

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
and  
**Office of Education Performance Audits Brief**  
for  
**Initial Education Performance Audit Report**  
  
**June 2011**

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**Title: Initial Gilmer County Education Performance Audit Report**

**Background**

West Virginia Code §18-2E-5 provided for on-site reviews of schools and school systems conducted only at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education upon its determination that the performance and progress of the schools or school system are persistently below standard or that other circumstances exists that warrant an on-site review.

An unannounced on-site review (five days in advance) was conducted at the Gilmer County School District May 2-4, 2011.

**Purpose**

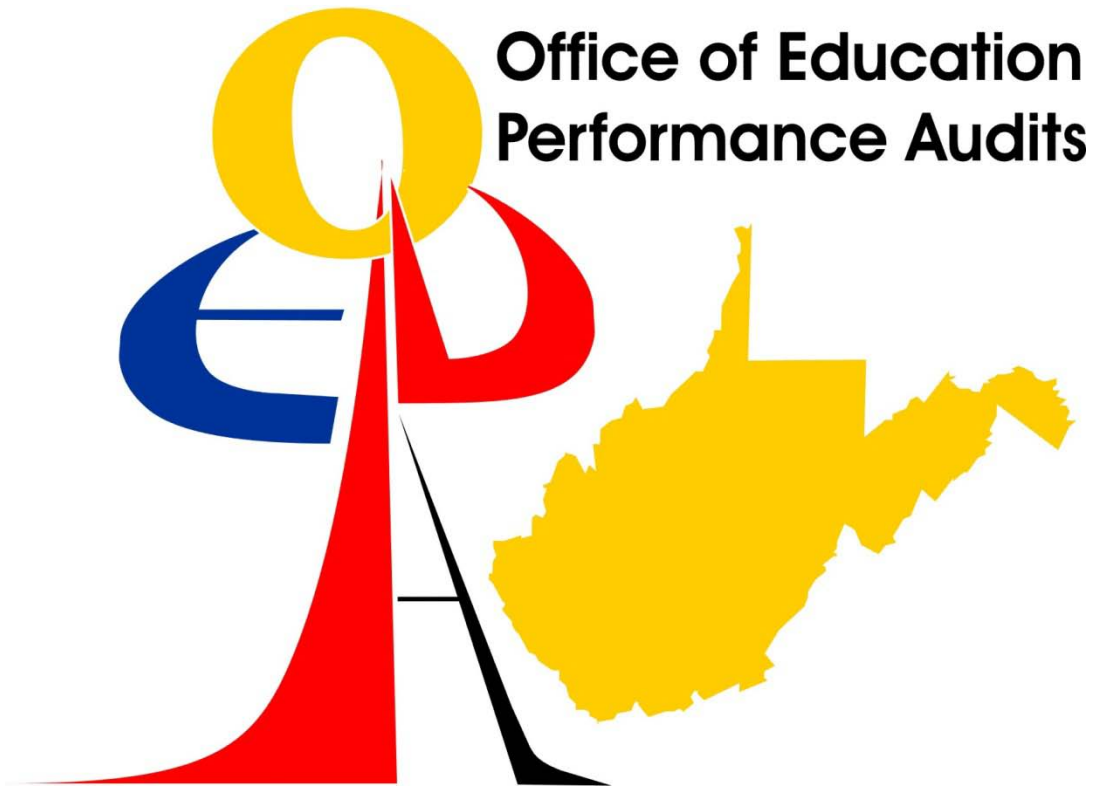
The purpose of the review was to investigate official complaints that alleged the county board was in violation of policies or laws under which schools and county boards operate.

**Provisions**

The OEPA audit of the Gilmer County School System revealed that conditions were present in the school district that prevented a thorough and efficient education system. These conditions are described in the Gilmer County Education Performance Audit Report.

**Impact**

Based upon the performance data and results of the Education Performance Audit, it is recommended to issue the Gilmer County School District the approval listed in report.



**Office of Education  
Performance Audits**

**INITIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR**

**GILMER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**JUNE 2011**

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

*Office of Education Performance Audits*

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## INTRODUCTION

An unannounced Education Performance Audit of the Gilmer County School District was conducted May 2-4, 2011. The review was conducted at the specific direction of the West Virginia Board of Education. The purpose of the review was to investigate official complaints submitted that alleged the county board was in violation of policies or laws under which schools and county boards operate and other existing circumstances that warranted an on-site review. The Team also reviewed district level high-quality standards in accordance with appropriate procedures to make recommendations to the West Virginia Board of Education on such measures as it considers necessary to improve performance and progress to meet the high-quality standards as required by W.Va. Code and West Virginia Board of Education policies.

The Education Performance Audit Team interviewed the Gilmer County Board of Education President and members, school district personnel including the County Superintendent, the Administrative Support Services Director, Treasurer, Special Education/PreSchool Director, Director of Federal Programs/Technology, and other county office and school personnel. The Team examined documents including the Gilmer County Five-Year Strategic Improvement Plan; minutes of meetings of the Gilmer County Board of Education; personnel documents; personnel evaluations; the school system policy manual; regulatory agency reviews, i.e., financial audit, the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP), etc.; and letters, faxes, and materials of interest to the Education Performance Audit.

This report presents the Education Performance Audit Team's findings regarding the Gilmer County School District.

**EDUCATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT TEAM**

Office of Education Performance Audits Team Chair – Dr. Donna Davis, Deputy Director

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
Delores Ranson	Retired Assistant Superintendent	Jackson County Schools	Personnel/Mentors/Hiring
Shawn Hawkins	Teacher Quality Coordinator	Office of Professional Preparation West Virginia Department of Education	Certification
Carroll Staats	Member - County Board of Education	Jackson County Schools	Administrative Practices/Evaluations
Dr. Theodora Cox	University Instructor	Preston County	Leadership
Laura Matheney	Treasurer/Chief School Business Official	Jackson County Schools	Finance
Gary Price	Assistant Superintendent	Marion County Schools	Policies/Policy Implementation
Sterling Beane	Coordinator	Office of Instructional Technology West Virginia Department of Education	Technology Plan & Instructional Technology
Wes Holland	Coordinator, Basic Skill and Success	Office of Instructional Technology West Virginia Department of Education	Technology Plan & Instructional Technology
Michael Pickens	Executive Director	Office of School Facilities West Virginia Department of Education	Facilities
David Bailey	HVAC Technician	Office of School Facilities West Virginia Department of Education	Facilities

## COUNTY PERFORMANCE

### ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

This section presents the Annual Performance Measures for Accountability and related student performance data. It also presents the Education Performance Audit Team's findings.

#### 5.1. ACCOUNTABILITY.

##### 5.1.1. Achievement.

##### Adequate Yearly Progress

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) data for the 2009-2010 school year identified that Gilmer County met adequate yearly progress (AYP). Gilmer County achieved AYP for the last five consecutive years; however, the county did not have a cell size for the special education (SE) subgroup large enough to be included in accountability.

Charts one and three indicated that the 2009-2010 Gilmer County School District student percent proficient in mathematics was higher than the State percent proficient at the elementary and high school levels in all subgroups for AYP. Gilmer County does not have a middle school level; therefore, a district percent proficient was not applicable (NA) for this level. Student assessment performance in reading/language arts (Chart 4) indicated that Gilmer County elementary level students performed lower than the 2009-2010 State percent proficient and Chart 6 indicated that the high school percent proficient was higher than the State.

Chart 1

<b>ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS 2009-2010</b>		
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>District Percent Proficient</b>	<b>State Percent Proficient</b>
All Students (AS)	47.0%	45.4%
White (W)	47.1%	46.0%
Black (B)	NA	33.9%
Special Education (SE)	NA	25.9%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	40.5%	35.3%

Chart 2

<b>MIDDLE MATHEMATICS 2009-2010</b>		
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>District Percent Proficient</b>	<b>State Percent Proficient</b>
All Students (AS)	NA	42.8%
White (W)	NA	43.3%
Black (B)	NA	30.3%
Special Education (SE)	NA	16.2%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	NA	32.5%

Chart 3

<b>HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS 2009-2010</b>		
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>District Percent Proficient</b>	<b>State Percent Proficient</b>
All Students (AS)	48.5%	40.4%
White (W)	49.2%	40.9%
Black (B)	NA	25.7%
Special Education (SE)	NA	11.5%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	43.3%	29.1%

Chart 4

<b>ELEMENTARY READING/LANGUAGE ARTS 2009-2010</b>		
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>District Percent Proficient</b>	<b>State Percent Proficient</b>
All Students (AS)	41.4%	44.0%
White (W)	41.4%	44.5%
Black (B)	NA	33.9%
Special Education (SE)	NA	20.2%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	32.7%	33.1%

Chart 5

<b>MIDDLE READING/LANGUAGE ARTS 2009-2010</b>		
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>District Percent Proficient</b>	<b>State Percent Proficient</b>
All Students (AS)	NA	43.2%
White (W)	NA	43.5%
Black (B)	NA	34.1%
Special Education (SE)	NA	13.1%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	NA	32.2%

Chart 6

<b>HIGH SCHOOL READING/LANGUAGE ARTS 2009-2010</b>		
<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>District Percent Proficient</b>	<b>State Percent Proficient</b>
All Students (AS)	42.8%	35.5%
White (W)	42.9%	35.9%
Black (B)	NA	23.3%
Special Education (SE)	NA	9.5%
Economically Disadvantaged (SES)	39.7%	24.7%

### **SAT/ACT Assessment Results**

Chart 7 shows the Gilmer School District's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) results. The SAT math mean score showed an increase from 2005-2006 to 2008-2009. The SAT reading mean score also increased from 2005-2006 to 2008-2009. The SAT writing score decreased from 2006-2007 to 2008-2009. The percent of test takers decreased during the four year time period. Data did not exist for 2009-2010 due to the small number of test takers.

American College Testing (ACT) trend data showed an increase in the composite score (20.2) from 2005-2006 to (21.5) in 2008-2009, then decreased to (20.8) in 2009-2010. However, the percentage of Gilmer County's students taking the ACT decreased from 67.6 percent in 2005-2006 to 60.0 percent in 2008-2009.

