



**FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR**

**FALL RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**MCDOWELL COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**AUGUST 2014**

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

An announced Education Performance Audit of Fall River Elementary School in McDowell County was conducted January 29, 2013.

A Follow-Up Education Performance Audit was conducted April 16, 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

#### 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)**

Five teachers did not exhibit high expectations for all students. Instruction in these classes was at very low levels and did not challenge students. This constituted nearly one-half of the teachers in the school. Basic recall information was widespread in these classrooms. All students must be challenged with a high quality curriculum rooted in student data analysis and relevant to individual student needs. This standard was also cited in the Education Performance Audit report of January 2010.

### FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

**COMPLIANCE.** The school and county provided an abundance of professional development programs to improve instruction and increase expectations for student learning.

- **Common Core Summer Academy.**
- **Online Writing Training.**
- ***Make-It-Real* Bookstudy.**
- **Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI).**
- **Building Vocabulary Strategies.**
- **WESTEST2 Data Analysis.**
- **Everyday Math In-Class Support (Heather Lash).**
- **Number Talks Overview.**
- **Mastery Matrix Development – to address weaknesses identified from various assessments utilizing Depth of Knowledge 1, 2, 3, questioning.**
- **APL Strategies.**

The Team observed teachers implementing many of the new strategies from the professional development. Student engagement was near 100 percent. Teachers analyzed assessment information and developed strategies and activities to address student weaknesses. Teachers were employing questioning techniques with Depth of Knowledge level 2 and 3, whereas prior to the professional development questions focused at a level 1 or basic recall. The principal and staff expect to see improvements in WESTEST2 results.

The principal frequently monitored instruction through classroom walkthroughs, weekly lesson plan reviews, and working with vertical planning groups, grade level professional learning communities (PLCs), and schoolwide PLCs to improve instruction and student learning.

The Team observed classrooms and reviewed lesson plans of the teachers cited in initial report and found instruction had substantially improved.

**7.1.5. Instructional strategies. Staff demonstrates the use of the various instructional strategies and techniques contained in Policies 2510 and 2520. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)**

Five teachers did not vary their instructional strategies. Teacher directed instruction was the predominant instructional strategy in these classes. Student attention was waning due to a lack of variety of curriculum delivery. These teachers will need to examine student engagement and cultivate student interest. This standard was also cited in the Education Performance Audit report of January 2010.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE.** The Team conducted classroom observations and found students actively engaged and teachers were using multiple strategies. The principal reported specifically checking for varied instructional strategies and student engagement during classroom walkthroughs.

**7.2.4. Data analysis. Prior to the beginning of and through the school term the county, school, and teacher have a system for analyzing, interpreting, and using student performance data to identify and assist students who are not at grade level in achieving approved state and local content standards and objectives. The county, principal, counselors, and teachers assess student scores on the American College Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test and develop curriculum, programs, and/or practices to improve student and school performance. (Policy 2510)**

While the staff had sufficient data, the information was not being used to drive the curriculum or adjust instructional practices to accommodate student skill development needs in all classes. At least 40 percent of the teachers could not discuss the school or classroom data or how data were to be applied to increase student achievement. These teachers could not discuss the mathematics and/or reading/language WESTEST2 results. All students, regardless of data, were being taught the same material in the same manner with the same plans.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**COMPLIANCE.** All teachers were provided training in data analysis. Data were used by teachers during weekly collaborations to discuss student weaknesses and devise strategies and skill groupings to best address the student weaknesses. All teachers were involved in collaboration and planning to improve instruction and student learning opportunities.

## 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 Fall River Elementary School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. McDowell 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 McDowell 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.**

Data analysis must be used to a greater degree in all classrooms. While teachers had access to a wide variety of data, it was not being used effectively to influence improved student achievement.

