



FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

WELCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MCDOWELL COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

AUGUST 2014

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Welch Elementary School in McDowell County was conducted February 27, 2013.

A Follow-Up Education Performance Audit was conducted April 17, 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

- 7.1.2. 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 Grade 3 teacher did not challenge students. Students were off task and not redirected in a timely manner. A student was sleeping for an extended amount of time. Instructional strategies did not vary during the observation period and student attention began to wane.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The teacher was transferred to a different position working in the computer laboratory utilizing WV Writes and 4 Square Writing Method to teach writing.

The entire staff at Welch Elementary School had extensive professional development this year to enhance their teaching skills. Professional development sessions included Cooperative Learning Strategies, Data Analysis, and APL Strategies. In addition, embedded professional development was provided in the Everyday Math process.

The Team conducted classroom observations and verified all teachers were effectively using a variety of instructional activities and all students were engaged in the lessons.

- 7.1.13. Instructional day. Priority is given to teaching and learning, and classroom instructional time is protected from interruption. An instructional day is provided that includes a minimum of 315 minutes for kindergarten and grades 1 through 4; 330 minutes for grades 5 through 8; and 345 minutes for grades 9 through 12. The county board submits a school calendar with a minimum 180 instructional days. (W. Va. Code §18-5-45; Policy 2510)**

Grades 3 and 5 did not have the required number of instructional minutes, as indicated by the teachers' classroom schedule. Grade 3 had 15 minutes per day for "Data Notebooks", which teachers and students stated that the time was used to get ready for the end of the day departure. This time was not counted as instructional time.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. Students maintained personal data notebooks, but time in the instructional schedule was no longer allotted for this work. *The Five Minute Song* was played over the public address system five minutes at the end of the day and used to get students packed up and ready to go home. A review of the teachers' classroom schedules showed all schedules included the required daily instructional time.

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 Welch 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.

The principal was in her second year at the school and had shown great organization and knowledge of the needs of the school and students. High quality professional development had been integrated to address areas of weakness. Teachers indicated that they believed that the professional development provided had greatly increased the quality of teaching in the building. Team members observed high quality instruction in a majority of the classes and high expectations were evident in most situations. The dramatic decline in achievement in the special education (SE) and the racial/ethnicity black (B) subgroups in reading/language arts was alarming. A strong focus of assistance must be provided in these areas.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The principal was knowledgeable of the school's needs and skilled in working with teachers to provide effective instructional strategies and learning opportunities for students. Professional development opportunities were provided and most of the staff took advantage of those opportunities to improve their instruction. Effective instruction was taking place throughout the school. The school was unable to fill a special education teaching position during the past two years and substitute teachers were in this position. The school was able to fill the position with a certified special education teacher this year (2013-2014). The principal expressed the hope the certified teacher will have a positive effect on reading/language arts and mathematics scores for students in the special education subgroup.

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 Welch 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.**

Under the leadership of the principal, the Team believed that Welch Elementary School has the capacity to correct the deficiencies found. The principal must remain vigilant in classroom observations and curriculum delivery and provide assistance and materials for the teachers to deliver high quality instruction.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The deficiencies found in the Office of Education Performance Audit Report had been corrected by the school principal and staff. The principal remained active in monitoring instruction and providing assistance when needed. High quality instruction continued in Welch Elementary School.

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.

Welch Elementary School (Grades Pre-K – 5)

This site did not have 11 usable acres and was not large enough for future expansion. The school was not removed from hazards and undesirable noise and traffic. Playgrounds were not located away from the main road. The media center was not adequate in size and lacked most of the resources specified. A dedicated art and music room was available, but did not have the equipment or materials specified. The gymnasium was located next to the media center and lacked mechanical ventilation. There were stained ceiling tile throughout the facility. Carbon dioxide levels were elevated in several classrooms due to improper thermostat control settings.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The facility issues remained as identified in the Initial 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.

The administration and staff of Welch Elementary School had conducted excellent data analysis and was working to implement programs and practices to address areas of weakness based on the data. Assistance must continue to be solicited from county and State educational personnel to assist in this endeavor.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

Welch Elementary School continued to receive support from the McDowell County Central Office staff, West Virginia Department of Education, and RESA 1. The staff participated in numerous activities presented by McDowell County School System, attended the school improvement conferences offered by the West Virginia Department of Education, and participated in the teachers' academy and Ruby Payne Training offered by the West Virginia Center for Professional Development.

The staff analyzed student data from the benchmarking tests and other assessments and prepared strategies to target the weaknesses in student learning.

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.