Chart 7

<b>SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST (SAT) - Gilmer County Schools</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
SAT Takers (%)	19.5%	13.3%	12.9%	14.6%	ND
SAT Math Mean Score	464	480	471	495	ND
SAT Reading Score	438	461	457	464	ND
SAT Writing Score	NA	482	495	442	ND
<b>AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING (ACT) - Gilmer County Schools</b>					
ACT Takers (%)	67.6%	53.3%	59.6%	60.0%	NA
ACT Composite	20.2	20.5	21.4	21.5	20.8

ND – No Data reported due to small number of students taking SAT.

NA – (Not Available)

Source: State, County and School Data, 2009-10 West Virginia Report Cards, West Virginia Department of Education.

### ACT EXPLORE Assessment Results

According to the 2010-2011 Grade 8 ACT EXPLORE results in Chart 8, Gilmer County students showed a decline in the composite score as compared to the 2006-2007 results. Five years of trend data showed a decline in all academic areas (Mathematics, Reading, and Science) except English in which the scores remained static.

Chart 8

<b>ACT EXPLORE RESULTS</b>				
<b>Grade 8</b>				
	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
English WV	14.2	14.3	13.9	14.1
English Gilmer	14.7	13.1	14.7	14.7
Mathematics WV	14.5	14.7	14.3	14.6
Mathematics Gilmer	16.3	14.7	14.5	14.9
Reading WV	13.9	13.9	13.6	14.0
Reading Gilmer	14.4	13.6	13.9	14.0
Science WV	15.9	16.0	15.6	15.8
Science Gilmer	16.9	15.8	16.7	15.6
Composite WV	14.8	14.9	14.5	14.8
Composite Gilmer	15.7	14.5	15.1	14.9

### ACT PLAN Assessment Results

Based on the Grade 10 ACT PLAN results in Chart 9, Gilmer County test takers showed a decline (from 2006-2007 to 2010-2011) in the composite score as well as in all academic areas. It is noted, however, that Gilmer County's 2010-2011 results were higher than the State in all academic areas and the composite score.

Chart 9

<b>ACT PLAN RESULTS</b>					
<b>Grade 10</b>					
	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
English WV	16.7	16.3	16.3	16.3	16.3
English Gilmer	18.0	15.4	15.7	15.8	16.7
Mathematics WV	16.6	16.3	16.3	16.2	16.2
Mathematics Gilmer	18.4	16.2	17.3	16.2	16.9
Reading WV	16.5	16.5	15.7	16.1	16.1
Reading Gilmer	17.9	15.9	15.5	16.1	16.9
Science WV	17.7	17.5	17.1	17.3	17.3
Science Gilmer	18.9	16.9	17.0	17.1	17.6
Composite WV	17.0	16.8	16.5	16.6	16.6
Composite Gilmer	18.4	16.2	16.5	16.3	17.0

**5.1.2. Participation rate.** A minimum of 95 percent in the current or a two or three year average of all students enrolled in a public school/county school district/state at the time of testing, including students in each subgroup as required by *NCLB* must participate in the statewide assessment WESTEST or the West Virginia Alternate Performance Task Assessment (APTA) in reading/language arts or mathematics. Students with a significant medical emergency may be exempt by appeal from the calculation of participation rate for AYP provided that the county superintendent has proper documentation. (Policy 2340; Policy 2419; Policy 2510)

Gilmer County School District met the participation rate requirement.

**5.1.3. Attendance rate (Elementary/Middle).** The student attendance rate, for elementary and middle schools is at or above 90 percent or the percentage of students meeting the attendance rate show improvement from the preceding year. The student attendance rate will be adjusted for students excluded as a result of the Productive and Safe Schools Act (W.Va. Code §18A-5-1a) and school bus transportation interruptions (W.Va. 126CSR81), West Virginia Board of Education Policy 4110, *Attendance Policy*, (hereinafter Policy 4110). Additional exclusions include excused student absences, students not in attendance due to disciplinary measures, and absent students for whom the attendance director has pursued judicial remedies to compel attendance to the extent of his or her authority. For the AYP determination, the attendance rate calculation will be used for accountability at the public school/LEA/SEA levels, but will not be calculated for each subgroup. However, for schools/LEAs that use the safe harbor provision to meet AYP for the achievement indicators, the attendance rate standard must be met by the subgroup/s not meeting AYP.

Chart 10 indicated the Gilmer County School District attendance rate has remained above the State requirement of 90 percent for the last five reporting years.

Chart 10

<b>ATTENDANCE RATE</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Attendance Rate</b>
2005-06	97.94%
2006-07	97.94%
2007-08	97.15%
2008-09	97.00%
2009-10	95.59%

**5.1.4. Graduation rate.** The student graduation rate is 80 percent or the percentage of students meeting the student graduation rate shows improvement. The graduation rate is calculated according to the high school completer formula recommended by the NCES with the additional condition that graduates include only those students who receive a regular diploma in the standard number of years and does not include students receiving the GED. For the AYP determination, the graduation rate calculation will be used for accountability at the public school/LEA/SEA levels, but will not be calculated for each subgroup. However, for schools/LEAs that use the safe harbor provision to meet AYP for the achievement indicators, the graduation rate standard must be met by the subgroup/s not meeting AYP.

Chart 11 showed that the Gilmer County School District graduation rate met the State requirement of 80 percent for the last five reporting years.

Chart 11

<b>GRADUATION RATE</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Graduation Rate</b>
2005-06	93.75%
2006-07	93.75%
2007-08	88.57%
2008-09	94.94%
2009-10	92.06%

## DATA ANALYSIS

Chart 12 provides college entrance testing information for the American College Test (ACT) and the advanced placement test (APT) for 2008-2009. Data are listed for Gilmer County High School, the county, and the State.

Gilmer County's composite score (21.5) on the ACT was higher than the State (20.7). Advanced placement courses were not taught at Gilmer County High School; therefore, 0.0 percent of students took the advanced placement test (APT).

Chart 12

<b>COLLEGE-ENTRANCE TESTING INFORMATION – ACT &amp; APT 2008-2009</b>					
<b>ACT(American College Test)</b>			<b>APT (Advanced Placement Test) Test Takers</b>		
<b>Schools</b>	<b>Test Takers</b>	<b>Composite Score</b>	<b>Tenth Grade</b>	<b>Eleventh Grade</b>	<b>Twelfth Grade</b>
Gilmer County High	60.0%	21.5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Gilmer County Schools	60.0%	21.5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
STATE	60.3%	20.7	2.3%	17.0%	20.0%

The high school graduate overall college going rate for Gilmer County (fall 2009) was lower (58.7 percent) compared to the State's overall college going rate (61.5 percent) as presented in Chart 13.

Chart 13

<b>ESTIMATED COLLEGE GOING RATE FALL 2009</b>		
	<b>Number of High School Graduates 2008-09</b>	<b>Overall College Going Rate Percentage</b>
State	18,418	61.5%
Gilmer County	75	58.7%

Source: West Virginia College Going Rates By County and High School Fall 2009, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

Gilmer County's percent of students enrolled in developmental courses was higher than the State's percentage of students taking both mathematics and English developmental courses (Chart 14).

The percentage of Gilmer County's first-time freshmen (21.95 percent) enrolled in Developmental English during fall 2009 was higher than the State total (15.53 percent). The percentage of graduates enrolled in Developmental Mathematics was higher (34.15 percent) than the State total (24.31 percent).

Chart 14

<b>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ENROLLED IN DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES FALL 2009</b>					
	1 <sup>st</sup> Time WV Freshmen Total #	English Total #	% in Developmental English	Mathematics Total #	% in Developmental Mathematics
State	8,311	1,291	15.53%	2,020	24.31%
Gilmer County High	41	9	21.95%	14	34.15%
Gilmer County	41	9	21.95%	14	34.15%

Source: First-Time Freshmen, Previous Year WV High School Graduates in Developmental Courses by Type of Course Fall 2009 (census).

## HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS

### 7.1. CURRICULUM.

**7.1.7. Library/educational technology access and technology application. The application of technology is included throughout all programs of study and students have regular access to library/educational technology centers or classroom libraries. (Policy 2470; Policy 2510)**

#### **Technology**

Gilmer County Schools has demonstrated ineffective strategic planning for technology and has done a substandard job of building capacity within the system to implement and maintain instructional technology. The county has not provided sufficient training to county and school personnel to handle "first level" technical support and building level technology integration. This is because the technology support/decision maker, a local vendor, which the Gilmer County Board of Education had contracted for many years, exerted "total control" over all technology related planning, maintenance and installation. Gilmer County Schools' personnel were never trained with basic trouble shooting procedures and instructed on how the support structure for State K-12 Tools for Schools technology contract items worked. As a result of this lack of training, the county has no capacity to support its technology. A climate of distrust regarding technology has been built between the Gilmer County Board of Education and the West Virginia Department of Education, RESA 7, and State K-12 Technology Contract vendors.

When Gilmer County Schools asked for assistance with technology related issues, the West Virginia Department of Education recommended that the county contract with RESA 7 or one of the State K-12 Technology Contract vendors to have a qualified technician "dedicated" to Gilmer County. Despite repeated recommendations from the Gilmer County School District Superintendent and central office staff, the county board of education failed to implement that recommendation. This was clearly shown in Gilmer County Board of Education minutes on multiple meeting dates. Without a dedicated support contract in place, the county has had to submit work orders to RESA 7 and enter the queue with the rest of the counties that RESA 7 serves. Gilmer County did not have a technology support structure in place, at the school level, that allowed them to work well in this situation.

Although the county instructional technology contact has done an outstanding and competent job of relating and requesting the appropriate needs for the county, those requests appeared to be "overruled" by the haphazard, substandard results of the local work.

In summary, despite the recommendations brought forward by the county superintendent, the Gilmer County Board of Education has not fully followed the

recommendations of the West Virginia Board of Education and the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Instructional Technology.

The Team found the following technology violations of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 6200.

### **Gilmer County High School**

The Media Center laboratory did not have structured cabling in place. The computers were connected with long patch cables to a switch located under a desk in the room. This did not meet Policy 6200 requirements. Additionally, any network electronics installed in an instructional area should be housed in an enclosed rack.

### **Troy Elementary**

Hubs connected nine computers in the library. The cabling in the library was not structured and did not meet Policy 6200 requirements. Additionally, any network electronics installed in an instructional area should be housed in an enclosed rack.

The computer laboratory upstairs did not meet Policy 6200 requirements. The computers were cabled with long patch cables to a switch placed on a desk in the room. Additionally, any network electronics installed in an instructional area should be housed in an enclosed rack.