The lack of high expectations and varied instructional strategies in nearly half of the classrooms was alarming. Fall River Elementary School had been provided a great deal of high quality professional development; however, it had not transferred to classroom practices. If instruction is not varied and challenging and students do not receive the necessary individual attention to achieve mastery, student achievement will continue to suffer. The principal must continue to monitor classroom instruction and ensure that the curriculum is delivered in a variety of ways, challenging to all students, and connected to the skills each student needs to achieve mastery of the content. The school has access to many professional development sessions that can aid in these areas; however, the training must result in classroom practice and student performance results.

## **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**Teachers received high quality professional development. They demonstrated improvement in classroom instruction through applying varied instructional strategies and higher level questioning. Students were on task and actively engaged in classroom activities. The principal continually monitored instruction through weekly lesson plan reviews and daily classroom walkthroughs. She was actively involved in teacher collaboration meetings and knowledgeable of instructional activities throughout the school.**

### **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 Fall River 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.**

Fall River Elementary School has access to high quality professional development to improve the teaching and learning process and decision making skills based on data analysis; however, the school has fallen short in targeting these resources to improve instruction and student learning. The school has failed to develop the capacity to improve student and school performance. The principal must actively work to ensure that the professional development is implemented in every classroom to strengthen teacher effectiveness and identify student difficulties and ensure students receive the instruction necessary to master the curriculum. If the professional development is not implemented and the issues of proper data application, high expectations, and instructional strategies are not adjusted in a meaningful way, 2013 WESTEST2 student achievement results will more likely continue to decline.

#### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**Through the principal's leadership, teachers were provided effective instructional strategies, close monitoring of instruction, and suggestions for improvement through regular feedback. Student scores on the 2013 WESTEST2 showed improvements in Grades 4 and 5 in both reading/language arts and mathematics, but Grade 3 scores declined in both reading/language arts and mathematics.**

## 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*)

The Facility Team identified facility resource needs which are presented in the McDowell County School System Report under 7.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews.

### **Fall River Elementary School (Grades Pre-K – 5)**

This school was very clean and well maintained by the custodian staff. The media center lacked electronic card catalogs, automated recirculation capacity, and on-line periodical indexes. The Kindergarten classroom was not located on the ground floor. No space was dedicated as an Art Room; therefore, the art facility area was not adequate in size and lacked many of the items specified for this type of area. The Music Room was not located away from quiet areas of the building and did not have a podium, music chairs with folding arms, music stands or acoustical treatment. The health services area was not adequate in size and lacked most of the resources specified for this type of space. Rest room exhaust fans were not operable.

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

The facility resource needs remained as stated in the original Education Performance Audit Report.

### **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.**

Fall River Elementary School is likely to maintain the course of its performance if it does not embrace and implement the professional development that has been afforded staff areas.

WESTEST2 (2012) achievement results by class reflected that Grade 3 students performed at 76.19 percent proficient in mathematics and 14.29 percent of the Grade 3 students achieved at the distinguished level. Grades 4 and 5 mathematics percent proficient levels were measurably lower (Grade 4 – 36.84 percent proficient and Grade 5 – 30 percent proficient). Reading data showed student proficient levels much lower than mathematics, but still following the same pattern of Grade 3 students performing 36 to 40 percent higher than Grades 4 and 5 (Grade 3 – 61.90 percent proficient; Grade 4 – 21.05 percent proficient; Grade 5 – 25.00 percent proficient). McDowell County and Fall River Elementary School must examine all aspects of student achievement and organize all the support services to intervene in a consistent approach to improve achievement.

### **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

**In Grade 3, the Team found a decrease of 11 points in reading/language arts (61 percent proficient to 50 percent proficient) and a decrease of 29 points in mathematics (74 percent proficient to 35 percent proficient) from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013. In Grades 4 and 5, the WESTEST2 scores improved. In Grade 4, reading/language arts scores increased 29 points (23 percent proficient to 52 percent proficient) and mathematics scores increased 12 points (45 percent proficient to 57 percent proficient). Grade 5 reading/language arts scores increased 1 point (29 percent proficient to 30 percent proficient) and mathematics scores increased 7 points (33 percent proficient to 40 percent proficient) from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013.**

### **Education Performance Audit Summary**

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