



EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR

REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICES AGENCIES

RESA 6

January 2012

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

An Education Performance Audit was conducted at RESA 6 in Wheeling, West Virginia on October 31, 2011. The purpose of the on-site review was to review the areas of service provided by the Regional Education Services Agency (RESA) which serves Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio, and Wetzel counties.

West Virginia Board of Education Policy 3233, *Establishment and Operation of Regional Education Service Agencies*, Section 6.4. states, "The Office of Education Performance Audits shall conduct routine on-site reviews of each RESA as directed by the West Virginia Board of Education."

The West Virginia Board of Education specifically directed the Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA) to conduct a review of RESA 6 in accordance with Policy 3233 and Policy 2320, *A Process for Improving Education: Performance Based Accreditation System*.

The Education Performance Team reviewed the RESA's strategic plan; RESA 6 Annual Report (Fiscal Year 2010); the Independent Auditor's Report and Related Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2010, and other documents pertinent to Areas of Service provided by the RESA. The Team interviewed the executive director, assistant director, and staff members and interviewed superintendents in the region served.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Title	School/County
Dr. Gus Penix, Team Chair	Director	Office of Education Performance Audits
Jane Lynch	Director	RESA 8

INTRODUCTION

West Virginia Regional Education Service Agencies

RESA 6 On-site Review

The Areas of Service for Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) are listed on this section of the audit report. The on-site team reported strengths and weaknesses, if any, for each area of service, and advise the RESA of available resources and technical assistance to further enhance the strengths and improve areas of weakness in the summary section.

Area of Service

1. Providing technical assistance to low-performing schools and school systems.

Only two schools were identified by the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and the Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA) as School Improvement schools. RESA 6 Technical Assistance Team, consisting of the Staff Development Director, Special Education Director, and Support for Personalized Learning Specialist (SPL) were interviewed. The Technical Assistance Team shared their efforts to collaborate with identified schools. One school was identified as a Tier 1 school, Valley High School in Wetzel County. RESA 6 provides extensive technical assistance, support, data collection, and professional development to Valley High School. In response to a request from Wetzel County's superintendent, the assistance team provided similar technical assistance for Hundred High School. Action plans identified specific needs of the school, teachers, administrator, and students, as well as address professional development, individualized assistance, or other support. Technical assistance continues in the 2010-2011 school year for both schools. The RESA 6 team meets regularly and shares progress with the Executive Director of RESA 6.

Implementation Standards:

1.1. Assist schools and school systems with specific student, teacher, and school needs evidenced in local school plans.

The RESA 6 Technical Assistance Team was working with 23 additional schools to implement and maintain the schools' efforts to use the information gathered from the Instructional Practices Inventory. The staff development director coordinated

professional development to assure the incorporation of research based strategies in those 23 schools, and any additional schools in the region. The assistance team provided information about their efforts to assist schools in planning, implementing Professional Learning Communities, disaggregating data, quality questioning and the team was working to implement student talks and student-led conferencing. Identified team members were on school strategic planning teams.

1.2. Provide leadership and equitable services for school improvement to schools and school districts to enable every learner to perform at higher levels of achievement.

County schools requesting this school improvement technical assistance and receiving support during the 2010-2011 school year include:

- Wetzel – Paden City High School, Magnolia High School.
- Marshall – Sherrard Middle School.
- Ohio – Warwood School.
- Hancock – Weir High School, Allison Elementary School, and Oak Glen Middle School.

The implementation of the IPI Process continues for the 2011-2012 school year. The county schools implementing IPI this year are:

- Wetzel – Hundred High School, Long Drain School, Valley High School, Paden City High School, Magnolia High School, and New Martinsville School.
- Marshall – Central Elementary School, John Marshall High School, Sherrard Middle School, McNinch Primary, Center McMechen Elementary School, and Glen Dale Elementary School.
- Ohio – Warwood Middle School, Warwood Elementary School, Bridge Street Middle School, and Ritchie Elementary School.
- Hancock – Weir High School, Allison Elementary School, Oak Glen Middle School, Oak Glen High School, Weir Middle School, and Weirton Heights Elementary School.
- Brooke – Hooverson Heights Primary and Brooke High School.

Area of Service

2. Providing high quality, targeted staff development designed to enhance the performance and progress of students.

RESA 6 compiled reports of the staff development sessions offered during the 2010-2011 school year, which totaled 10,181 participants in 696 sessions. The sessions offered were both school specific, supporting school improvement efforts and regional offerings, which included administrators' conferences. The sessions were provided by different departments, such as, Special Education, WVEIS, Staff Development, Tobacco Prevention, Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Public Service offerings for educators. There was evidence of support for West Virginia Department of Education initiatives.