The school had unencrypted wireless access points in place. This violated Policy 6200 as well as federal E-rate regulations.

### **Sand Fork Elementary**

The computer laboratory upstairs did not meet Policy 6200 requirements. The computers were cabled with long patch cables to a switch placed on a desk in the room. Additionally, any network electronics installed in an instructional area should be housed in an enclosed rack.

The school had unencrypted wireless access points in place. This violated Policy 6200 as well as federal E-rate regulations.

### **Glenville Elementary**

The computer laboratory upstairs did not meet Policy 6200 requirements. The computers were cabled with long patch cables to a switch placed on a desk in the room. Additionally, any network electronics installed in an instructional area should be housed in an enclosed rack.

## **Normantown Elementary**

Due to other facility issues, students were not taught in the main school building. They were housed in mobile classroom units outside the main building. School staff members are doing the best they can by using wireless mobile computer laboratories. This situation is far from ideal as the technology infrastructure and structure are not in place to provide the technology resources available in an adequate school facility.

### **7.2. STUDENT AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE.**

**7.2.1. County and School electronic strategic improvement plans. An electronic county strategic improvement plan and an electronic school strategic improvement plan are established, implemented, and reviewed annually. Each respective plan shall be a five-year plan that includes the mission and goals of the school or school system to improve student or school system performance or progress. The plan shall be revised annually in each area in which the school or system is below the standard on the annual performance measures.**

While Gilmer County had a Five-Year Electronic Strategic Plan, the county board of education members were not involved in developing the plan and most were not aware of the plan's contents. All stated that updates on the plan had not been presented to the board.

## 7.4. REGULATORY AGENCY REVIEWS.

**7.4.1. Regulatory agency reviews. Determine during on-site reviews and include in reports whether required reviews and inspections have been conducted by the appropriate agencies, including, but not limited to, the State Fire Marshal, the Health Department, the School Building Authority of West Virginia, and the responsible divisions within the West Virginia Department of Education, and whether noted deficiencies have been or are in the process of being corrected. The Office of Education Performance Audits may not conduct a duplicate review or inspection nor mandate more stringent compliance measures. (W.Va. Code §§18-9B-9, 10, 11, 18-4-10, and 18-5A-5; Policy 1224.1; Policy 8100; W.Va. Code §18-5-9; Policy 6200; Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 §104.22 and §104.23; Policy 4334; Policy 4336)**

### Finance

1. The Team reviewed the county board distribution of the system's resources on the basis of the strategic plan. The Team reviewed the county level accounting practices and reported that the Gilmer County Strategic Plan goals were broad and budget plans included were primarily for federal program activities. The budget was not specific to actions to meet the county board's goals. Goals were so broad that the plan and budget were not meaningful in strengthening the county's education program.
2. The Team reviewed invoices and noted that payments were sometimes issued without an itemized invoice or any invoice at all. The Team reported the following payments issued without an itemized invoice.
  - Johnnie Heater – Has a contract to provide package plants services to the school system. The contract specifies a monthly amount that Mr. Heater is to be paid for the services. Monthly payments are being processed without an invoice itemizing the services provided during the month or any documentation of receipt of services.
  - Grasshopper Lawn Care – Similar to the preceding situation, monthly payments are being processed without an invoice itemizing the services provided during the month, or documentation of receipt of services.
  - Rachel's Challenge – An invoice was provided prior to any work being performed, but it was not itemized. No payment was issued in advance, and more detail was provided in the contract.
  - RAMCO – The company provides technology related services. The company was paid \$21,491.75 by check dated August 30, 2010 for services rendered during the 2009-10 year based on Purchase Order Number 2454, which was not

issued until August 25, 2010. The vendor provided an invoice, which provided some detail, but did not indicate the charge for each service rendered or the amount of time spent on each service. In addition, competitive bids were not obtained prior to engaging RAMCO for the services.

West Virginia Code §12-3-18 prohibits any local governmental entity from paying any claim for services rendered or materials furnished without the claimant filing an itemized invoice covering the claim. If the invoice is for services, the invoice must show the kind of service, the dates when the services were rendered and the name of the person performing the service. If the claim is for materials furnished, the invoice must show in detail the kind of material or supplies furnished, the quantity, dates of delivery, and to whom delivered.

Furthermore, State Board Policy requires county boards to seek competitive bids for any commodities or services purchased in excess of \$5,000. There are exceptions for certain services, but technology services is not exempted.

3. An individual was a school principal who was also paid a supplement for performing duties as the attendance director.
  - The individual resigned effective 2/28/11 from this position (principal).
  - The individual was hired at the 2/7/11 board meeting under the personnel section of the agenda as a half time attendance director at a rate of \$30,000 per year.
  - The individual was issued an extracurricular contract of employment which had not been signed and returned at the time of the OEPA visit (5/2/11).
  - To date, the individual had been issued two checks ( #34154 and #34337) in the amount of \$2500 each through the accounts payable process which would indicate the Gilmer County School District was treating him as an independent contractor.
  - The individual (as attendance director) would be difficult to qualify as an independent contractor because the Gilmer County School District provides work space, materials, supervision, etc.

West Virginia Code §18-8-3 requires every school district with less than 4,000 students to employ at least a half-time attendance director. The employment of an independent contractor to perform the services does not fulfill the statutory provisions of this Code section.

4. In the annual audit of Gilmer County Schools, the auditors noted the following conditions: Individual school audit reports were completed by a certified public accounting firm for fiscal year 2010. Glenville Elementary School and Troy

Elementary School each received a compliance finding because the annual reports submitted by their PTOs were incomplete.

Section 5-9 of the *Accounting Procedures Manual for the Public Schools in the State of West Virginia*, State Board Policy 1224.1, requires every school support organization to prepare annual financial statements and provide two copies to the school principal.

5. Gilmer County Board of Education policies had not been adopted for individual school accounting. Various sections of the *Accounting Procedures Manual for the Public Schools in the State of West Virginia* require local boards of education to establish by board policies certain parameters for the financial operations of individual schools. For example, the board must establish which funds are authorized and whether petty cash and/or starting cash drawers are permitted. The Team was provided Policy 3450, Money in School Buildings, from the Gilmer County Schools Policy Manual. This was the only individual school finance policy provided. Policies were not in place to guide management of fiscal resources of the Gilmer County School District.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Recommendation regarding Decentralized Entering of Services and/or Decentralized Retention of Accounts Payable Records. The Team recommended that the Chief School Business Official (CSBO) work with the county's auditing firm and the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Finance, regarding a procedure which would either 1. Centralize the inputting of invoices and accumulation of accounts payable records or 2. At a minimum, allow the paper invoices to be submitted to the central office for review and retention prior to payment being made. Currently, school secretaries and various county office personnel enter invoices in WVEIS and a WVEIS list is submitted to the board for approval. The invoices are retained wherever the invoice is entered and no one in the business office has been provided any documentation.

## **Facilities**

The Education Performance Audit Team reviewed pertinent documents and interviewed the county superintendent and other county personnel. A narrative of the Team's observations follows.

### **Countywide**

- The county maintenance staff consisted of one full time person. The county maintenance staff was not keeping up with reactive maintenance items. Very little, if any, preventive maintenance was being performed countywide.
- The facility conditions at Troy Elementary School, Sand Fork Elementary School, and Normantown Elementary School are critical in nature. The Normantown building has been condemned and the students are housed in portable classrooms. Troy and Sand Fork both had structural issues identified that required repairs to make the buildings suitable for occupancy. Although the buildings have been certified safe for occupancy, both the Troy and Sand Fork buildings have numerous deficiencies. Some of the major items at both facilities included Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues; antiquated heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; insufficient electrical services; and numerous safety and health concerns.
- Glenville Elementary School and Gilmer County High School are the newest structures in the county inventory. However, both facilities are showing signs that neither is receiving the maintenance required to properly maintain the buildings. Continuing to defer proper maintenance will shorten the life expectancy of the structures and mechanical systems.
- With the exception of Gilmer County High School, all the buildings were well below the desired utilization rate of 85 percent.
- Gilmer County is ineligible for School Building Authority (SBA) funding because the county does not have an approved 2010-2020 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP).

### **Troy Elementary School**

- The original building was constructed in 1928. Additions were added in 1941 and 1958.
- In 2009, the State Superintendent of Schools ordered the superintendent of Gilmer County Schools to seek professional services to ensure that the building structure was safe for the school occupants. Engineers were secured, structural deficiencies were identified, and the structural issues were then corrected. The county obtained

clearance from the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and reoccupied the building.

- The parking for this facility is located next to the highway. Unloading of passengers and pedestrians is in close proximity to the highway. This is a potential safety concern. The student drop-off area is inadequate.
- Due to the type of HVAC equipment in this facility, ventilation current is inadequate according to American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and West Virginia Board of Education Policy 6200 standards.
- This facility was not compliant with ADA requirements. Rest rooms were not noncompliant with ADA requirements.
- The gymnasium had open gas furnaces with mercury thermostats which are against current ASHRAE and Policy 6200 standards.
- The students must exit the main building and cross the parking lot to reach the cafeteria and gymnasium. The walkway is uncovered.
- Block piers supporting the gymnasium entrance showed some visible cracking.
- An existing bat problem in the attic was prevalent and large amounts of bat guano were present. Bats have infiltrated inside the building in the past. This presents a serious safety/health hazard for the building occupants.
- The electrical service that serves this building was at capacity.
- The facility needed a new roof.
- The 2000-2010 CEFPP listed the building utilization as 75 percent.

### **Normantown Elementary School**

- The main building at this site has been condemned and was not in use. The students attended classes in portable classrooms. The office was also located in a portable trailer.
- The gymnasium section of the main building was being used for classes. This gymnasium is located in the flood plain and has undergone numerous floodings. The substructure of the gymnasium is constructed of wood joisting and has sustained water damage. There appeared to be potential mold growth on the wood structure underneath the gymnasium. Students walk by the condemned main building to go to the gymnasium for classes. Music instruction also takes place in this gymnasium.

