

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

WEST VIRGINIA

*This profile was verified by the staff of the West Virginia Department of Education
in June of 2000. All information is current as of that date.*

Index:

State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

Performance Standards

Reporting Performance Data

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

The **Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition** has been required for all public schools in West Virginia since 1997, before which the CTBS had been administered since 1972. It was not until 1996-97 that a norm-referenced test was required to be administered in all grades; previously it was only administered in grades 3, 6, 9 and 11. Additional norm and criterion-referenced exams provide academic indicators in writing, and readiness for kindergarten and workplace skills. The writing assessment has been in place since 1985, and the other components of the assessment system were incorporated at multiple intervals. The ACT tests and the Metropolitan Readiness Test have been in place since 1996-97.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:*

- Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s):

West Virginia Statewide Assessment Program: Norm-referenced component
Writing Assessment component
Metropolitan Readiness Test component
ACT Explore component
ACT Work Keys component

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested:*

The state administers the Stanford, Ninth Edition in grades 3-11 in the following subjects:

- Reading
- Language
- Spelling
- Study Skills
- Mathematics
- Science, and
- Social Studies.

The abbreviated version of the SAT9 is also administered as subject tests in grades 1 and 2 in reading, math, language and listening. The results from these grades are not, however, used in the state accountability system. Listening is also tested in grades 3 through 8.

The state also administers the following required assessments:

- Metropolitan Readiness Test in Kindergarten to determine readiness for the 1st grade.
- The State Writing Assessment for 4th, 7th and 10th grades
- The American College Testing (ACT) Explore exam in grade 8, covering reading, language arts, science and mathematics
- The ACT Work Keys Component (knowledge of process/workplace skills) for grade 12

- *Norm or Criterion Referenced:*

Norm referenced: SAT9, ACT Explore, Metropolitan Readiness Test
Criterion-referenced: Writing Assessment, ACT Work Keys Component

- *Matrix or Census Testing:* All assessments are census
- *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.*

All assessments are multiple choice except for the writing assessment which involves a writing prompt and an essay response.

- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window):*

Fall: ACT Explore and ACT Work Keys Component
Spring: SAT9, Metropolitan Readiness Test, Writing Assessment

- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*

Although the SAT9 is given in the high school grades, it is not considered a high school exit exam and is only used for school and district accountability.

- *Other Assessments*

The legislature allocated \$250,000 for the development of statewide end-of-course exams. The state is piloting an end-of-course, criterion-referenced assessment in algebra in the spring of 2000. It will be primarily multiple choice (approximately 75%) with some performance items (approximately 25%).

The state also participates in the NAEP in grades 4, 8, and 12.

- *Transitional or Final Assessment System:* Transitional

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state? Probe on:*

- *State Department of Education*
- *Commercial Testing Organization*
- *State teachers and administrators*
- *Assessment Committee*
- *Other*

If a commercial test was used by the state, were modifications or additions made to the assessment to address state requirements or standards? If so, what did they include?

The majority of the assessments used in the state were developed by corporations or other outside companies (SAT9, Metropolitan Readiness Test and the ACT). However, the state has an assessment committee that evaluates assessments when the state issues an RFP and looks for the match between the state's instructional goals and objectives and the items in the assessments. This committee includes multiple stakeholders. The writing assessment was developed by the state with prompts written by language arts teachers and experts in the field. The rubric was also developed internally by state and local teachers and officials. The writing assessment has been in place since 1985.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

There are no requirements for local assessments to be administered by districts or schools.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned? Probe on:*

- *Refining standards*
- *Revamping assessments*
- *Adding components to assessments*

What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?

The ACT Explore and Metropolitan Readiness Test are norm-referenced and are not meant to measure standards. The writing assessment is aligned and the ACT workplace skills test is in partial alignment. The state is developing new criterion-referenced exams to address the state standards, and they hope for these to be in place for 2000-2001, although they are for the most part in the planning stages. The algebra end-of-course assessment will be piloted

this year. According to the state, the Instructional Goals and Objectives (IGOs) in West Virginia are closely aligned with the SAT-9 objectives.

6. *What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The rubric for the writing assessment is matched against the state's instructional goals. The ACT workplace readiness exam assesses approximately 75% of the state's 45 workplace readiness standards, but it was found to be the best match. The ACT Explore and Metropolitan Readiness Test are norm-referenced and are not meant to measure standards; as stated, the IGOs in West Virginia are closely aligned with the SAT-9 objectives.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

The results of the SAT9 are used in the state accountability system. All other tests are used for instructional and curricular purposes and are also reported to the public.

