

OFFICE OF EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDITS



FINAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

WIRT COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL

WIRT COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

NOVEMBER 2004

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits conducted an Education Performance Audit of Wirt County Middle School in Wirt County May 2, 2003.

A Follow-up Education Performance Audit of Wirt County Middle School was conducted September 27, 2004. The purpose of the follow-up 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

NONCOMPLIANCE

5.1 Curriculum

5.1.5. Instruction. Instruction is consistent with the programmatic definitions in Policy 2510. In grades K-3, the benchmarks in reading and mathematics and the accompanying informal assessments to guide and measure student progress in mastering the basic skills must be used when approved by the West Virginia Board of Education. (Policy 2510)

The Team observed the following practices that were inconsistent with appropriate instructional practices identified in Policy 2510.

- Some teachers relied heavily on work sheets.
- An activity from the College program was being taught during a science period. The activity should have been scheduled at another time during the instructional day.
- Students reported regularly having time to complete homework during class time.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

COMPLIANCE. Through interviews with the principal, superintendent, last year's principal, teachers, students, and visits to all classrooms, the Team determined that very few work sheets were being used during the Follow-up Review.

The College program was moved to the rotation period and was offered as a mini-class.

During visits to all classrooms and interviews with teachers and students, the Team determined that very little or no homework was done during class time. In some classes students may have a few minutes at the end of the period to get started on their homework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.4. Learning environment. The Team observed few examples of student work and students reported few recognition programs. Areas of the building were cluttered. The entrance landscaping was over grown with weeds and tools and empty coffee cans were propped by the front door. Debris was stacked by the front drive. The Team recommended the following strategies to foster a more positive learning environment.

- Increased student recognition for academic performance.

- Cluttered areas cleaned and organized to provide an inviting entrance and well-maintained campus.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. The entrance to the school was attractive and inviting. The school principal provided information on several different ways student academic performance was being recognized.

5.1.8. Library/educational technology access and technology application. The Team observed that some teachers were integrating technology across the curriculum and providing students with opportunities to apply technology as a tool for learning, processing, and communicating information. The Team recommended that the county provide professional development on integrating technology across the curriculum for the teachers who do not provide students regular access to technological tools.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. Several staff development programs on integrating technology into the curriculum had been provided.

5.1.14. Multicultural education. The Team observed evidence of several outstanding multicultural activities. However, students would benefit from a coordinated approach to multicultural education instruction that is appropriate for programmatic levels and implemented across the curriculum.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. The multicultural activities had been compiled into a guide to be used in the Advisor/Advisee program along with a Character Counts program and a series of videos on violence.

5.10.2. Excellence in job performance. The Team recommended that processes be implemented to recognize teachers for excellence in teaching.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED. The county participated in the Teacher of the Year Program; the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) developed a teacher recognition program; the school had a bulletin board reserved to display teachers who show excellence in their work, etc.

5.11.1. School rules, procedures, and expectations. Students reported that rules were not consistently enforced across classes. The Team recommended that the school staff heighten expectations for a disciplined learning environment and assure rules are applied fairly and equitably.

FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWED.

BUILDING CAPACITY TO CORRECT DEFICIENCIES

14.3.11. Ensuring that the needed capacity is available from the state and local level to assist the school or school system in achieving the standards and alleviating the deficiencies.

The Team determined that Wirt County Schools and Wirt County Middle School have the capacity to implement the strategies needed to improve student achievement and correct the identified noncompliance.

The school should maintain the focus on improvement already in place, monitor results, and build on positive results. Wirt County must continue to support school improvement at Wirt County Middle School and provide the assistance and monitoring needed to ensure student success.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The school corrected the noncompliance and responded positively to the recommendations of the Education Performance Audit Team. The focus on improvement appeared to be on-going as the school provided excellent opportunities for staff development in such areas as the Reading Conference and sessions to align the curriculum with the Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs).

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 Team was concerned about the Grade 7 and 8 students eating lunch during the fourth lunch period. Classes begin at 8:15 a.m. and the fourth lunch period begins at 12:55 p.m. Students reported being hungry and, when asked if they could change one thing about their school, said that it would be to have an earlier lunch. Reteach classes are provided immediately preceding lunch for those students and the Team realized that students who felt hungry might have difficulty concentrating. The Wirt County Middle School staff should explore options in providing an earlier lunch.

TEAM SUMMARY

The school staff discussed this matter and looked for ways to improve the time for the Grades 7 and 8 students' lunch. The one cafeteria is shared by the middle school and the elementary school. Each school needs two lunch periods to feed their student bodies. The first lunch period starts about 11:00 a.m. and they have been unable to find any way to effectively shorten the times.

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 Team assessed as requiring more efficient application.

The indicators of efficiency listed are intended to guide Wirt County and Wirt County Middle School in providing a thorough and efficient system of education. Indicators of Efficiency shall not be used to affect the approval status of Wirt County or the accreditation status of the school.

6.1.5. Personnel. The school and school district staff should evaluate the benefits of providing fulltime Title I services to Wirt County Middle School. A Title I teacher assigned to the Wirt County Primary Center provided limited tutoring services for low performing students. However, with more than fifty percent (50%) of the students on free or reduced meals and more than sixteen percent (16%) performing in the first quartile, students may benefit from increased Title I services.

FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION

The county has assigned a full time Title I teacher to Grades 5 and 6 at Wirt County Middle School. The county has also employed a Literacy Coach who serves all three schools, including Wirt County Middle School.

SCHOOL SYSTEM APPROVAL & SCHOOL ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Office of Education Performance Audits recommends that the West Virginia Board of Education continue the **Full Approval** status of the Wirt County School System and issue **Full Accreditation** status to Wirt County Middle School.