



FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

SOUTHSIDE K-8 SCHOOL

MCDOWELL COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

AUGUST 2014

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Southside K-8 School in McDowell County was conducted January 30, 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. 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 Grade 6 mathematics teacher did not exhibit high expectations for all students. When the Team member entered the classroom the teacher was seated at the teacher's desk and students were not engaged in any educational activity. The beginning bell ringer activity began at 1:32 p.m., although, the schedule provided to the Team indicated that the class was to begin at 1:20 p.m. While this was one period of one day, the Team believed that this behavior on the day of an OEPA audit was indicative of regular occurrences. All students must be actively engaged in high quality educational activities throughout the entire class period every day.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. The Southside K-8 School staff was provided numerous professional development sessions on classroom management, varying instructional activities, effective instructional strategies, collaborative learning strategies, team building, etc. The principal reorganized instructional assignments in the upper grades which provided a departmental configuration. The Team observed classrooms and found effective instruction with high student engagement. The Team specifically observed the teacher cited in the initial audit and noted effective instructional strategies and students fully engaged in the activities.

RECOMMENDATION

7.1.12. Multicultural activities. When asked about a school Multicultural Plan, a majority of teachers were not aware of the plan or what was contained in the plan. Many teachers stated that they used the textbook to deliver multicultural activities. The Team recommended that the school have a plan to expose students to cultures outside McDowell County, West Virginia and the United States. The Team recommended that teachers be made aware of the components of a multicultural program and that a wider variety of multicultural activities be implemented at the school.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

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 Southside K-8 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.

Southside K-8 School has received a great deal of high quality professional development from a variety of sources, including in-house, the McDowell County Central Office, RESA 1, the West Virginia Center for Professional Development, and the West Virginia Department of Education. The staff at the school had embraced the need for change and has actively embedded this professional development into instruction to bring about positive changes in student achievement. While student achievement had declined in five of the eight reporting subgroups in mathematics and reading/language arts since the 2010 WESTEST assessment, the staff members articulated that they were implementing the professional development and held high expectations for themselves and the students. A possible hindrance to improved achievement is the high percentage of teacher turnover. The principal reported a 25 percent turnover of staff in the past year. Stability in teaching positions would greatly aid in the overall school atmosphere.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

High quality professional development continued for the Southside K-8 School staff. Embedded professional development was being effectively implemented in classrooms. Good instruction was occurring and student achievement should show improvements this year. High teacher turnover continued to be a problem with 20 percent turnover the past year. The school filled some positions with long-term substitute teachers as fully certified teachers could not be found.

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 Southside K-8 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.**

Southside K-8 School has been provided the resources to improve student and school performance. The school has failed to develop the capacity to improve student and school performance.

The OEPA Team reported an organized principal and teachers that had students-on-task and involved in the learning process. Professional development and training were abundant and seemingly of high quality. Yet the school has declined dramatically in WESTEST2 percent proficiency from the 2009 WESTEST to the 2010 assessment and remained near the 2010 proficient level during the 2011 and 2012 testing cycles. It is troubling that the school has not shown progress in the past three years of WESTEST assessment.

The OEPA is hopeful that the current superintendent of the McDowell County School System, with his demonstrated student-center approach, can compel the school to show progress. It is further hoped that the staff will be stabilized and translate into increased student achievement on the 2013 WESTEST2.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The school continued to provide effective classroom instruction and the students were engaged in the instruction. Embedded professional development designed to improve instruction through engaging students and using the most effective teaching strategies was provided by outside consultants (trainers). The staff was hopeful efforts will result in increased student achievement on the State assessment this year.

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.

Southside K - 8 (Grades K – 8)

This school was very clean and well maintained by the custodian staff. Painting has improved the aesthetics of the common areas of the halls and gymnasium. The school location and site did not have 11 usable acres. The site was not large enough for future expansion. The site was not well drained and water was ponding in the playground area. The site was not suitable for special instruction needs. The site did not have adequate parking for staff, visitors, and individuals with disabilities. The playgrounds were not well equipped and appropriate for the age level. Most of these issues will be resolved once the abandoned high school structure is removed and the land is converted to usable land for the Southside K-8 School.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

Facility conditions had not changed. The county continued to work through issues that need to be resolved before the old high school structure could be removed.

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 staff must remain vigilant in student achievement and continue to monitor individual and classroom data and adjust the curriculum delivery accordingly. The Team observed high quality data analysis and the staff was intimately aware of the curriculum needs based on the data. This awareness, positive staff attitudes, and high quality instruction observed are expected to lead to increased student achievement.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

The principal and staff continued efforts to provide high quality engaging instruction to motivate student learning. Students were actively involved in the learning process. Hopefully these efforts will be realized through improved student achievement.

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.