- The parking for this facility is located next to the highway. Passenger unloading and pedestrian activity is in close proximity to the highway. This is a potential safety concern. The student drop-off area is inadequate.
- The cafeteria building is also in the flood plain. This building houses two classrooms, the library, and the speech room. Art instruction takes place in the cafeteria. The cafeteria building is not ADA compliant. A student who is physically impaired attends this school.
- Due to the type of HVAC equipment used in the portable classrooms, ventilation is insufficient.
- Several buildings were in violation of ASHRAE codes and standards.
- A security issue exists at this facility due to open multi-portable classrooms. The county cannot use approved School Access Safety funds at this facility because the students are housed in portable units.
- The 2000-2010 Comprehensive Education Facilities Plan (CEFP) listed the building utilization at 59 percent (utilization was based on the main building that has been replaced with portable classrooms).

### **Sand Fork Elementary School**

- In 2009, the State Superintendent of Schools ordered the Superintendent of Gilmer County Schools to seek professional services to ensure that the building structure was safe for the school occupants. Engineers were secured, structural deficiencies were identified, and the building was then vacated. The structural issues were then corrected and the county obtained clearance from the West Virginia Department of Education and reoccupied the building in April 2010.
- This facility has window air conditioning units which are not current with ASHRAE and West Virginia Board of Education, Policy 6200 standards.
- Due to the type of HVAC equipment in this facility, ventilation is inadequate.
- This facility was not compliant with ADA requirements. Rest rooms were not compliant with ADA requirements.
- PreK-2 students were housed in a separate building. These students must travel to the cafeteria, music room, and other areas of the campus, which is a potential safety concern.

- The overhead covering between the main building and cafeteria is constructed of tin with wood joists and appeared to be unsafe for excessive snow covering.
- Due to outdated wiring in the computer room, power wires were laid across the floor in the computer room classroom. This is against wiring codes.
- The custodian closet did not have an exhaust fan to provide adequate ventilation to remove chemical odors.
- No rest rooms were located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> floors of the main building where students attend classes. Students must travel to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor to have access to a rest room.
- Students must walk up outside wooden stairs to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. This could potentially be a safety concern during inclement weather.
- Art and music classes were conducted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor above the cafeteria and accessed by wooden stairs. This could potentially be a safety concern during inclement weather.
- The carpet was in disrepair and needed to be replaced in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom.
- The receptacle at close proximity to the water fountain and sink in the music and art room was not a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) type as required by electrical code.
- The rest room in the music and art rooms was not functional. Students must travel outside to another classroom to have access to a rest room.
- The gymnasium has open gas furnaces with mercury thermostats which are against current ASHRAE and Policy 6200 standards.
- The 2000-2010 CEFPP listed the building utilization as 70 percent.

### **Glenville Elementary School**

- The original portion of this facility was constructed in 1976. An addition was added in 1993.
- The mechanical system (rooftop) units are approximately 11 years old. The average life expectancy of these units is typically 15 years.
- The structural integrity of this facility appeared sound.

- The HVAC units were not receiving preventive maintenance as required by the manufacturer.
- Overall the facility appeared clean.
- The facility is located next door to an industrial site (plastic plant).
- The roof was damaged during a recent storm, thereby, allowing water infiltration into the building.
- The 2000-2010 CEFPP listed the building utilization at 66.9 percent.

### **Gilmer County High School**

- The original structure was built in 1957. Additions and renovations were made in 1976, 1988, 1996, and 1999.
- All the rooftop units on the main building are approximately 12 years old, with the exception of the gymnasium units which were just replaced. The typical life expectancy for these types of units is 15 years.
- The interior of this building would benefit from a more aggressive housekeeping schedule. A hole was in the drywall in the hallway and stained ceilings, walls scuffs, etc., existed throughout the school.
- The front steps entering the facility had a steep incline and were starting to degrade.
- The HVAC was not receiving preventive maintenance as required by the manufacturer.
- The facility did not have an auditorium.
- The 2000-2010 CEFPP listed the building utilization at 88 percent.

## **7.5. ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS.**

### **7.5.4. Physical Assessment. The school participates in the appropriate statewide physical assessment program.**

- The results of the Fitnessgram testing had been submitted to the Department of Education on WVEIS. Results of testing of Aerobic Capacity, Body Composition, Muscular Strength, Endurance, and Flexibility were submitted by all schools.
- A review of master schedules for the physical education teachers in the elementary schools showed students in all elementary schools received three classes of 30+ minutes of physical education in week one and two classes of 30+ minutes of physical education in week two. This schedule followed a rotating basis throughout the school year. Therefore, Gilmer County elementary school students were not receiving at least 30 minutes of physical education for not less than three days a week as required by W.Va. Code §18-2-7a.
- Gilmer County did not have an alternate program for providing physical education that had been approved by the West Virginia Department of Education and the Healthy Lifestyle Council as provided by W.Va. Code §18-2-7a.

## 7.6. PERSONNEL.

**County boards shall employ personnel to deliver high quality programs and services to all public school students that ensure academic success; implement employment hiring and assignment practices that conform with W.Va. Code and West Virginia Board of Education policy; and promote the development of human resources.**

### **7.6.1. Hiring. County boards follow hiring practices set forth in W.Va. Code. (W.Va. Code §§18A-4-7a, 18A-4-8, and §18-2E-3a)**

The Team interviewed principals of Sand Fork Elementary School; Glenville Elementary School; Gilmer County High School (GCHS); recently retired principal, Sand Fork Elementary School and attendance director (contracted); director of federal programs, executive secretary/coordinator of administrative services; and the county superintendent.

Hiring practices were not always followed as set forth in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a.

1. No one individual was designated as the Personnel Director in Gilmer County. Principals appeared to be responsible for selecting personnel for his/her respective school. The superintendent was responsible for the selection of school principals and county office personnel. The hiring process was handled by several individuals with what appeared to be little training in the hiring process. No documentation was available at either the county office or schools to verify that the most qualified candidate was being selected per W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a.

Job postings were posted on the West Virginia Department of Education K-12 Job Bank webpage, in the county office, and in schools. Letters of applications and résumés were received by the executive secretary/coordinator of administrative services during the posting period. Following the end of the posting period, letters and résumés were forwarded to principals who reviewed the applications, conducted interviews, and made their selection of the most qualified candidate. Interviews may include the faculty chair person or a staff teacher. Job applications and the principal's recommendation of his/her selection are returned to the superintendent. Principals do not include a matrix or documents showing comparisons of candidates as per W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a. A copy of the posting and applications for each posting were retained in the county office.

2. The recently retired principal of Sand Fork Elementary School stated that as a principal he reviewed the qualifications of applicants for vacancies at his school and completed a matrix which was sent to the county office. No one at the county office recalled receiving matrices from him or any of the schools. Neither could any be located in the county office or the schools.

Only postings and letters of application and résumés for posted positions were kept at the county office. Since the documentation was not available at the schools, this created an incomplete hiring file. The Team located and reviewed only three hiring files at the county office (English - Gilmer County High School, Speech/Language Pathology-Itinerant, and Elementary Principal-Normantown Elementary School). The matrices in those files were either in error or incomplete.

The Team recommended that a county office administrator be designated as personnel director or person responsible for personnel. This could be in addition to other responsibilities. Once the person is designated and trained to be responsible for the hiring process, he/she would review and approve all postings before they are posted to ensure the certification listed for the position is accurate, that the job is posted to ensure that the largest possible pool of qualified applicants may apply, etc. (W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a (o)). Once the posting period closes and applications have been received for the posted position, the personnel director will need to identify the correct set of factors to use in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a (c or d) to determine the most qualified candidate for a job. Then, he/she or a trained designated person (such as the principal) must complete documentation, as determined by the board, when using the first set of factors in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a (c) to show that all criteria were given consideration for each applicant. If the second set of factors is used (W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a (d)) to identify the most qualified applicant who meets the standards of the posting, a matrix must be completed to show consideration of each applicant and that equal weight was given to each criterion. Although the interview is not one of the criterion in the second set of factors, principals must be given an opportunity to interview all qualified candidates (W.Va. Code W.Va. §18A-2-1).

3. Glenville Elementary School. The Team reviewed a matrix on file for one recent teacher vacancy at Glenville Elementary School. Although five individuals applied (three out-of-state and two local), only two (local candidates) were listed on the matrix which the county used to compare qualifications of applicants. There was no evidence that the three out-of-state candidates were considered. This was most likely due to: 1. The applicant selected had worked in the county on a contracted basis and her qualifications were known by the principal and 2. This was a one-year position and the principal did not believe an out-of-state individual would want to relocate for a short period, or 3. The county board unlawfully disregards out-of-county applicants.

The above vacancy was the first filled with a “new” applicant in five years for the Glenville Elementary School principal as vacancies are traditionally filled with in-county transfers. The principal stated that when regularly employed applicants applied for posted positions, the selection was made at the county office by the superintendent and principals were given the name of the person who was most qualified for the position and, in turn, wrote a letter of recommendation for that person. This also appeared to be the procedure for hiring service personnel. After the Team shared this information with the superintendent, he seemed surprised that

this might be true during his tenure as superintendent. The executive secretary/coordinator said it was possibly true, but that during the summer months principals had come in to review applications for posted positions. This clearly indicated, however, that no one is responsible for completing the required matrix for comparison of applicants when regularly employed persons apply. The seven criteria of W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a (d) are to be considered and given equal weight (Reference §18A-4-7a (e)). No matrix was available for the Team to verify that seniority is given greater weight than the other six criteria to determine otherwise.

4. Gilmer County High School. An incomplete matrix of a posting reviewed at the county office and Gilmer County High School was one with many problems. Twelve individuals applied for the position. Only two names were shown on the matrix.

The position was posted incorrectly. Video Journalism has been taught at Gilmer County High School for more than 20 years. Video Journalism can be taught with the following certifications: Language Arts (0800), English Language Arts (1001), or Journalism (3900). English certification (1000) is not a certification for teaching Video Journalism. Individuals holding the posted position in past years have had English/Language Arts certification.

The vacant position was posted as follows:

**POSITION: English/Language Arts Teacher 7-12, Journalism 9-12 (encouraged but not required)**

**EMPLOYMENT TERM: 2010-2011 School Year**

**QUALIFICATIONS: West Virginia Certification in English 7-12**

The Gilmer County High School principal believed that this information listed under the position identified the certification needed for the vacant position (at a minimum, English/Language Arts).