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The state is planning to have criterion-referenced exams for next year in the three grade spans outlined in the IASA of 1994 to fulfill the IASA regulations.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

There have been objections to the use of just one assessment (SAT9) in the accountability system. The state is considering the inclusion of other assessments in the accountability system. The SAT9, along with the other assessments, have created a burden for schools and districts that complain about "over testing."

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

All students are to be included in the statewide assessment system. Special education students may be excused if documented in their IEP or 504 Plan. For those students who do not participate, an alternative form of assessment must be conducted.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

The IEP team or Section 504 committee make decisions as to the accommodations and modifications appropriate for each student. Accommodations fall into four categories:

- Timing/scheduling: multiple test sessions, changing the sequence of tests administered, etc.
- Setting: small group on individual testing, the use of study carrels, noise buffers, etc.
- Presentation: large-print tests, hearing devices, Braille editions, signing, directions read aloud, etc.
- Response: augmented communication devices, oral answers from the student, etc.

Modifications may include:

- Extended time
- Unlimited testing sessions
- Breaks in testing
- Reading test items to a student
- Audio cassette version of a test
- Use of a calculator
- Repeating directions.

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

Spanish language assessments are made available for the SAT9 upon request.

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

For those students who do not participate, an alternative form of assessment has been conducted in the past as regulated. However, the state is piloting an alternative SAT9 assessment for students with special needs.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

There are no set goals, but participation has generally been at around the 95% level.

6. *Are changes planned for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

No additional changes are planned at this time apart from the alternative SAT9 assessment for students with special needs that is being piloted.

Performance Standards

1. *How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

The state has identified the following performance levels for students on the SAT9:

- Basic – 50 percentile (reading, math and language arts)
- Proficient – 70th percentile (reading, math and language arts).

The SAT9 is the only assessment used at the state level for accountability purposes.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

The performance measures and high quality standards provide assurance that schools and county boards are making progress in achieving the education goals of the state of West Virginia:

Goal 1. All children entering the first grade will be ready for the first grade.

Goal 2. All students will have equal education opportunity.

Goal 3. Student performance on national measures of student performance will equal or exceed national averages and the performance of students falling in the lowest quartile will improve by fifty percent.

Goal 4. Ninety percent of ninth graders will graduate from high school.

Goal 5. High school graduates will be fully prepared for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment. The number of high school graduates entering post-secondary education will increase by fifty percent.

Goal 6. All working age adults will be functionally literate.

Annual Performance Measures: Student *achievement, attendance, and dropout data* are reviewed annually to determine the accreditation status of schools and the approval status of county boards. The remaining performance measures may be reviewed *annually or randomly by on-site review teams*.

1. A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the school's students in grades 3 through 11 perform at or above the 3rd quartile in total basic skills; and no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the students perform within the 1st quartile, or the percentage of students performing within the 1st quartile is decreased based on two (2) of the most recent three (3) years.

2. The student attendance rate is at or above 90.5% for the 1997-1998 school year; 91.5% for the 1998-1999 school year; 92.5% for the 1999-2000 school year; and 93% for the 2000-2001 school year and subsequent years.

3. The maximum student dropout rate is six percent (6%) in two (2) of the most recent three (3) years, or in the most recent year for which data are available. The dropout rate is calculated according to the formula of the National Center for Education Statistics.

4. By the year 2003, the graduation rate is at or above ninety percent (90%). The graduation rate, adjusted for migration, will be calculated according to the number of ninth graders who remain in school and graduate.

5. No teacher shall have more than 20 pupils in kindergarten, 25 pupils in grades 1 through 3, and 25 pupils in grades 4 through 6, excluding chorus, band, and orchestra. Exemptions may be granted for no more than 3 additional pupils per teacher for kindergarten and grades 4 through 6, provided that exemption requests to obtain these maximum ratios are waived in schools where the schoolwide pupil-teacher ratio does not exceed 25 to 1 in grades 1-6.
 6. The number of split-grade classrooms does not exceed the number that existed as of January 1, 1983.
 7. All schools are served by a certified principal. There is a full-time principal at each school in which the net enrollment equals or exceeds one hundred seventy students based on the previous year's 2nd month enrollment report. No principal is assigned more than two schools.
 8. Average operating expenditures per pupil are based on the average daily attendance for the current year and are at or above the per pupil allocation for the county provided by the state aid formula.
 9. The percentage of graduates enrolled in college, enrolled in other post-secondary education, or fully employed within one year of graduation is ninety-five percent (95%) or above for the year 2003 graduates excluding those graduates electing to pursue other options.
 10. The level of parent involvement shows an increasing trend during the most recent three (3) years or is at or above sixty percent (60%).
 11. The average combined percentage of parent, teacher, and student satisfaction with the school is at or above seventy-five percent (75%).
 12. The percentage of graduates attaining the minimum level of performance (50th percentile) in reading, mathematics, and language is at or above sixty percent (60%).
 13. The percentage of graduates attaining the warranty level for an advanced workplace position or entry into post-secondary education (70th percentile) in reading, mathematics, and language is at or above thirty-three percent (33%).
 14. The percent of students in grades K-9 passing the Presidential Physical Fitness Test at the national level is forty percent (40%) or above for the 2000-2001 school year or shows an increasing trend during the most recent three (3) years.
3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

