

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



DRAFT EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT FOR ELKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

RANDOLPH COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

NOVEMBER 2004

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An announced Education Performance Audit of Elkins Middle School in Randolph County was conducted on October 5, 2004. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the review was to investigate the reasons for performance and progress that are persistently below standard and to make recommendations to the school and school system, as appropriate, and to the West Virginia Board of Education on such measures as it considers necessary to improve performance and progress to meet the standard.

The Education Performance Audit Team reviewed the Unified School Improvement Plan, interviewed school personnel and school system administrators, observed classrooms, and examined school records. The review was limited in scope and concentrated on the subgroups that failed to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM

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

West Virginia Department of Education Team Leader – Judy Robertson, Coordinator, Office of Special Education

TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
Mike Boyd	Director of Secondary Education	Wood County Board of Education
Bill Chapman	Principal	Spencer Middle School Roane County
Tom Garrett	Principal	Polk Creek Elementary Lewis County
Sharon Harsh	Assistant Superintendent	Monongalia County Board of Education
Jeannie Montgomery	Special Education Teacher	Spencer Middle School Roane County
Joe Oliverio	Assistant Principal	Williamstown Elementary Wood County

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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

75-401 ELKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL – Needs Improvement

RANDOLPH COUNTY

Grades 06 - 08
Enrollment 788

GROUP	Number Enrolled for FAY	Number Enrolled on April 20	Number Tested	Participation Rate	Percent Proficient	Met Part. Rate Standard	Met Assessment Standard	Met Subgroup Standard
MATHEMATICS								
All	705	737	733	99.46	60.73	Yes	Yes	✓
White	696	724	721	99.59	60.95	Yes	Yes	✓
Black						NA	NA	NA
Hispanic						NA	NA	NA
Indian						NA	NA	NA
Asian						NA	NA	NA
Low SES	388	407	404	99.26	51.03	Yes	No	✗
Spec. Ed.	122	127	127	100.00	22.95	Yes	No	✗
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
READING/LANGUAGE ARTS								
All	705	737	732	99.32	79.05	Yes	Yes	✓
White	696	724	720	99.45	79.22	Yes	Yes	✓
Black						NA	NA	NA
Hispanic						NA	NA	NA
Indian						NA	NA	NA
Asian						NA	NA	NA
Low SES	388	407	403	99.02	70.38	Yes	Confidence Interval	✓
Spec. Ed.	122	127	127	100.00	36.88	Yes	No	✗
LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Passed

ATTENDANCE RATE = 92.8%

AYP Information by Class

MATHEMATICS

Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished
06	270	263	268	262	99.26	11.83	32.06	41.22	12.60	2.29
07	244	237	244	237	100.00	11.39	26.58	41.77	17.72	2.53
08	223	205	221	204	99.10	8.82	25.98	45.10	16.18	3.92

READING

Class	Tested Enr.	FAY Enr.	Tested	FAY Tested	Part. Rate	Novice	Below Mastery	Mastery	Above Mastery	Distinguished
06	270	263	268	262	99.26	4.58	15.27	43.51	26.34	10.31
07	244	237	244	237	100.00	2.95	20.25	43.04	22.78	10.97
08	223	205	220	203	98.65	3.45	16.26	40.89	29.56	9.85

Other Relevant Performance Data

Writing Assessment

Grade 7

4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	N
1%	2%	10%	12%	52%	13%	5%	4%

Note: Seventy-six percent (76%) of the students scored at or above 2.0 on the Statewide Writing Assessment.

Physical Assessment – Presidential Physical Fitness Test

Percentage of Students	School Year
43%	2003-04
42.7%	2002-03
48.3%	2001-02

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Below Standard

5.1.1. Achievement

Elkins Middle School failed to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) in one or more subgroups designated in 5.1.1. Achievement. Two subgroups designated in 5.1.1 Achievement, included: (SES) economically disadvantaged and (SE) special education students. In accordance with Section 9.5 of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2320, *A Process for Improving Education: Performance Based Accreditation System*, the West Virginia Board of Education issued the school Temporary Accreditation status at the September 10, 2004 State Board meeting.

The Team determined that the Unified School Improvement Plan (USIP) had been revised to address the deficiencies in 5.1.1 Achievement.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT

INITIATIVES FOR ACHIEVING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Education Performance Audit Team reported that Elkins Middle School had undertaken initiatives for achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP). The prominent initiatives and activities included the following.