The vacancy should have been posted:

**POSITION: English/Language Arts 7-12/Video Journalism 9-12**

**QUALIFICATIONS: English Language Arts 7-12 (also Journalism 9-12 preferred\*).**

(\*Note: This means a person with English/Language Arts could be certified to teach classes in the vacant position; however, having both English/Language Arts and journalism would most likely make for a more highly qualified teacher.)

Twelve individuals applied for the position. One applicant was a regular employee with English certification; therefore, the second set of factors in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a is required to be used to determine the qualifications of applicants. The interview committee used the first set of factors. The matrix used was incorrect when considering years of experience, requesting total experience in the subject area (used in first set of

factors in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a when all applicants are new or do not meet standards of the posting), not overall total experience. As per the matrix, an applicant with English/Language Arts was the most qualified and was recommended at the June 10, 2010 meeting of the Gilmer County Board of Education. This applicant was certified to teach English/Language Arts and Video Journalism. The recommendation failed and the board requested a second recommendation. The other applicant was recommended and approved. Although this applicant met the qualifications listed on the incorrect posting, this applicant was not/is not certified to teach Video Journalism. This results as a noncompliance.

When the individual was employed, it appeared that the superintendent or board did not know that the posting was incorrect or that the applicant hired was not certified to teach Video Journalism, as the posting was not corrected with a re-posting of the position. If the posting had been corrected (this was June), the applicant would not have been considered for the position if there were certified candidates, as this applicant was not certified and would not have met the requirements of the posting.

Later, after the recommended candidate filed a grievance for the non-selection, it was found that the matrix used for the selection of the most qualified did not have the correct criteria listed on the matrix form (as noted above). When the correct criteria were used, considering, again in error, that the candidate was certified for the position, she was found to be the most qualified candidate. Being so informed, the recommended candidate withdrew the grievance.

Now that Gilmer County has been informed of the above problem, the county board will need to correct the problem/error to avoid the noncompliance of having Video Journalism taught by a non-certified individual.

**Recommendation.** If the employee is to remain in the position and assigned to teach Video Journalism, the individual will need to apply for a permit in either language arts (1001) or journalism (3900) and complete the required certification. If the individual does not agree to do this, the county can remove the teacher from the position for not being certified using W.Va. Code §18A-2-8 (incompetency). Again, this situation emphasizes the need for a personnel director or at a minimum training for principals in the hiring process of W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a. A trained personnel director should have caught this error (incorrect certification) before the job was posted. The Team recommended that the person responsible for postings check the West Virginia Department of Education Course Code before posting teacher positions to get the certification required to teach all courses of the posted position.

5. Another posting, along with applications and an incomplete matrix made available, was for a speech/language pathologist. The interview/selection committee, including county office administrators, found Candidate A to be the most qualified. Candidate A was recommended by the superintendent (June 10, 2010) for employment; however, the motion failed and the county board asked the superintendent for a second applicant. The superintendent recommended Candidate B who was

approved. Candidate B is the daughter of a then board member. This is a finding if it is found that the most qualified candidate was not employed and W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a (c) was not followed. Documents were not available for the Team to determine this; however, a selection committee interview member believed it to be so.

6. The third posting, which had applications and an incomplete matrix available, was for an elementary principal at Normantown Elementary School. The superintendent reviewed the applications, interviewed, selected, and recommended the person, Candidate A, he found to be the most qualified candidate, an out-of-county candidate who had experience as an elementary school principal. That individual was not approved by the board and a second applicant was requested. Candidate B, had worked only at the secondary level with no principal experience, was then recommended and approved. Although the board has a right to reject the superintendent's recommendation for good cause and the superintendent must submit another name (W.Va. Code §18-4-10), **for this to occur repeatedly appears that the board is ignoring W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a in its employment of personnel for Gilmer County Schools. In the above instance it was obvious that the most qualified applicant was not employed.**
7. The administrative assistant/executive secretary, prepares all postings. Postings are posted for a period of five days on the West Virginia Department of Education K-12 Job Bank webpage, in the county office, and in the schools. Postings included, for the most part, Position, Employment Term, Qualifications, Salary, Responsibilities, to whom the application is to be sent, date due, and a statement of compliance with federal laws and regulations in its hiring procedures. There was no separate job description for posted positions. The Gilmer County School District considers the job description included in the job posting. For professional personnel, W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a (o) (B) states, "The notice shall be posted . . . and include the job description." For service personnel, W.Va. Code §18A-4-8b (g) (2) states, "Notice of a job vacancy shall include the job description . . . ." Responsibilities of the position are listed on postings for professional positions. However, the responsibilities vary from a statement for classroom teachers such as "Duties as outlined in West Virginia State Board of Education Policy 5310" (See posting for social studies teacher, Gilmer County High School dated April 25, 2011) to the posting for English/Language Arts Teacher, Gilmer County High School, where additional responsibilities had been listed (See posting dated May 10, 2010). The same is true on coaching postings. Head Mini-Titan Football Coach, Gilmer County High School listed responsibilities as "Plan, practice, coach and manage a football team." While the posting for Athletic Trainer listed specific responsibilities (See Athletic Trainer, Gilmer County High School, dated April 25, 2011). Service personnel postings reviewed had no "Responsibilities" listed on the posting; therefore, this would appear not to satisfy the requirement of a job description.

**Corrective Action.** The county can develop separate job descriptions for all professional and service positions or add responsibilities to job postings for service personnel and revise responsibilities on job postings for professional personnel.

Service personnel postings listed under “Qualifications” must have GED or high school diploma. To meet the requirement of W.Va. Code §18A-4-8b (g) (2), “Job postings . . . shall be written to ensure that the largest possible pool of qualified applicants may apply.”

**Corrective Action.** Add under qualifications, “Or enrolled in an approved adult education course to obtain a GED.” (W.Va. Code §18A-2-5).

8. Out-of-field: One teacher (Health) was identified as teaching out of field. This was not approved by the county board.

9. The Gilmer County School District does not provide a job application for posted positions. Applicants applying for a posted position must send a letter of application and résumé to the superintendent. This includes regularly employed applicants. Applications reviewed revealed many styles of letters and résumés for applicants. An individual reviewing the résumés would have to look for information relevant to the criteria listed in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a. No résumé the Team reviewed had all the information needed to compare applicants on either of the two sets of factors listed in Code. Principals stated that they either called applicants and asked for the information or got the information in an interview. Principals stated that a job application which requested qualification information of candidates as listed in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a (c) and (d) would put the comparison and final selection on a more level playing field.

**Corrective Action.** Design a job application (this is not the employment application) that lists all criteria in both set of factors of W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a. Make the application available on line for individuals to complete and e-mail, fax or mail to the personnel director. Data from this application can be used to compare qualifications of applicants. However, data must be verified as accurate/correct prior to making a recommendation of the most qualified.

Gilmer County School District personnel interviewed stated that they will now use matrices to determine the most qualified applicant for a posted position. At the county level, matrices (for both sets of factors listed in W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a) were recently revised and provided to principals. However, the Team noted a few errors in the revised matrices.

**Corrective Action.**

**Matrix for first set of factors.**

Matrix: #6. Add “conducted pursuant to W.Va. Code §18A-2-12.”

Directions for using the Matrix: #5. Remove “limited to specialized training as listed in the job posting, if any was listed in this posting.” The Code permits consideration of “relevant specialized training.” It does not have to be just that listed in the job description. #6 Remove “for the last 2 years.”

**Matrix for second set of factors.**

Matrix: #5. Change job posting to job descriptions; #6 add “conducted pursuant to W.Va. Code §18A-2-12.”

Directions: #5. Change job posting to job descriptions; #6 change from the last 2 years to previous two evaluations.

**Corrective Action.** Board agenda item: Approval of out-of-field authorization for teaching: Name of employee, area (subject) of out-of-field authorization, school year. (State Board Policy 5202 §126-136-11.7.3 (a). If new employee, include in the initial employment item on the agenda.

As per the administrative assistant/executive secretary, no teachers were in long-term substitute positions and no teachers transferred after five days prior to the beginning of the instructional term.

10. Attendance Director. As per W.Va. Code §18-8-3, a county must employ at least a half-time director of school attendance if the county has a net enrollment equal to or less than four thousand pupils. Gilmer County falls into this category. Gilmer County does not have an employed half-time attendance director; however, the county contracts for a half-time attendance director. It appears, as per Code, that the individual must be employed. A person on contracted services is not an employee of the board.

**RECOMMENDATION**

If the hiring process is to continue in the current manner with principals being responsible, for the most part, for selection of personnel, it is highly crucial that training in the hiring process be provided to principals/supervisors by a person knowledgeable of W.Va. Code §18A-4-7a. If cost is a factor, it is recommended that the superintendent work with RESA 7 to provide such training as it is training that can be used by personnel directors and principals throughout West Virginia. The training should be detailed and in depth rather than an overview. Several principals said they needed and would welcome the training. One said that s/he had requested such training.

The Team further recommended that each posting be numbered and that a complete file consisting of the posting, applications, rating documentation (matrix), and letter of recommendation be kept in the same location, preferably in the office of the individual designated by the superintendent as the director of personnel.

Other information may be added, such as, names of interview committee, date of interview, etc., as determined by the county.

It appears that administrators, including the county superintendent, have made good faith efforts (albeit filled with errors and lack of knowledge) in bringing forth recommendations for new personnel. What is troubling is the county board rejecting those nominations and recommendations and substituting their own desires without good cause.

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

Chart 20 explains the certification issues the Team observed through a detailed review of the certified list, WVEIS Master Course Schedule, and the West Virginia Department of Education Certification Database.