Although the first three standards (achievement on the SAT9, attendance and drop-out) are included in determining school levels of performance, they have not been combined to create an index or set a long-term goal for the state.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

All students not excluded due to their IEP or LEP are included in testing and are thereby included in determining performance.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The state is considering moving from 50% to 60% as the minimum percentage of students in grades 3 through 11 to perform at or above the 3rd quartile in total basic skills. Although other plans are being considered, nothing else is concrete at this time.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

Eight schools have been listed under the accountability categories as “seriously impaired” and two districts are in “nonapproval” status (see district accountability section) for the 1999-2000 school year. The state has taken over one of these districts and the other is in the middle of the six-month improvement period and will continue to be monitored.

Reporting Performance Data

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

The **West Virginia Report Cards: State, County and School Data** reports on data from the most recently completed school term on multiple indicators. The reporting system (the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS)) is annually updated.

State Board Policy 7300: School, District and Statewide School Report Cards

Indicators of student performance and other student data will be collected and reported for comparison at the school level with county, state, regional, and national data and include:

- Test results from NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress)
- Test results from the statewide assessment program adopted by the West Virginia Board of Education for grades 3 through 11
- School attendance rates for grades K-12 as a percentage.
- The graduation rate, adjusted for migration, will be calculated according to the number of ninth graders who remain in school and graduate.
- The dropout rate will be calculated according to the formula of the National Center for

Education Statistics.

- The percentage of graduates taking the ACT (American College Testing)
- The ACT Composite score for a school when ten or more students are tested.
- The percentage of graduates taking the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) when ten or more students are tested.
- The percentage of sophomores and percentage of juniors taking the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test)
- The percentages of tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students who took an advanced placement course in high school will be reported.
- The percentages of tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students who took Advanced Placement Examinations (The College Board) will be reported.
- The percentage of twelfth graders taking Advanced Placement Examinations (The College Board) who scored a 3 or higher on the examinations will be reported.
- Indicators based on the relationship among students, personnel, classes, and courses at the school, county, and state levels.
- The average class size will be determined by dividing the number of students in regular education classes in grades 1-12 by the number of classes.
- The percentages of students in grades 9-12 enrolled in foreign language, mathematics, science, English language arts, and social studies courses
- Pupil-teacher ratio will be determined by dividing the total number of pupils by the total number of classroom teachers for grades K-12, excluding librarians and counselors but including head teachers and permanent substitutes, on a FTE basis.
- The number of classrooms for which requests for exceptions to pupil-teacher ratio were made and the number of classrooms for which exceptions were granted.
- The pupil-administrator ratio will be determined by dividing the number of pupils enrolled by the number of administrators on a FTE basis.
- The number of split grade classrooms
- The percentage of students by career cluster as indicated on the individualized student transition plans will be reported for grades 9-12. (Effective 1999-2000)
- Indicators based on expenditures, personnel qualifications, and school size at school, county, and state levels.
- County operating expenditures per pupil will be determined by dividing the total operating expenditures for the entire fiscal year by the tenth-month enrollment.
- County instructional and non-instructional expenditures will be provided in graphic display.
- The percentage of professional staff by each educational level will be reported.
- The average number of years of experience of professional staff will be reported.
- The number of administrators and classroom teachers employed that exceeds the number allowed by the public school support plan and the amount of salary supplements that would be available per state authorized employee if all expenditures for the excess employees were converted to annual salaries for state authorized administrators and classroom teachers will be reported.
- The number of service personnel employed that exceeds the number allowed by the public school support plan and the amount of salary supplements that would be available

per state authorized employee if all expenditures for the excess employees were converted to annual salaries for state authorized service personnel will be reported.

- The grade range of the school and total enrollment for grades K-12 will be reported.

- *Student reports*

Every student receives his/her results on all of the state assessments administered, including the standard reports generated for the SAT9 and ACT. The data is sent to schools by the state, and then schools are responsible for distributing the information to parents in the form of individual student profiles. Parents are required to sign the reports to prove that they have been distributed by the schools, and this is monitored as part of the accountability process.

