.
- 19.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The art area did not have access to artificial light, two deep sinks, hot water, mechanical ventilation, a ceramic kiln, or black-out areas. The music facility was not located away from quiet areas of the building and did not have a chalkboard and bulletin board, music stands, and a podium. The physical education facilities did not have provisions for two or more teaching stations, a display case, bulletin board, or seating available.
- 19.1.15. Health service units.** The health service unit did not have scales or a work counter.

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.

Student performance on the DIBELS assessment showed a troubling negative school level growth in mathematics and a negative growth of Grades 1 and 2 in both mathematics and reading.

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 five high quality standards necessary to improve performance and progress.

They include the following:

- 7.1.2. High expectations.
- 7.2.1. County and School electronic strategic improvement plans.
- 7.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback.
- 7.6.4. Teacher and principal internship.
- 7.8.1. Leadership.

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

Widmyer Elementary 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 Widmyer Elementary 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 Widmyer Elementary School and Morgan 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.