- 6.1.2. High expectations.** Teachers volunteered to serve as Team Coordinators and developed student teams during the summer. This was a worthwhile endeavor and a strong indicator of the high expectations of these teachers.
- 6.1.6. Instruction in writing.** A concentrated effort was being put forth in the writing curriculum. Teachers had been provided training and support to implement a schoolwide writing program. Examples included: Two-column note taking; standardized rubric; graphic organizers, etc. Seventy-six percent (76%) of Grade 7 students scored at or above 2.0 on the Statewide Writing Assessment during the 2003-04 school year.
- 6.2.3. Lesson plans and principal feedback.** Common teacher planning time was being used for staff collaboration and continuous school improvement. This time was being utilized for effective planning of instructional strategies and communication among the team. Core teachers had a 90-minute block in which to plan that included 45 minutes for team planning and 45 minutes for individual planning.
- 6.2.4. Data analysis.** Benchmark tests were used which assisted staff in analyzing progress towards improving students' achievement on the WESTEST. Students and staff were aware of and fully utilized the "I Know" website (IKnow.com).
- 6.7.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations.** The Team commended the teachers and administration for their visibility in hallways and the clear school rules, procedures, and expectations. Student behavior was excellent and this practice also provided an excellent vehicle for communication among the staff members. Educators interacted with students in a positive, considerate, and respectful manner. Students responded

likewise. Character education was an observable component of the school environment.

- 6.8.1. Leadership.** The principal provided excellent leadership for the school. The staff stated that the principal is an excellent leader, is well respected, and is willing to assist them.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

Necessary to Improve Performance and Progress to Meet the Standard (5.1.1 Achievement – SES/SE)

6.1. Curriculum

- 6.1.1. Curriculum based on content standards and objectives. The curriculum is based on the content standards and objectives approved by the West Virginia Board of Education. (Policy 2510; Policy 2520)**

Given the limitations imposed by the Art Room and lack of materials, the teacher could not deliver all the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). Art instruction concentrated on two-dimensional art projects. According to the teacher, little or no three-dimensional work was able to be done with the exception of some papier-mâché. Instruction in sculpture was limited. When asked about resources, the teacher indicated receiving \$125 for materials.

Instruction in science to meet the 50 percent investigation, active inquiry, and experimentation was limited by a lack of a science laboratory and materials and equipment.

- 6.1.2. 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 education opportunities including reteaching, enrichment, and acceleration. (Policy 2510)**

The Team observed a teacher working on Alternate Assessment paperwork the entire day and verified this as the daily schedule. The teacher stated the aides in the classroom were responsible for delivering the instruction.

The Team observed a special education teacher assigning students sustained silent reading (SSR) the entire day. The teacher reported that this occurs one day a month. Central office staff indicated that this type of reading activity was recommended to occur only 15 minutes per session. In consideration of the special education subgroup failing to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), curricular and instructional practices must be utilized to assure the best practices for achievement of all students.

6.4. Regulatory Agency Reviews

- 6.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews. Determine during on-site reviews and include in reports whether required reviews and inspections have been conducted by the appropriate agencies, including, but not limited to, the State Fire Marshal, the Health Department, the School Building Authority, and the responsible divisions within the West Virginia Department of Education, and whether noted deficiencies have been or are in the process of being corrected. The Office of**

Education Performance Audits may not conduct a duplicate review or inspection nor mandate more stringent compliance measures. W.Va. Code §§18-9B-9, 10, 11, 18-4-10, and 18-5A-5; Policy 1224.1; Policy 8100; W.Va. Code §18-5-9; Policy 6200; Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 §104.22 and §1.4.23; Policy 4334; Policy 4336)

The Team reviewed required regulatory agency review reports to determine whether required reviews and inspections had been conducted by the appropriate agencies and whether noted deficiencies have been or are in the process of being corrected. The Team reported the following deficiencies remained from other agency reviews.

1. The Bureau of Risk and Management made several recommendations for the school. The county staff advised the school personnel to remedy the deficiencies and no plan for improvement of these deficiencies was presented.
2. The State Fire Marshal cited Elkins Middle School for having fire doors propped open. The Team observed that fire doors were propped open.

6.6. Personnel

6.6.2. Licensure. Professional educators and other professional employees required to be licensed under West Virginia Board of Education policy are licensed for their assignments including employees engaged in extracurricular activities. (W.Va. Code §18A-3-2; Policy 5202)

The Team reported the following personnel licensure issues.

1. One non-professional coach did not have the proper paperwork on file.
2. One special education teacher reported that he had not signed the collaborative agreement with the regular education teacher.

6.6.3. Evaluation. The county board adopts and implements an evaluation policy for professional and service personnel that is in accordance with W.Va. Code, West Virginia Board of Education policy, and county policy. (W.Va. Code §18A-2-12; Policy 5310; Policy 5314)

Policy 5310 needed to be followed. The principal's evaluation from 2003-2004 only had one goal. The two Assistant Principals' evaluations only had one goal and they had not met with the principal to establish goals for the 2004-2005 school term. The most current date of evaluation for the guidance counselor was 2001-2002. Several staff members were unaware of the evaluation process and the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.2. High expectations. Some staff members were not delivering instruction to actively engage students in the learning process. The Team recommended that the administration explore staff development opportunities to assist these teachers with strategies to deliver instruction to economically disadvantaged (SES), special education (SE), and low motivated students.