- *School reports*

There are two versions for the current school data reports. Both provide information on student and personnel characteristics and educational outcomes. The first version is a report card for each individual public school. The SDE prepares the report and sends it to the county school board. The county is then responsible for duplicating and distributing the individual school reports to parents, employees and the community. The county is also responsible for making copies available to the local media.

- *District reports*

The second version is a compilation of the individual student data into the **West Virginia Report Cards: State, County and School Data**. This publication provides the same information as do the school reports, as well as information on the county staff, LBE, and county expenditures. The following indicators are included:

1. Advanced Placement Testing (APT)
 - Percentage of test takers in grades 10, 11 & 12
 - Percentage of grade 12 students with AP scores of 3 or higher
2. American College Testing (ACT)
 - Percentage of test takers among graduates
 - ACT Composite mean score for the state
 - ACT Composite mean score for the nation
3. Attendance rate
4. Average class size
5. Classrooms with split grades
6. Dropout rates
7. Enrollment by subject area for grades 9-12 in E/LA, Foreign language, Math, Science, Social Studies
8. Exemptions to maximum pupil: teacher ratio (requested and granted)
9. Number of graduates
10. Per pupil expenditures
11. Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT): Percentage of test takers in grades 10 & 11
12. Professional staff
 - Average years of experience
 - Level of education by percent
13. Pupil: administrator ratio
14. Pupil: teacher ratio

15. Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

- Percentage of test takers among graduates
- SAT math mean score for the state
- SAT math mean score for the nation
- SAT verbal mean score for the state
- SAT verbal mean score for the nation

16. Student enrollment (PK-12)

17. Testing information (SAT9): Percentile scores for total basic skills in grades 3-11

- *State reports*

The **West Virginia Report Cards: State, County and School Data** reports on data from the most recently completed school term on multiple indicators. The reporting system (the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS)) is annually updated.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

See above. The county is responsible for duplicating and distributing the individual school reports to parents, employees and the community. The county is also responsible for making copies available to the local media.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

Although data is disaggregated at the six levels required in the IASA of 1994, the state does not report the data. The data is available however, by request and reports on assessment results by subgroup may be generated through the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS).

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?*

The SAT9, ACT and Metropolitan assessments date back to 1996-97.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

All students included in testing are reported as a whole, not as individual groups. The state has very few students who have limited proficiency in English.

6. *What are the state’s requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

County and School Improvement Plan Process (State Board Policy 2320)

Each county board develops and submits a Unified County Improvement Plan or an equivalent strategic plan to the West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits by December 31 each year. This plan is based on information from the Unified School Improvement Plans, locally identified needs, and school performance data. The plan specifies strategies for meeting high quality standards and performance measures that have not been met.

Each school develops a Unified School Improvement Plan or an equivalent strategic plan by September 30, and annually submits to the West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits a checklist indicating compliance with the high quality standards and performance measures and specific plans to meet standards and performance measures not met. The plan is based on the identified needs of the students and is developed collaboratively by the local school improvement council, the principal, faculty senate, and school curriculum team.

8. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

The inclusion of criterion-referenced tests (i.e. algebra end-of-course exam) would be included in the reporting structure once administered. There is also discussion of including the ACT and writing assessments in the accountability system, along with the SAT9.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

Again, the state is working on incorporating additional assessments in reporting and accountability.

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

The legislature established the **Office of Educational Performance Audits** in March of 1998 as part of House Bill 4306. The Office of Educational Performance Audits annually reviews information from each district and periodically sends out review teams to make unannounced site visits to see whether schools and districts are performing adequately on the SAT9 and whether they meet the other state requirements. However, the state has a history of “high stakes” accountability and has taken over districts in the past if they were low performing.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?*

State Board Policy 2320: Performance Based Accreditation System

The West Virginia Board of Education is responsible through the system of education

performance audits to assist to ensure that a thorough and efficient system of schools is being provided and to improve *student, school, and school system* performance through an assessment and accountability system that includes:

- The assessment of student, school, and school system performance and the processes in place in schools and school systems that enable student performance.
- The review of school and school system Unified Improvement Plans.
- The periodic, random, unannounced on-site review of school and school system performance and compliance with the standards.

The State Board uses school and school system assessment information from the system of education performance audits to assist it in the following:

- Determining school accreditation and school system approval status.
- Holding schools and school systems accountable for the efficient use of existing resources to meet or exceed the standards.
- Targeting additional resources when necessary to improve performance.