**Chart 20**  
**Professional Staff: Gilmer County- May 2, 2011**

<b>County-School</b>	<b>Educator Name</b>	<b>Courses /Content Teaching</b>	<b>Certification /Status</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
022-501	Educator	5660 Spanish Explore 5661 Span I 5662 Span II	Application Pending	Date of hire was September. An initial application was submitted in December, but not eligible for reciprocity (not a fully certified out-of-state certificate)	Form 1 pending— Waiting on College signature (application eligible for denial May 14, 2011) **Applicant's GPA will not allow her to hold any certificate, except a Substitute certificate. Application will be denied**
	Educator	5622-FRENCH II 0 Grades: 09 10 11	French 1-9	Not certified to teach grades 10 and 11.	Apply on Form 1
	Educator	3021-ALGEBRA I 0 Grades: 09 10 11 3041-ALGEBRA II 0 Grades: 09 10 11 12 3101-APPLD MATH 0 Grades: 09 10 7821-PLANNING 0 Grades:	English 7-12 Math 7-9	Not certified to teach math grades 9 and above (assigned to 9-12)	Apply on Form 1

County-School	Educator Name	Courses /Content Teaching	Certification /Status	Findings	Recommendations
	Educator	6031-CHEMISTRY 0 Grades: 10 11 12 6033-CHEMISTRY II 0 Grades: 11 12 6041-PHYSICS 0 Grades: 11 12 6043-PHYSICS II 0 Grades: 12 6103-ADV HMN ANAT 0 Grades: 10 11 12 7821-PLANNING	Physics and Chemistry 9-Adult	6103 requires a biology certification	Apply on Form 1
	Educator	4011-ENG LA 11 0 Grades: 11 12 4011-ENG LA 11 0 Grades: 11 4056-JRNLSM PHOTO 0 Grades: 09 10 11 12 4061-JRNLSM VIDO 0 Grades: 08 09 10 11 12 4061-JRNLSM VIDO 1 Grades: 4071-SCH YRBOOK 0 Grades: 10 11 12 7821-PLANNING 0 Grades:	English (1000) 5-12	Not certified to teach 4056 Journalism Photo, 4061, Journalism Video.	Apply on Form 1
022-201	Educator	Assigned to case manage an autism identified student	Multi-Subjects K-8 LD, BD and MI K-12	Teacher is not certified to teach or case manage Autistic students.	Apply on Form 1

County-School	Educator Name	Courses /Content Teaching	Certification /Status	Findings	Recommendations
	Educator	Course not coded for gifted, but was hired to teach gifted	Elem. K-6 Early Ed. PK-K Multi-Cat K-6 & 5-Adult	Not assigned to any content courses and not coded as gifted, but was hired for gifted. Teacher is not certified.	Apply on Form 1
022-202	Educator	8011 COLTCH EL.	Multi-Subjects K-8 Reading Specialist PK-Adult	Teaching Title I Reading, should be coded as 4809.	Correct course code
	Educator	Course not coded for gifted, but was hired to teach gifted	Elem. K-6 Early Ed. PK-K Multi-Cat K-6 & 5-Adult	Not assigned to any content courses and not coded as gifted, but was hired for gifted. Teacher is not certified.	Apply on Form 1
022-203	Educator	2610- PRESCHOOL 0 Grades: P5 2615- PRESCH HNDCP 0 Grades: 7821- PLANNING 0 Grades:	OK	No special ed. students assigned, should only reflect 2610 code	Correct course code
022-205	<b>No certification issues</b>				

Coaching Staff:

\*\*The coaches' database was not up-to-date and had not been maintained.

\*\*A coach who was unable to obtain authorization for 2010-2011 (still pending due to legal background issues) was offered employment for 2011-2012 (should not have offered employment due to good faith issue).

Coaches Name	Authorization	Expired
Coach	Athletic Trainer/Limited Football Trainer	Authorization expired 2008
Coach	Coaching Authorization	Authorization expired June 30, 2010.
Coach	No authorization ever obtained	
Coach	No authorization ever obtained	
Coach	Coaching Authorization	Authorization expired 2008
Coach	Coaching Authorization	Authorization expired 2009

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

The Team reviewed new teacher hire logs for 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010, to determine the 0-3 years experience for required observations/evaluations; and compiled an alphabetical listing of personnel and matched the list with current personnel files.

The Team also reviewed personnel evaluations for professional personnel with 4-5 years experience, other professional personnel, support personnel, service personnel, coaches, etc., to determine that the evaluation process was conducted according to W.Va. Code §18A-2-12, West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310, and county policy.

**A random review of professional evaluations disclosed the following:**

1. One teacher (Gilmer County High School) did not have evaluations for 2008-2009 or 2009-2010.
2. One teacher's (Gilmer County High School) evaluation, completed June 7, 2010, had not been signed or dated by the evaluator.
3. One teacher (Sand Fork Elementary) received only one evaluation which did not meet the requirement of two evaluations per year for teachers with 0-2 years of experience.
4. All other teacher evaluations reviewed by the Team met all requirements of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310.

**A random review of support personnel evaluations disclosed the following:**

1. One speech pathologist (Glenville Elementary School) had not been evaluated during the 2009-2010 school year.
2. One elementary school counselor (countywide) had not been evaluated during the 2009-2010 school year.
3. All other evaluations for professional support personnel reviewed by the Team met all requirements of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310.

**A random review of coaches' evaluations disclosed the following:**

1. The evaluation for one coach (Gilmer County High School Varsity Volleyball) dated November 11, 2010, was not signed and dated by either the evaluator or the employee.
2. The athletic director was last evaluated in 2007-2008.
3. One coach (Head Track Coach-boys and girls) did not have an evaluation for the 2009-2010 year.

4. One coach's (Glenville Elementary School Basketball) evaluation was signed but not dated by the evaluator.
5. One coach's (Gilmer County High School Junior Varsity girls basketball) evaluation was not signed by the evaluator.
6. One coach (Gilmer County High School Assistant Volleyball) had a completed evaluation form dated November 11, 2010, but it was not signed by the evaluator or employee.
7. All other coaches' evaluations reviewed by the Team met all requirements of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310.

**A random review of service personnel evaluations disclosed the following:**

- 1, One central office staff member (Coordinator of Administrative Services) had not been evaluated in 2009-2010.
- 2, One secretary (Central Office) had not been evaluated since June 2008.
3. The county maintenance director had not been evaluated during the 2009-2010 school year.
4. One custodian (Gilmer County High School) had not been evaluated during the 2009-2010 school year.
5. One accountant (Central Office) had not been evaluated during the 2009-2010 school year.
6. All other service personnel evaluations reviewed by the Team met all requirements of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310 and Gilmer County Board of Education Policy 4117.5.

**A random review of school administrator evaluations disclosed the following:**

1. Two school administrators (Director of Food Services and Transportation and the Treasurer) had goals established for the 2009-2010 year, but there were no end of the year evaluations.
2. All other school administrator evaluations reviewed by the Team met all the requirements of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5310.

**7.6.4. Teacher and principal internship. The county board develops and implements a beginning teacher internship program and a beginning principal internship program that conform with W.Va. Code and West Virginia Board of Education policies. (W.Va. Code §18A-3-2b and 2d; Policy 5899; Policy 5900)**

The Team found the following instances in which mentors had not been assigned.

<b>School Location</b>	<b>Educator</b>	<b>WVEIS Assignment</b>	<b>Current Certification</b>	<b>Correction Needed</b>
Glenville ES	Teacher	Grade 6	Hire date 12-10	Hire Mentor
Gilmer HS	Teacher	English 9-12	Hire date 12-10	Hire Mentor
Sand Fork ES	Principal	Principal	Hire date	Hire Mentor

The county recognizes that W.Va. Codes §§18A-3-2b and 18A-3-2d require a Beginning Teacher Internship Program and a Beginning Principal Internship Program. However, county policies needed revisions because a specific written internship program did not exist. The county provides mentors for all new (eligible) professional personnel. Mentors for professional support were paid from county or federal funds. The program appeared to be very weak. The federal programs director, who is retiring at the end of this school year, was responsible for the mentor programs at the county level. Her responsibility included posting the mentor positions and submitting required information to the West Virginia Department of Education for payment reimbursements. The individual did not supervise or monitor the program at the school level. According to the federal programs director, the implementation and responsibility of the program is the responsibility of the mentor.

Four mentors were hired this year (2010-2011) for new educators (principal, classroom teacher, counselor, and speech/language pathologist). Three other new educators did not have mentors. Positions were posted and reposted, but no applicants were trained mentors and no training was scheduled after December 2010. Therefore, mentors were not provided for these new educators. The federal programs director reported the West Virginia Department of Education gave approval to wait until next year to repost the positions. It was also noted that the two teachers were on the reduction in force (RIF) list, but if they return the county will post for a mentor for 2011-2012. As shown on a list of trained mentors, only 11 are still employed in the county. No one has been trained since 2009 when one teacher was trained.

The Team interviewed two principals about mentors. The principals stated that mentors were not able to meet the observation and conference requirements. The federal programs director said that money can be provided through Title II for substitutes to be use for mentor observations/conferences; however, no one has requested the funds. The director of special education was mentor to two of the new educators. The mentor was not available for interview.

**Corrective Action.** The individual responsible for personnel will need to contact the Center for Professional Development (CPD) for a schedule of summer training sessions for mentors. Principals will need to identify their master teachers and recruit them to complete the required State training to be a mentor for beginning teachers. The county should strive to get a minimum of one teacher from each school trained as a mentor for new teachers. The new person over the Beginning Teacher and Principal Internship programs should also attend the training. Additionally, master principals should be recruited to train as principal mentors for new principals in the county.

Several teachers listed on the Trained Mentor list have retired. When currently employed teachers are not available, the county could recruit retired teachers to serve as mentors. This might have been an option for mentors for the new teachers/principal this year (2010-2011).

Upon the federal program director's retirement, the implementation of the Beginning Teacher Internship and Beginning Principal Internship programs should be assigned to a specific person who will post positions and develop a specific program with a county orientation meetings with all new educators, county monthly or quarterly meetings, staff development, etc. This individual should also monitor implementation of the programs. Some excellent Beginning Teacher Internship Programs exist in the State that could serve as models. One excellent mentor program is in Jefferson County which includes orientation meetings, monthly staff development, etc. The Team recommended that person responsible for mentorship programs review programs from other counties to help in designing a specific program for Gilmer County.

## **7.7. SAFE, DRUG FREE, VIOLENCE FREE, AND DISCIPLINED SCHOOLS.**

**7.7.2. Policy implementation. The county and schools implement: a policy governing disciplinary procedures; a policy for grading consistent with student confidentiality; policies governing student due process rights and nondiscrimination; the Student Code of Conduct policy; the Racial, Sexual, Religious/Ethnic Harassment, and Violence policy; an approved policy on tobacco use; an approved policy on substance abuse; and an approved policy on AIDS Education. (W.Va. Code §18A-5-1 and §18-8-8; Policy 2421; Policy 2422.4; Policy 2422.5; Policy 4373; Policy 2515)**

W.Va. Code §18A-1-12a (17) states, “All official and enforceable personnel policies of a county board must be written and made available to its employees.”