- 6.1.3. Learning environment.** The learning environment was not attractive and somewhat unkempt. Examples included: First floor walls were dingy and dirty; trash was scattered throughout the facilities, including under and around the shrubs outside; trees needed pruning; and some instructional areas were cluttered. The Team recommended that attention be given to the general maintenance of the building and that trash be regularly removed from classrooms and the outside area to improve the teaching and learning environment. Other areas that impact the learning environment are in Section 17.1.
- 6.7.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations.** There was no system for two-way communication from the classrooms to the office. While the office could communicate to the classrooms, classroom teachers were unable to contact the office. This lack of classroom teachers' ability to contact the office in the event of an emergency presented safety concerns for students and staff. The Team recommended that two-way communication be installed. Additionally, a lock-down situation would present a challenge for the total school, especially the modular classrooms.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS & PRACTICES

6.1.2. High expectations.

Title: Positive Behavior Support

Description of Program

The Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program was designed to provide a positive atmosphere and climate for teaching and learning. The school staff developed a set of expected behaviors for students and taught them to the student body. A rewards program for students who exhibit and reflect the behaviors outlined in the program is an important program component. Bonus bucks are offered for positive behavior, which students can use in the Bonus Buck Store to purchase a variety of products. Team rewards for various goals are offered at the end of each grading period for students who have successfully participated in the PBS program. Individual incentives are offered for students who improve their grade point average (GPA) and/or reduce their discipline referrals.

Data collected from the PBS Program are reviewed and used to determine how teachers can reduce the number of times students are out of class and off task. Each year staff analyzes the data and amends the program to decrease the number of times students are absent from instructional time.

Summary of Results

The PBS program has been successful in decreasing lost student instructional time. Approximately 37 percent reduction in the number of discipline referrals has been achieved since the program's inception in 2001-2002 as noted in the chart below. With further attention dedicated to amending the program, the school's goal is to decrease the number of referrals to approximately 900-925 for the 2004-2005 school year. Staff is currently working with West Virginia University to develop a plan of action for dealing with the more severe discipline cases. This group comprises approximately five percent of the student body.

School Year	Number of Office Referrals
2003-04	1014
2002-03	1079
2001-02	1679

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EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS & PRACTICES

6.7.2. Policy implementation.

Title: Hi-Y and Shadow

Description of Program

Elkins Middle School Hi-Y is a school and community service organization. Members must maintain a 2.3 grade point average (GPA) and present unquestionable behavior while at school or representing the school. Members of the Hi-Y are encouraged to apply to be a Shadow member. Shadows must maintain a 3.0 GPA, contribute time to service projects, and exhibit superior conduct.

Shadow students implement a transition program for Elkins Middle School's six feeder schools. Teams of five to eight students visit the elementary schools and talk to the small groups of Grade 5 students about the middle school and answer questions that the students may ask. Later the Grade 5 students visit Elkins Middle School and are assigned a Shadow Kid for lunch and a school tour. Shadows are available the first day of school to help new students open lockers and find their way.

Summary of Results

This program has been successful in assisting new students adapt to Elkins Middle School. The program was selected for presentation at the 2003 Southern Regional Education Board Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

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EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS & PRACTICES

6.8.1. Leadership.

Title: Faculty Senate Budget Request

Description of Program

Each year when Elkins Middle School receives Faculty Senate funding, the budget is set through an established series of steps. First, the Faculty Senate votes to allocate the funding developed per teacher. Traditionally, the vote allocates \$100.00 to spend at the teacher's discretion and \$100.00 is contributed to a group fund; however, each year a new vote is taken. The group fund is used to purchase more expensive items based upon students' needs. These items are requested on a form developed by the Faculty Senate Finance Committee. The Finance Committee reviews the requests and approves them based on need and criteria established by the Faculty Senate.

After careful review by the Finance Committee, the budget is presented to the Faculty Senate for approval. For example, approved requests have included: A magazine index for the library, equipment for the science department, computers for classrooms, etc.

Summary of Results

Having request forms and the requests reviewed for specific criteria by the Finance Committee (representatives from each team) to be approved by the Faculty Senate makes the budget process efficient and equitable. Each teacher, each team, and each department has the opportunity to request items that would benefit the Elkins Middle School students.

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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.

None identified.

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 Elkins Middle School in achieving capacity, the following resources are recommended.

HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS	RECOMMENDED RESOURCES
6.1.1. Curriculum based on content standards and objectives.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.1.2. High expectations.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Instructional Services (304) 558-7805
6.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of School Facilities (304) 558-2711
6.6.2. Licensure.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Professional Preparation (304) 558-7842
6.6.3. Evaluation.	West Virginia Department of Education Office of Human Resources (304) 558-3401 Center for Professional Development (304) 558-0539 800-982-7348

- 17.1. Capacity building is a process for targeting resources strategically to improve the teaching and learning process. School and county Unified 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 determined that Elkins Middle School and Randolph County have the capacity to correct the identified deficiencies.

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.

17.1. 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 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, Elkins Middle School was below standard in the areas identified.

- 17.1.1. School location.** The school side was not 11 acres + 1 acre for each 100 students over 600. Sidewalks were not adequate with designated crosswalks, curb cuts, and correct slope.
- 17.1.2. Administrative and Service Facilities.** Administrative office areas did not include adequate reception/waiting areas and administrative personnel were not provided sufficient work space and privacy.
- 17.1.8. Grades 1-12 classrooms.** Academic learning areas did not provide communication technologies. Classrooms were generally small and lacked sufficient space, especially the four classrooms in the modular buildings.
- 17.1.10. Specialized instructional areas.** The Art Room, located in a modular building, lacked sufficient space, equipment, and materials. The facility and lack of materials impeded the delivery of education. The choir class was located on a 12'x36' stage off the cafeteria and was inadequate to meet the educational needs of more than 60 students enrolled in choir.

- 17.1.11. Grades 6-12 science facilities.** The science instructional area lacked sufficient space, equipment, and materials. The lack of science facility, equipment, and materials impeded the delivery of the science curriculum.

GENERAL RESOURCE NEEDS

In addition to the specific facility resource needs identified in the above section, the Team presents the additional general resource needs.

1. The choir class was held on a 12' by 36' stage area off the cafeteria and could not adequately meet the needs of more than 60 students. This could also be considered a safety hazard because of the crowded conditions. The Team recommended that another area be designated for choir.
2. The facility was outdated and lacked the infrastructure for the curricular delivery for the twenty-first century. The four modular classrooms were uncomfortable, unattractive, and generally unsuitable for teaching and learning. Examples included: Classrooms were small, the cover was missing from a heater in Room 113, the exit platforms had four steps without a handrail, grass was not trimmed around the modular units, storage was limited, the step from the landing of the ramps to the modular classrooms also presented a tripping hazard. The ramps for accessibility would be difficult for a person using a wheelchair or ambulatory devices to navigate.

Note: The Team observed that the School Building Authority (SBA) provided funds enabling the addition of a library/media center and enlarging/updating the cafeteria. The library/media center was being thoroughly used during the Team's review and a welcome addition to the school.

3. Through student and teacher interviews the Team found that the climate of the building in the early fall and late spring was too warm to promote a positive learning environment. Plans to air condition the facility were unable to occur due to lack of proper electrical wiring. The Team recommended that a plan be developed to upgrade the wiring and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) capabilities to improve the learning environment.
4. **Safety Issue: The Team observed a breaker box with no door and exposed breakers in Room 105.** The school principal and county superintendent were informed about the breaker box and the Fire Marshal's office has been sent notification of the issue.

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.

Given the achievement levels of students in the economically disadvantaged students (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups, Elkins Middle School and Randolph County must implement curriculum and instruction that will improve students' achievement. Randolph County must actively pursue assistance from RESA VII, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the West Virginia Center for Professional Development to assist with school improvement efforts. Curriculum must be data-driven and instruction must be relevant to the curriculum and provide all students the opportunity to learn.

School Accreditation Status

School	Accreditation Status	Education Performance Audit High Quality Standards	Annual Performance Measures Needing Improvement	Date Certain
75-401 Elkins Middle School	Temporary Accreditation	6.1.1; 6.1.2; 6.4.1; 6.6.2; 6.6.3		5.1.1 (SES/SE) September 1, 2005

Education Performance Audit Summary

The Team identified five (5) high quality standards – necessary to improve performance and progress to meet the 5.1.1 Achievement – for the economically disadvantaged (SES) and special education (SE) subgroups, and presented four (4) recommendations, and three (3) exemplary programs and practices.

Elkins Middle School's Education Performance Audit was limited in scope to the process and performance standards and progress related to student and school performance in the area of deficiency (5.1.1 SES/SE). The Team also conducted a resource evaluation to assess the resource needs of the school. The Team submits this draft report to guide Elkins Middle School in improvement efforts. The school and county have until the next accreditation cycle (September 1, 2005) to correct deficiencies noted in the report.