Each school is expected to meet performance measures in the following areas:

- student performance as measured by: a uniform statewide assessment program; school attendance rate; student dropout rate; as well as:
- graduation rate;
- average class size;
- pupil-teacher ratio;
- number of exceptions to that ratio requested by county boards and number granted;
- number of split-grade classrooms;
- percent of graduates who enrolled in college or other post-secondary education and percent of graduates who become fully employed within one year of high school graduation as reported by the graduates on the assessment form attached to their individualized transition plan;
- pupil-administrator ratio;
- parent involvement;
- parent, teacher, and student satisfaction;
- operating expenditure per pupil;
- percent of graduates who attain the minimum level of performance in the basic skills recognized by the State Board and the grade level distribution in which the minimum level of performance was met; and
- effective school system participation with their assigned regional educational service agency.

Responsibilities of the **Office of Education Performance Audits** include the following:

- Assure that all statewide assessments of student performance are secure.
- Administer all accountability measures.
- Determine what capacity may be needed by schools and school systems to meet the standards established by the Legislature and the State Board, and recommend to the school, school system, and State Board, plans to establish those needed capacities.

- Determine whether statewide system deficiencies exist in the capacity to establish and maintain a thorough and efficient system of schools, including the identification of trends and the need for continuing improvements in education, and report those deficiencies and trends to the SBE.
- Determine staff development needs of schools and school systems to meet the standards established by the Legislature and the State Board, and make recommendations to the State Board, the center for professional development, regional education service agencies, higher education governing boards, and county boards.
- Identify exemplary schools and school systems and best practices that improve student, school, and school system performance, and make recommendations to the State Board for recognizing and rewarding exemplary schools and school systems and promoting the use of best practices.

On-Site Review: At the direction of the State Board or by weighted, random selection by the Office of Education Performance Audits, an unannounced on-site review will be conducted by the Office of Education Performance Audits of any school or school system for purposes, including, but not limited to the following:

- Verifying data reported by the school or county board.
- Documenting compliance with policies and laws.
- Evaluating the effectiveness and implementation status of school and school system Unified Improvement Plans.
- Investigating official complaints submitted to the State Board that allege serious impairments in the quality of education in schools or school systems.
- Investigating official complaints submitted to the State Board that allege that a school or county board is in violation of policies or laws under which schools and county boards operate.

Selection of schools and school systems for an on-site review uses a weighted random sample so that those with lower performance indicators and those that have not had a recent on-site review have a greater likelihood of being selected. The teams are composed of an adequate number of persons who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to make an accurate assessment of education programs and who are drawn from a trained cadre established by the Office of Education Performance Audits. The teams are led by a member of the Office of Education Performance Audits staff. The Office will report the findings of the on-site reviews to the West Virginia Board of Education for inclusion in the evaluation and determination of a school's or county Board's accreditation or approval status as applicable.

If, during an on-site review, a school or county board is found to be in noncompliance with one or more standards, the school and county Unified Improvement Plans must be revised and submitted to the West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits within 30 days of receipt of the draft written report. The plans will include objectives, a time line, a plan for evaluation of the success of the improvements, a cost estimate and a date certain for achieving full accreditation and/or full approval status as applicable.

If an acceptable plan is presented to the West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits, the county board and school(s) must implement the plan(s) in accordance with the date certain. If the plan submitted to the West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits is not acceptable, the Director of the office may return the plan for modification or has discretion to modify the plan in consultation with the county board and accept the plan as modified. The on-site review process will include compliance with the high quality standards, but primary emphasis in determining school accreditation and school system approval status will be based on student, school, and school system performance measures.

School Accreditation Status

The State Board annually reviews the information from the system of education performance audits submitted for each school and issues to every school one of the following:

- Full accreditation status,
- Temporary accreditation status,
- Conditional accreditation status, or
- Seriously impaired status.

Full accreditation status is issued to a school when the measure of the school's student and school performance is at a level that meets the annual performance measures and the high quality education standards in this policy.

Temporary accreditation status is issued to a school when the measure of the school's performance is below established standards and performance measures. Whenever a school is issued temporary accreditation status, the county board shall ensure that the school's Unified School Improvement Plan is revised to increase the performance of the school to a full accreditation status level. The revised plan shall include objectives, a time line, a plan for evaluation of the success of the improvements, cost estimates, and a date certain for achieving full accreditation status. The revised Unified School Improvement Plan shall be submitted to the State Board for approval.

Conditional accreditation status is issued to a school when the measure of the school's performance is below established standards and performance measures, but the school's Unified Improvement Plan has been revised to achieve full accreditation status by a date certain, the plan has been approved by the State Board, and the school is meeting the objectives and time line in the revised plan.

Seriously impaired status is issued to a school when the measure(s) of the school's performance is/are below the established performance measures or the State Board determines that one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. The total basic skills score for one or more grade levels in grades 3 through 11 is at or below the 30th percentile in the most recent year for which data are available and one (1) of the two (2) preceding years.
2. The student attendance rate is at or below eighty percent (80%) in the most recent year for which data are available and one (1) of the two (2) preceding years.