Implementation Standards

2.1. Assists schools and school systems in improving teaching.

- Offered graduate credit courses for school personnel.
- Provided technical assistance for OEPA audit results.
- Utilized data from school culture surveys and IPI to assist developing action plans.
- Provided support for special populations specific to students' needs identified in IEPs.
- Responded to needs identified by the Regional Professional Development Committee, comprised of county chief instructional leaders.
- Provided Life Skills materials and training to counties by request.

2.2. Participation in RESA staff development services enables teachers and administrators to improve instruction and/or job related practices.

- Technical Assistance (TA)/Professional Development sessions as requested by counties.
- Parent/Community Academy.
- Regional support for Principal Institute Attendees.
- Principal Mentor Training.
- Substitute Teacher Training (Policy 5202).
- Technology Embedded Lesson Planning.
 - Acuity.
 - TechSteps.
 - WV Writes with Writing Roadmap.

- Benedum Foundation Grants.
 - Principals.
 - National Board Certification.
- E-Walk Software, Classroom Walk-Throughs.
- New Teacher Monthly Trainings/Book Study.
- Principal Leadership Series (PRI/bi-annually).
- County Requested Trainings.
 - Standard Focused Classrooms.
 - Assessment Strategies.
 - Teach 21 Review.
 - Depth of Knowledge (DOK).
 - Instructional Practice Inventory (IPI).

Area of Service

- 3. Facilitating coordination and cooperation among the county board of education within their respective regions in such areas as cooperative purchasing; sharing of specialized personnel, communications and technology curriculum development; and operation of specialized programs for students with exceptionalities.**

RESA 6 provides coordination for cost effective programs across the counties it serves. All programs are available to all counties in the region.

Implementation Standards

- 3.1. Cooperative and coordinated services are based upon the needs of schools and school districts.**

- Energy management services.
- Substitute employee calling system.
- Policy development specifically, 403B.
- Employs 33 specialized staff to provide special education services, such as, speech therapy, hearing, vision, and Braille teachers, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy (OT/PT) services, autism mentors, interpreters, and audiology testing.
- Regional School Wellness Specialist services.
- Coordination of Regional Fairs.
- Planned and submitted Wetzel County Adult Basic Education (ABE) grant application.

- 3.2. Cooperative and coordinated services are cost-efficient.**

- Medicaid billing.

- Hands on science program, provided science kits for all teachers in RESA 6.
- Multi-county instructional supplies, food, and paper.
- Substitute teacher training.
- Regional training day provided for specialists.
- Analyst hours reviewing information for bid services for county finance directors.

3.3. Cooperative and coordinated services are provided in a timely delivery.

- Coordinate WVEIS services for over 1400 system users, which included: Installations, updates, technical support, and training.
- Computer repair and technology support.
- Public Service training for school districts, including First Aid, CPR, National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- Title III Consortium provided through RESA 6.

Area of Service

4. Installing, maintaining and/or repairing education related technology equipment and software with special attention to state-level basic skills and Student Utilization of Computers in Curriculum for the Enhancement of Scholastic Skills (SUCCESS) programs.

The Technical Services department of RESA 6 provided services to insure that all students and faculty have use of technologies needed for teaching and learning. Some of the services provided included:

- Technology Repair.
- Lower Labor Cost.
- Wholesale Parts Costs.
- Network Support.
- In House Wiring and Configurations.
- Assist County Maintenance Personnel.
- New Computer Purchases.
- Operating System Training.
- Cannibalization and Recycling of Technology Equipment.
- Research and Development.
- Conduit of Information Between Counties.

In the school year ending June 30, 2011, RESA 6 completed 5,491 work orders with the majority of those repairs in two major state projects: Tools for Schools

Elementary (Basic Skills) and Tools for Schools Secondary (SUCCESS). RESA 6 also repaired computers used in the WVEIS, World Schools/Telecommunication Grant, and other state and non-state projects.

Implementation Standards

4.1. Provide timely delivery of services.

RESA 6 maintained a Technology Service Database which generates monthly reports, quarterly reports, and annual reports for submission to the RESA 6 Executive Director, RESA 6 Regional Council, and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE). The database maintains the inventory, billing, and man-hour data which provided for efficiency of services as well as streamlining the service process.