The Team reviewed all policies listed in Standard 7.2.2 and other policies which came into question during the routine investigation and verification of the aforementioned policies. Gilmer County Schools complied, at last minimally on most required policies, but several issues emerged related to policy irregularities. Upon approval of a new or revised policy, Gilmer County Schools has failed to adjust or eliminate other county policies which may conflict with the new/revised policy.

1. Discipline. Gilmer County School District adopted the Student Code of Conduct set forth by the West Virginia Board of Education in Policy 4373. However, former Gilmer County Policy 5114 on Suspension and Policy 5114.1 on Expulsion continued to be listed in the county’s policy manual and on the website. The terminology differs and was often in conflict between the new policy and the old ones.

Policy 5114 on Suspensions appeared to indicate a student may be suspended for the violation of any written school rule or board regulation.

Disciplinary Procedures - Suspension 5114 – The policy did not identify disciplinary levels and the reasons for discipline were very vague. For example, Grounds for Suspensions 1.1 and 1.2, caused some confusion for dealing with the Code of Conduct.

Expulsion 5114.1. This policy did not include all Safe School violations. It implied that students may be expelled just if “charges” are serious enough. This caused some confusion in dealing with the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct listed in the student handbook at Gilmer County High School referred to categories of offenses, whereas, the Code of Conduct policy referred to level of violations. Examples of offenses/violations were also different than listed in policy. While educators may maneuver through this mixed terminology easily, it may result in significant confusion for students, parents or other members of the public

when trying to access information or formulate a defense in suspension/expulsion hearings.

2. Grading. The Team found numerous conflicts and inconsistencies in Gilmer County Board of Education's policies regarding student grades.

Gilmer County Board of Education Policy 5123.5, Gilmer County Grade Advancement and Testing Out Policy, referred to students in Grades 1-8 performing at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile in total basic skills on the SAT-9 test to qualify for consideration for grade advancement. However, Gilmer County no longer uses the SAT-9 test.

Policy 5123.5 also referred to high school students performing at the percentile in a discipline area to be considered for testing out. However, staff indicated that Gilmer County now uses RESA 7 for determining testing out criteria.

3. Gilmer County Board of Education Policy 5124 was not consistent with the State's policy regarding weighted grade point averages.
4. Activities Conduct Policy 5131 – This policy was a general framework for school discipline. There was no reference to classroom management plans. Gilmer County policies in this series included: 5131.1-Student Conduct on Bus; 5132 Dress/Hair; and 5130-Student Code of Conduct.
5. Substance Abuse. A policy on substance abuse was not available.
6. The Team recommended that the Gilmer County Board of Education review all printed materials distributed by agents of the board to assure compliance with all board policies, consistency in the terminology and purpose of the policies, and in delivery of county policies.
7. The Team recommended that the Gilmer County Board of Education follow its own Policy 1200, Policy to Promote School Board Effectiveness, as required by W.Va. Code §18-5-14, which calls for an annual review of policies.

## 7.8. LEADERSHIP.

### **7.8.1. Leadership. Leadership at the school district, school, and classroom levels is demonstrated by vision, school culture and instruction, management and environment, community, and professionalism. (Policy 5500.03)**

W.Va. Code §18A-2-12a (1) provides “The effective and efficient operation of the public schools depends upon the development of harmonious and cooperative relationships between county boards and school personnel.”

The Team interviewed all five members of the Gilmer County Board of Education and the Gilmer County Superintendent of Schools. The Team also reviewed agendas and minutes of county board meetings from September 2008 to the present. The Team also reviewed minutes from the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP) committee meetings. The following findings verified that the Gilmer County Board of Education was not operating according to statutory requirements and West Virginia Board of Education policies. Board minutes and board member and county staff interviews showed that the county board members were in discord, the county board operations were dysfunctional; and meetings were unproductive and resulted in the board being incapable of following State Code and West Virginia Board of Education policies.

1. Five-Year Strategic Plan. A statutory responsibility central to the purpose of local school boards is establishing a long term vision for the school system that keeps the district focused on learning and achievement for all students. A Gilmer County Five-Year Strategic Plan had been developed; however, the board members did not participate in the plan’s development. Most were unclear about the plan and all members questioned about updates on progress of the strategic plan in achieving the goals and objectives stated that they had not received updates on the plan. Board minutes did not indicate that the County Five-Year Strategic Plan had been presented to the board.
2. Annually the board is to meet with each school’s Local School Improvement Council (LSIC) and at this meeting a quorum of the Local School Improvement Council is to be in attendance. Meetings with the Gilmer County Board of Education and each school’s LSIC were not held as required by W.Va. Codes §§18-5-14 and 18-5A-2. The county board conducted “Linkage” meetings at each school and the LSIC provided a report on accomplishments and the school’s needs. Gilmer County had not developed and submitted to each council an agenda for this annual meeting as specified by Code. The Code requires the council chair or designee to address items designated by the county that are specified in W.Va. Code §18-5-14(a) (1) (B). These include: School performance, Curriculum, Status of the school in meeting the school improvement plan, and status of the school in meeting the county plan. Minutes of the Gilmer County Board of Education did not show that a required quorum was present.

3. Board minutes showed on two occasions (June 7, 2010 and March 14, 2011) that the affected board member failed to recuse him/herself from the room during board voting on personnel actions of family members. Minutes showed that each board member abstained from voting on that particular personnel item. The Ethics Commission has ruled that members of a board of education are to leave the room when the board votes on matters relating to a family member.
4. The Gilmer County Board of Education has at times not supported the superintendent's personnel recommendations. The following personnel employment decisions showed instances in which the board of education did not accept the superintendent's recommendation.

June 7, 2010. The minutes state . . . "Recommended by the Superintendent . . . to employ Candidate A as English/Language Arts Teacher 7-12, GCHS. Motion failed 0-5. The board president "asked for a second applicant" The superintendent recommended Candidate B. . . . Motion carried 5-0.

June 7, 2010. "Superintendent recommended employing Candidate A as Speech/Language Pathologist. Motion failed 0-5. The board president "asked for a second applicant" The superintendent recommended Candidate B. . . . Motion carried 4-0 with a board member abstaining. The individual hired was the daughter of the board member abstaining. Two questionable protocol issues resulted from this board action. First, the board member abstaining should have left the room during this vote. Secondly, the board not accepting the first candidate recommended by the superintendent and approving the second applicant gave the perception that a relative of a board member was given preferential consideration for employment. Board minutes of a later meeting showed this individual was then given \$5,000 to the initial salary supplement. At the July 26, 2010 Regular Board Meeting, the superintendent recommended and a motion was made and seconded to raise the Speech/Language Pathologist supplements from \$1895 to \$7000. Motion carried 5-0. When asked about this significant supplemental pay, some board members and the superintendent indicated that it was necessary in order to get and retain this qualified person. This board action caused the county staff and board to realize that a speech/language pathologist already employed in the county would also receive the same supplement increase (\$5,000).

July 26, 2010. The superintendent recommended employing Candidate A as principal at Normantown Elementary School. Motion failed 2-3. The superintendent was asked for another recommendation. The minutes do not state that the superintendent made another recommendation. A motion was made by a board member and seconded to employ Candidate B as principal of Normantown Elementary School for 2010-2111. Motion carried 3-2.

January 27, 2011. A Special Board Meeting of the Gilmer County Board of Education January 27, 2011, agenda item, "Superintendent's Recommendation for elimination of the following contracts at the end of this school year" listed 10 superintendent recommendations for reductions in force. Board minutes indicated the "motion died 0-5" on five recommendations and the "motion carried" on five personnel recommendations.

January 27, 2011. The board agenda item, superintendent's "Recommendation for Employee Transfers" showed the board tabled the superintendent's recommendation on the transfer of the cook positions. Further recommendations on this item indicated the motion died on five superintendent recommendations for employee transfers. The board approved recommendations of four employee transfers, two of which were rescinded later in the meeting.

5. Delegations. Gilmer County Board of Education members were not aware of a county policy regarding "Delegations" or people signed up to address the board under Delegations. Board minutes showed several people addressing the board during meetings. Interviews with board members indicated that after a member of the public addressed the board, they might have something else to add and would be permitted to speak again. No time limit had either been set in policy or followed by the board for delegations addressing the board. Instances were listed in the board minutes where individuals requested an executive session and the board complied (August 24, 2009 and November 8, 2010. It was also reported that meeting attendees would speak out during board meetings and engage exchanges with board member(s). All these breaks in the continuity of a board meeting results in exceedingly long meetings that may not be productive. The board will need to develop a policy concerning delegations and adhere to the policy to conduct coherent and transparent meetings of the Gilmer County Board of Education.
6. A board must operate openly with trust and integrity govern in a dignified and professional manner, and treat everyone with civility and respect. The following indicated instances in which the Gilmer County Board of Education did not follow general meeting procedures.

It was apparent that member(s) encouraged teachers and community members to come directly to them and they sometimes informally asked staff to resolve stated issues.

Interviews indicated that board member(s) encouraged teachers and parents to repeatedly attend and speak at board meetings to get what they wanted.

Minutes indicated that a Gilmer County Board of Education member did not treat CEFPP committee members respectfully in a public board meeting. Membership on the committee declined considerably after the incident.

Board minutes (March 19, 2010) indicated that a member called parents in one school zone for personal opinions. Decisions should be based on sound educational practice, rather than personal polls.

7. Ten-Year Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP). Gilmer County had not completed for approval a CEFP for the 2010-2020 as required by West Virginia Board of Education Policy 6200, Section 100 which specifies, "The plan is to be updated annually . . . and rewritten every ten years thereafter beginning with the plan submitted in 1990."

A previous superintendent of the Gilmer County School District and the local board of education appointed a CEFP committee. After a great deal of work and analysis, the committee developed and presented its consideration for the school system to the Gilmer County Board of Education in 2008. The CEFP planning committee recommended one elementary school for Gilmer County. Board members rejected the one school proposal and some members voiced refusal to accept any CEFP for one school. At the date of the Education Performance Audit (May 2-4, 2011), the CEFP committee had not brought another proposal to the board and membership dwindled so that only four or five committee members attended the CEFP meeting the week prior to the OEPA audit. The CEFP committee indicated that it will not present a plan that contains something that will not be funded by the School Building Authority of West Virginia (SBA) and was adamant about a one elementary school plan.