3. The student dropout rate is at or above nine percent (9%) in the most recent year for which data are available and one (1) of the two (2) preceding years. The dropout rate is calculated according to the formula of the National Center for Education Statistics.

4. The school falls below the criteria for full accreditation in all three of the following performance measures: 4.1, student achievement; 4.2, student attendance; and 4.3, student dropout.

5. The West Virginia Board of Education may determine a school to be seriously impaired when extraordinary circumstances exist. Extraordinary circumstances are conditions that constitute major impediments to the provision of educational programs and services for students. Extraordinary circumstances shall include the failure of a school on temporary accreditation status to obtain approval of its revised Unified School Improvement Plan within a reasonable time period as defined by the State Board and the failure of a school on conditional accreditation status to meet the objectives and time line in the revised plan or to achieve full accreditation by the date specified in the revised plan. Extraordinary circumstances may also include the following:

- Physical or other abuse of students;
- Inappropriate suspensions and/or expulsions;
- misappropriation of funds;
- misuse of public funds;
- falsification of reports and/or failure to submit required reports;
- violation of W.Va. Code and State Board policies that impacts the provision of an appropriate educational program;
- unhealthy or unsafe conditions for students and/or employees; or
- failure to provide a high quality and equal educational opportunity for students.

Whenever a school is seriously impaired, the West Virginia Board of Education, will appoint a **team of improvement consultants** to make recommendations within sixty days of appointment for correcting the impairment. Upon approval of the recommendations by the West Virginia Board of Education, the recommendations will be made in writing to the county board. If progress in correcting the impairment is not made within six months of receipt of the recommendations, the State Board will place the county board on temporary approval status and provide consultation and assistance to the county board to:

- Improve personnel management,
- Establish more efficient financial management practices,
- Improve instructional programs and rules, or
- Make such other improvements as may be necessary to correct the impairment.

If the school's impairment is not corrected by a date certain set by the State Board, the county board is issued **nonapproval status**. Whenever a school is determined to be seriously impaired and fails to improve its status within one year, any student attending such school may transfer once to the nearest fully accredited school, subject to approval of the fully accredited school and at the expense of the school from which the student transferred.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The State Board annually reviews information submitted for each school system from the

system of education performance audits and issue one of the following approval levels to each county board:

- Full approval,
- Temporary approval,
- Conditional approval, or
- Nonapproval.

Full approval is issued to a county board whose educational system meets or exceeds all of the high quality standards for student, school, and school system performance and processes adopted by the West Virginia Board of Education and whose schools have all been issued full, temporary, or conditional accreditation status.

Temporary approval is issued to a county board whose educational system is below the level required for full approval. Whenever a county board is given temporary approval status, the county board shall revise its Unified County Improvement Plan to increase the performance of the school system to a full approval status level. The revised plan shall include objectives, a time line, a plan for evaluation of the success of the improvements, a cost estimate, and a date certain for achieving full approval. The revised plan shall be submitted to the State Board for approval.

Conditional approval is issued to a county board whose educational system is below the level required for full approval, but whose Unified County Improvement Plan meets the following criteria:

- The plan has been revised to achieve full approval by a date certain,
- The plan has been approved by the State Board, and
- The county board is meeting the objectives and time line specified in the revised plan.

Nonapproval status is issued to a county board which fails to meet the criteria established by the State Board. A school system shall be designated as on nonapproval status when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The county board fails to submit and gain approval of its Unified County Improvement Plan.
- A county board on temporary approval status fails to submit its revised Unified County Improvement Plan within thirty days following written notification of the temporary approval status.
- A county board on conditional approval status fails to meet the objectives and time line of its revised plan.
- A county board on conditional approval status fails to achieve full approval status by the date specified in the revised plan.

The West Virginia Board of Education may issue nonapproval status to a county board when extraordinary circumstances exist. Extraordinary circumstances are conditions that constitute major impediments to the provision of education programs and services for students.

Extraordinary circumstances may include:

- Misappropriation of funds;
- misuse of funds;

- falsification of reports and/or failure to submit required reports;
- violation of W.Va. Code or West Virginia Board of Education policies that impacts the provision of an appropriate educational program;
- unhealthy or unsafe conditions for students and/or employees; or
- failure to provide a high quality and equal educational opportunity for students.