4.2. School and county participation in RESA computer repair services.

Four of the five counties in RESA 6 utilized the computer repair services provided by RESA 6 for all repair needs. Brooke County maintains its own computer repair personnel and has done so for the past 26 years. However, RESA 6 does repair work on WVEIS equipment housed in all five counties including Brooke.

4.3. Provide qualified technicians.

RESA 6 provided six qualified technicians (five technicians and one administrator). All technicians are CompTia A+ Certified. Peer to peer training occurs amongst the technicians which promotes cooperation and sharing of information between counties.

Area of Service

5. Receiving and administering grants under the provisions of federal and/or State law.

RESA 6 applied for and received several grants to provide services and meet needs of the counties it serves. All grants are monitored to assure compliance with federal and/or state law. Individual grants are enumerated in the following subsections.

Implementation Standards

5.1. There is evidence of adequate agency support for receiving and administering grants.

Public Service Training (PST) receives, administers and oversees West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and Hazardous Materials Emergency Procedures (HMEP) grants supporting emergency response and instructor development classes to meet the needs of the region's educational and emergency response organizations

RESA ,6 Director of Programs, manages the Title III Consortium Grant.

- 2010-2011: Nine counties make up the consortium, including: Barbour, Brooke, Gilmer, Grant, Hancock, Lewis, Marshall, Morgan, and Ohio.
- 2011-2012: Seventeen counties make up the consortium, including: Barbour, Brooke, Doddridge, Gilmer, Grant, Hampshire, Hancock, Lewis, Marion, Marshall, Mineral, Morgan, Ohio, Randolph, Taylor, Upshur, and Wetzel.

RESA 6, Director of Special Education, is responsible for the preparation of and submission of a district-specific funding application for improving results grants for the education of students with disabilities to the West Virginia Department of Education. Requirements for personnel, special education services, professional development, materials, supplies and equipment are established for the fiscal year and noted on the funding application. The request is reviewed and grants are awarded accordingly.

5.2. Agency grants are based on needs of schools, districts, and community.

- State grants are developed in alignment with the input of directors and coordinators in collaboration with county representatives to ensure that county/school needs are being met.
- County funded programs are specifically designed to meet the needs of the counties who fund the programs.
- West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) determines the Title III Grant awards for the seventeen consortium counties.

Area of Service

6. Developing and/or implementing any other programs or services as directed by law or by the West Virginia Board of Education.

PST in cooperation with the RESA 6 technology program and the Wheeling Fire Department is developing an emergency response distance learning program with plans for implementation and expansion when pilot programs are successfully completed and evaluated. Equipment has been purchased, bench tested, and

deemed ready to be field tested at designated sites once necessary bandwidth is installed at remote training sites.

The RESA 6, Director of Programs, plans implements and facilitates the required programs. Included are Exemplary Teachers, Principal Mentor Training (Done in conjunction with RESA 7), RESA 6 County Professional Development Council, State Staff Development Council (regulated through Center for Professional Development (CPD), and the West Virginia Board of Education Staff Development Master Plan.

The RESA 6, Director of Special Education prepares and provides professional development, or facilitates the provision of professional development for the introduction and implementation of new programming, policies, guidance documents and current best-practice models for the education of students with disabilities as directed by the Office of Special Programs, the West Virginia Board of Education or the West Virginia Department of Education.

The RESA 6 Tobacco Prevention Specialist provides Life Skills Training and curriculum in all five counties for 6th – 8th grade teachers and students in RESA 6. Life Skills provides the counties with a comprehensive drug education program and skills to make healthy decisions. This curriculum will assist the counties in meeting grant obligations under Title IV Safe and Drug Free requirement of a comprehensive prevention program.

The Regional School Wellness Specialist, with direction from the West Virginia Department of Education, will coordinate the schedule of, and conduct the S3 Surveys for the students, staff and parents of Wetzel County.

Implementation Standards

6.1. There is evidence of adequate agency support for legislative and West Virginia Board of Education mandates and initiatives.

- The RESA 6 WVEIS Operations Center serves 55 schools, five county board of education offices, three transportation offices and five food service operations. Over 1400 RESA 6 system users were assisted with the following services.
 - Help-desk support as needed for WVEIS users.
 - Assistance with mandated state and federal data submissions.
 - Train users and set up WVEIS and WEB access for all users and devices.
 - Work with state WVEIS office to resolve issues and report problems.

- Serve as intermediary consultants between State Department of Education and counties.
 - Assist with SmartFindExpress Substitute Calling System used by four counties.
 - Train County Contacts to develop queries and sequel reports.
 - Write IBM queries for use by the counties as requested.
 - Develop Query Reports, Sequel reports and FormSprint reports used statewide.
 - Support submission for Payroll, Vendor and AP Direct Deposits.
 - Create Vendor Newspaper financial data by excel work-sheet used by all five counties.
 - Assist other RESA 6 departments as requested.
 - Develop RESA 6 webpage for trainings, public information and notices.
 - Submit West Virginia Department of Education data as requested.
 - Support for each county's software training and implementation.
 - Prepare training materials as needed.
 - Prepare and compile RESA-6 Annual Report and Strategic Plan information.
 - Manage router systems that allow access to WVEIS or to the Internet.
 - Maintain communication between counties and facilities.
 - Frontier/Stratuswave for data communication lines--and report trouble tickets as needed.
- RESA 6 Exemplary Teacher Peer Review completes the review process in May each year. Store DVD(s) of the teachers nominated and the DVD(s) are available for viewing at RESA 6. The winning DVD(s) is sent to the WVDE following the peer review.
 - Principal Mentor Training is provided as needed in collaboration with RESA 7.
 - RESA 6 County Professional Development Council meets quarterly to discuss West Virginia Department of Education information and the needs of the counties for professional development.
 - The RESA 6, Director of Programs, attends the State Staff Development Council (regulated through Center for Professional Development) meetings as scheduled.

- The State Staff Development Master Plan is designed during meeting(s) with CPD, RESAs, WVDE and Higher Education Institutions representatives.

6.2. The agency's budget reflects support for the agency goals.

- The general RESA 6 budget primarily funds executive administration, school improvement, and fiscal accountability.
- Federal, State and county grants are designed to fund the basic costs of the positions and allow for adequate discretionary funds for directors and coordinators to fulfill the funding entities' expectations in a professional manner.

6.3. The agency has a system that holds personnel accountable for the support of the agency's goals and services delivery.

- Attend monthly Director's Council meetings.
- Submit monthly reports reflecting impact on targeted goals.
- Submit quarterly reports to the State Director (Technology and Special Education).
- Submit information for the RESA Strategic Plan.
- Submit information for the RESA Annual Report .

6.4. The agency has an approved system of internal controls over financial reporting, compliance with State regulations applicable to RESAs, compliance with fiscal agent, and compliance with requirements of federal assistance administered by the RESAs.

- It appeared that RESA 6 was operating in compliance with West Virginia Board of Education Policy 3233 and was being monitored by both RESA and the Finance Office of the Ohio County School System.
- The RESA 6 financial audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 (most current audit available), did not cite any deficiencies in the internal controls procedures. No other findings were cited in the audit as well.

6.5. The agency has an approved system of internal controls over personnel, compliance with State regulations applicable to RESAs, compliance with fiscal agent, and compliance with requirements of federal assistance administered by the RESAs.

All RESA 6 service and professional personnel were evaluated during the 2010-2011 school year according to guidelines in the RESA Policy Manual.

Capacity Building

Challenges Identified at RESA 6.

1. The current funding cap on the state foundation allowance for RESAs has placed limitations on capacity building, program implementation, and available personnel.
2. RESAs do not have access to county or school WESTEST2 data. Currently, RESAs contact the county superintendent for this information. Immediate access to WESTEST2 data would enable a more efficient response time for providing technical assistance to counties and schools.
3. Due to limits in funding, RESA 6 is unable to expand services without direct cost to counties served. In some personnel areas (e.g., technology related), it is difficult to replace key personnel as they retire/leave due to the ability to offer a competitive wage.
4. RESA 6 is subject to the payment of Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), but does not receive funding to reimburse employee benefits as county boards of education do. The collection of their OPEB liability will severely damage the ability of RESA 6 to provide services for the counties they serve.

Recommendations to Increase Service.

1. Encourage legislators to lift the current funding cap.

Commendation.

RESA 6 initially provided a program called "Hands on Science" through a grant, with the National Science Foundation. The program provided 100 hours of professional development on inquiry-based methods for all participating teachers, providing science instruction. After the grant cycle was completed, RESA 6 continued the program for the five counties it serves. The cost of materials to refurbish kits and the salary of the trainer is supported by RESA 6 counties. Provisions are made to provide training for teachers new to the region. A cadre of trained teachers provides support to county teachers.

Summary Conclusion

RESA 6 appears to be accomplishing its mission and operating within the parameters of laws and policies governing RESAs. The programs and services that are being provided appear to be delivered in an economical and effective manner. All five superintendents in RESA 6 viewed the agency as a valuable aid in providing needed services to its respective counties.