Whenever a county board has more than a casual deficit the county board shall submit a plan to the State Board specifying strategies for eliminating the casual deficit. The State Board shall either approve or reject the plan. Any county board that fails to submit and gain approval for the plan before the end of the fiscal year after a deficit greater than a casual deficit occurred or any county board which fails to comply with an approved plan may be designated as having nonapproval status. Whenever nonapproval status is issued to a school system, the West Virginia Board of Education shall declare a **state of emergency** in the school system by written notification and shall appoint a team of improvement consultants to make recommendations within sixty days of appointment for correcting the emergency. Upon approval of the recommendations by the West Virginia Board of Education, the recommendations shall be made in writing to the county board. If progress in correcting the emergency, as determined by the State Board, is not made within six months of receipt of the recommendations, the State Board shall intervene in the operation of the school system to cause improvements to be made that will provide assurances that a thorough and efficient system of schools will be provided. This intervention may include, but is not limited to:

- limiting the authority of the county superintendent and county board as to the expenditure of funds, the employment and dismissal of personnel, the establishment and operation of the school calendar, the establishment of instructional programs and policies and such other areas as may be designated by the West Virginia Board of Education by rule;
- taking such direct action as may be necessary to correct the emergency; and
- declaring that the office of the county superintendent is vacant.

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

For students to receive a “state warranty” for college or the workplace they must:

- score at the 70th percentile in reading, language arts and mathematics for the college warranty, or
- score at the 50th percentile in reading, language arts and mathematics for the workforce warranty.

There is also a Certificate of Proficiency presented to every student who successfully completes high school.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

Schools and districts must meet absolute targets in achievement, attendance and drop-out in the state accountability system.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

All students participating in the assessment are included in the measure of progress.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The systems of accountability for Title I and non-Title I schools and districts are in alignment and no distinctions are made between the two. Title I and non-Title I schools are treated in the same fashion. All schools and districts are listed in the accreditation categories and judged by the same performance measures. The technical definition of adequate yearly progress, however, is defined only in terms of achievement on the SAT9, and does not include attendance and drop-out rates (see the definition of AYP in the Title I section).

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Subgroup performance is in no way considered in the accountability system.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

There are no charter schools in the state and the private schools are not included under state regulation and are not a part of the accountability system. The state is developing new voluntary participation policies for private schools.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The legislature has passed and the governor has signed legislation adding an additional accreditation level of **exemplary** for schools and school systems as the highest level, supplementing those already in place. The specific definition has not, however, been established. The legislation also amended HB 4306 so that the SBE would no longer be required to wait six-months before intervening in a low performing district. The state has further been instructed to develop indicators of efficiency to be added to the performance measures already in place.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

The challenge will be working with the very troubled schools with the lowest levels of performance once the state has addressed the needs of the other schools and districts that have shown improvement.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

See above for “seriously impaired” and “non-approval status” for schools and districts. There is no difference between Title I and non-Title I schools.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

In both the case of the low-performing district and school, it is a state determination.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

Under the direction of the state board, the office of education performance audits receives from the West Virginia education information system staff research and analysis data on the performance of students, schools and school systems. In addition to other duties which may be assigned to it by the state board or by statute, the office of education performance audits works to:

- (1) Assure that all statewide assessments of student performance are secure
- (2) Administer all accountability measures as assigned by the state board, including, but not limited to, processes for the accreditation of schools and the approval of school systems, and recommend to the state board appropriate action, including, but not limited to, accreditation and approval action;
- (3) Determine *what capacity may be needed by schools and school systems to meet the standards* established by the Legislature and the state board, and recommend to the school, school system and state board, plans to establish those needed capacities;
- (4) Determine whether statewide system deficiencies exist in the capacity to establish and maintain a thorough and efficient system of schools, including the identification of trends and the need for continuing improvements in education, and report those deficiencies and trends to the state board;
- (5) Determine staff development needs of schools and school systems to meet the standards established by the Legislature and the state board, and make recommendations to the state board, the center for professional development, regional education service agencies, higher education governing boards and county boards; and
- (6) Identify exemplary schools and school systems and best practices that improve student, school and school system performance, and make recommendations to the state board for recognizing and rewarding exemplary schools and school systems and promoting the use of best practices.

The state board provides information on best practices to county school systems and uses information identified through the assessment and accountability processes to select schools of excellence.

Whenever **nonapproval status is given to a school system** (county district), the SBE declares a state of emergency in the school system and appoints a team of improvement consultants to make recommendations within sixty days of appointment for correcting the emergency.

Upon approval of the recommendations by the state board, the recommendations are made to the county board. If progress in correcting the emergency, as determined by the state board, is not made within six months from the time the county board receives the recommendations, the state board intervenes in the operation of the school system to cause improvements to be made that will provide assurances that a thorough and efficient system of schools will be provided. This intervention may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Limiting the authority of the county superintendent and county board as to the expenditure of funds, the employment and dismissal of personnel, the establishment and operation of the school calendar, the establishment of instructional programs and rules and such other areas as may be designated by the state board by rule;
- taking such direct action as may be necessary to correct the emergency; and
- declaring that the office of the county superintendent is vacant.

When deficiencies are detected through the assessment and accountability processes, the revision and approval of the school and county Unified Improvement Plans is meant to ensure that schools and school systems are efficiently using existing resources to correct the deficiencies. When the State Board determines that schools and school systems do not have the capacity to correct deficiencies, the State Board shall work with the county board to develop or secure the resources necessary to increase the capacity of schools and school systems to meet the standards and, when necessary, seek additional resources in consultation with the Legislature and the Governor.

The State Board then recommends to the appropriate body including, but not limited to, the Legislature, county boards, schools, and communities methods for targeting resources strategically to eliminate deficiencies identified in the assessment and accountability processes by the following:

- Examining reports and Unified Improvement Plans regarding the performance of students, schools, and school systems relative to the standards and identifying the areas in which improvement is needed;
- Determining the areas of weakness that appear to have contributed to the substandard performance of students or the deficiencies of the school or school system;
- Determining the areas of strength that appear to have contributed to exceptional student, school, and school system performance and promoting their emulation throughout the system;
- Requesting technical assistance from the School Building Authority in assessing or designing comprehensive educational facilities plans;
- Recommending priority funding from the School Building Authority based on identified needs;
- Requesting special staff development programs from the Center for Professional Development, higher education, regional education service agencies, and county boards based on identified needs;
- Submitting requests to the Legislature for appropriations to meet the identified needs for improving education;
- Directing county boards to target their funds strategically toward alleviating deficiencies;
- Ensuring that the need for facilities in counties with increased enrollment is appropriately

- reflected and recommended for funding;
- Ensuring that the appropriate person or entity is held accountable for eliminating deficiencies; and
- 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.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

See above. The SBE will appoint a team of improvement consultants to make recommendations within sixty days of appointment for correcting the emergency.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

No, the consequences and interventions are the same for Title I and non-Title I schools and districts in the state.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

If a school and district can show that they have addressed their needs through the unified improvement plan, the state will generally move them up from temporary status to either conditional or full status. However, seriously impaired schools and districts in nonapproval must do more than show improvement to get full accreditation again, and the decision is made at the discretion of the state on a case-by-case basis.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

See above. Unified improvement plans are revised to meet the needs of the school or district as identified by the data.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

No changes have been established at this time as the accountability system has only recently been fully implemented.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

Adequate yearly progress is based solely on the SAT 9 scores.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?

A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the school's students in grades 3 through 11 perform at or above the 3rd quartile in total basic skills; and no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the students perform within the 1st quartile, or the percentage of students performing within the 1st quartile is decreased based on two (2) of the most recent three (3) years.

This definition is transitional as the state is moving towards the use of more criterion-referenced exams and multiple indicators of achievement. The timeframe for a new systems has not been established.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

The process is identical to that of all schools and districts and Title I and non-Title I distinctions are not made. The state determines whether or not a school or district has met the state performance measures.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

Schools are categorized as "seriously impaired" and districts are placed in nonapproval status by the state regardless of their Title I status. The consequences and process for getting out of the lower accreditation levels are also identical under the general state accountability system.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

Title I schools work through the same system of identification and assistance as do other schools identified as low performing. However, the Title I office does tend to focus more specifically on reading and math through the use of subject coordinators. One state Title I Math Coordinator and one Reading Coordinator offer technical assistance to low performing schools. For example, teachers and staff from the 25 lowest performing Title I schools have been offered week-long professional development sessions in reading and math to try to improve student performance.

In addition, the Title I Office also has a loose affiliation of contacts in the state who are willing and able to provide more specific assistance to low performing Title I schools on a more individual basis.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

Along with the general state system described previously, the Title I office provides assistance through the reading and math coordinators and other state consultants and contacts.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

No, waivers have not been a factor in the state.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

This system is transitional as the state is moving towards the use of more criterion-referenced exams and multiple indicators of achievement. The timeframe for a new systems has not been established.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

Yes, there is complete alignment and identical systems.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

Due to the fact that adequate yearly progress is based on SAT9 scores, a norm-referenced measure, the state has been unable to secure approval for this system from the USDOE.

Contact Information

Assessment

Karen Nicholson
Assistant Director
Student Services and Assessment
West Virginia Department of Education
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-2651; fax 558-1613
knichols@access.k12.wv.us

Accountability

Dr. Kenna Seal
Executive Director
Office of Educational Performance Audits
West Virginia Department of Education
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-3788
kseal@access.k12.wv.us

Title I

Suzette Cook
Title I Office
West Virginia Department of Education
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-7817
scook@access.k12.wv.us