The board placed a bond on the ballot before the voters in November 2010 for two elementary schools to replace the current four elementary schools. The bond failed by a considerable margin. The community is also divided on their support of the CEFP. Consequently, the Gilmer County Board of Education and the CEFP committee were at an impasse and seemed unable to move forward with a ten-year Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan to address the demands of comprehensive educational programs and aging and obsolete facilities. Meanwhile, students in three elementary schools continue to be deprived of a thorough and efficient education in safe and healthy environments.

### **Additional Information**

Subsequent to the OEPA audit (Monday, May 22, 2011), the Gilmer County Board of Education appointed 12 new members to the original CEFP planning committee. This action raises questions about who prepared the recommended membership and how it was presented to the Gilmer County Board of Education for approval. All individuals interviewed by telephone stated, "The list appeared" before each board member at the May 22, 2011 meeting. The superintendent stated that he recommended this list of names to the county board for approval. However, the superintendent was not clear about how the list of recommended appointees to the CEFP planning committee was developed and who placed the list of names in front of each board member. He and other individuals indicated that the list was circulated by a local media representative. It was further reported that a local media representative moved around the table and marked through the word "tentative" beside one name on the list. Some local individuals feel that board member(s)

developed this particular list to include individuals who will support the majority of the board members' desires. At this point, the OEPA cannot verify the veracity of these reports; however, persons interviewed indicated a close relationship between some of the CEFP planning committee new appointees and a member of the Gilmer County Board of Education. It is not clear that the county superintendent recommended all the new CEFP planning committee members or how the members were selected. Regardless, this is another example of questionable actions by the Gilmer County Board of Education. It is the responsibility of the board president to follow proper meeting procedures.

The original CEFP planning committee met May 18, 2008 and voted to include a new middle school for grades 5-8 and renovate and expand Glenville Elementary School to accommodate the county's grades PK-4, and close Sand Fork, Troy, and Normantown Elementary schools in the CEFP. According to this plan, Grades 7 and 8 will be moved from the high school and occupy the new middle school. The superintendent stated that a special meeting of the Gilmer County Board of Education is scheduled June 21, 2011 to consider the CEFP and a copy is to be submitted to the School Building Authority (SBA) July 27, 2011 for review. He further reported that the CEFP is planned to be submitted to the West Virginia Board of Education at the July meeting of the State Board. The expedited sequence of events heightens concerns regarding the planning process and public input process.

Also troubling is what appears to be a critically damaged relationship between the CEFP committee and the Gilmer County Board of Education. While each body has contributed extensive time and effort on the CEFP, the committee has not presented a formal completed plan to the board. In turn, board member(s) have made their position clear to the CEFP committee.

1. Meeting minutes of the Gilmer County Board of Education showed that the board accomplished few meaningful actions that advanced the educational system. The same items appeared on the board's agenda meeting after meeting before resolution. For example, the posting of an attendance director was first combined with a technology director and was later posted as a half-time attendance director position.

An issue regarding student residency has consumed numerous board meetings and remained unresolved to date.

Several meetings involved items concerning technology services.

2. Gilmer County has experienced instability with the superintendent's position. The current superintendent is retiring and the board has hired someone to take his place by a 3-2 vote. The critical position to lead the county has been disrupted by the turnover in county superintendents. Gilmer County is at a critical point operationally.

**8.1.3. Facilities. Schools are operated efficiently, economically, and without waste or duplication, and the number and location of schools efficiently serves the student population. (W. Va. Code §18-9D-15 and §18-9D-16 (d))**

Four of Gilmer County's five schools were below the recommended 85 percent utilization capacity.

**Troy Elementary School** is at 75 percent utilization with 100 students

**Normantown Elementary School** is at 59 percent utilization with 105 students enrolled.

**Sand Fork Elementary School** is at 70 percent utilization with 116 students enrolled.

**Glenville Elementary School** is at 66.9 percent utilization with 196 students enrolled.

**Utilization data source:** Gilmer County 2000-2010 CEFP.

**Head County Enrollment Source:**

<http://wveis.k12.wv.us/nclb/pub/enroll/sumdatap04v2.cfm?cn=022&sn=1&conme>.

Three of the five schools in Gilmer County, (Troy Elementary School, Normantown Elementary School, and Sand Fork Elementary School) have exhibited serious structural and safety issues and numerous deficiencies that compromise the health and safety of students and staff. Gilmer County School District cannot provide an effective and efficient system of education in these three facilities.

All five schools needed an aggressive maintenance plan. Without such action, the life expectancy of the newer facilities will deteriorate.

Gilmer County does not have an approved Comprehensive Education Facilities Plan (CEFP), and the committee, county board, and community are at an impasse in the content of the CEFP. As a result of not developing and gaining approval for a 2010-2020 CEFP, Gilmer County is not eligible for School Building Authority (SBA) funding.

Necessary maintenance on the three critical facility schools drains fiscal resources that could be used for other educational purposes. The current conditions of three elementary schools in Gilmer County make it impossible to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Safe Schools Act.

The current condition of the facilities in Gilmer County impedes the delivery of an effective and efficient educational system.

Currently, 943 students are enrolled in Gilmer County Schools. In 2001-2002, a total of 1,095 students were enrolled. In less than 10 years, the system has lost over half of

their students, yet no schools have been closed. Rapid population loss without facility closures is unsustainable.

**8.1.4. Administrative practices. The school district assesses the assignment of administrative personnel to determine the degree managerial/administrative services provided schools establish and support high quality curriculum and instructional services.**

The administrative staff at the county office, which is responsible for operating an effective and efficient school system, is limited. Tasks for specific jobs are broken down and assigned among county administrators, secretaries, and/or principals. As a result, it appears that no one person is responsible for a total program. In these situations, no complete package of a specific job can be provided by one person. The hiring of personnel and the implementation of the Beginning Teacher and Beginning Principal Internship programs illustrate limitations of county personnel. Administrative staffing at the school level appears to be adequate with full-time principals at each elementary school and two administrators (principal and assistant) at the middle/high school.

At the school level, the county provided staff to meet the requirement of law (elementary K-6 and special education) and the required programs of study. The superintendent has worked to get the county within formula in personnel; however, the board has rejected some of the superintendent's recommendations to reduce personnel and eliminate positions.

**8.1.5. Personnel. The school district assesses the assignment of personnel as based on West Virginia Code and West Virginia Board of Education policies to determine the degree to which instructional and support services provided to the schools establish and support high quality curriculum and instructional services.**

Seven and one-half professional and one-half service positions were funded outside the State basic foundation allowance formula for 2010-2011. According to interviews with the county treasurer, funding sources for positions funded outside the formula were provided through county excess tax, Medicaid funds, and carry-over monies. These funds, along with federal funds, also pay for contracted services (including, but not limited to, attendance director, tutor interventionist, teacher for the visually impaired, as well as for occupational therapist and physical therapist services.) Technology services were being contracted through RESA 7.

Staff indicated that all required programs of study were offered. However, due to class-size numbers, low incidence subjects must be taken at or through the local college (Glenville State College) where dual credit may be received. Funds from the Gear Up program provide tuition for the dual credit classes. Students also have the opportunity to earn from 18-24 hours in Criminal Justice and Business Education at the Calhoun-Gilmer Career Center. Advanced placement (AP) classes were not offered at the high school. Art, music, and physical education were offered at the elementary levels by itinerant teachers with comparable instructional staffing services. A school nurse

provided health services at each school on both a scheduled and as needed basis as determined by individual student needs.

Gilmer County provided minimal levels of service personnel, for example, only one maintenance employee was employed to serve Gilmer County. The number of custodians at Gilmer County High School was reduced from two to one. Both areas were needs in the county. Cooks were staffed at individual schools based upon meals served. Aides were staffed per State Board policies and Special Needs Students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

The Gilmer County Superintendent of Schools indicated the county's need for personnel included one maintenance person, a custodian, and a high school mathematics teacher.

The Team noted that services in personnel, curriculum and instruction, and maintenance were severely lacking at the county office level. Staff at the county office were spread thinly and held multiple responsibilities that impeded the efficient functions of the county office.

### **Recommendation - Staffing**

If the county board wishes to work toward reducing staff and wishes to staff elementary schools to meet the requirements of W. Va. Code §18-5-18a (Grades K-6); State Board Policy 2419 (special education) and 2510 (kindergarten aides), the Team recommended that the county board project student enrollments for the upcoming year. Then, in instances when projected student enrollment numbers are close and it is unclear that a teacher or aide is needed, the board can RIF employees, place them on the reduction-in-force list for a lack of need and if on or before August 1 the reason for the RIF goes away, the teacher or aide can be reinstated (W. Va. Code §18A-4-7a.(j) (4)). If the need for staff does not exist, the county board has reduced its staff.

#### **8.1.6. Regional Education Service Agency. The school district effectively utilizes Regional Education Service Agency programs and services or other regional services that may be initiated between and among county boards.**

The Gilmer County School District has been reluctant to use the Regional Education Service Agency Service Agency (RESA 7) for technology. This contributed to issues with technology implementation and all related processes.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

**18.1. Capacity building is a process for targeting resources strategically to improve the teaching and learning process. School and county electronic strategic improvement plan development is intended, in part, to provide mechanisms to target resources strategically to the teaching and learning process to improve student, school, and school system performance.**

Through several county superintendents and assistance from the West Virginia Department of Education, the School Building Authority of West Virginia (SBA), RESA 7, and other State agencies, the Gilmer County School District has failed in the capacity to target resources strategically to improve the teaching and learning process.

Resources available for use have not been accepted or requested. Students are attending some schools in substandard situations. The county failed in the capacity to reach an agreement on a long range facilities plan to alleviate this problem. In the meantime operation of the county school district continues as it has in the past. The findings in this report lead the Team to conclude that the Gilmer School District Strategic Plan was not a functional document or used to target resources strategically to improve student, school, and school system performance.

## **GILMER COUNTY SUMMARY**

Gilmer County Schools are at an emergency stage. The county has lost over half their student population in the past ten years. The system has not adjusted their facilities and their staffing patterns to confront these realities. The current school board is dysfunctional, divided, not providing leadership, and actually impeding progress due to not following laws and policies/designed to improve student performance. Technology infrastructure is lacking and rules are not being followed due to board decisions. Financial irregularities are occurring in part due to decentralized accounting procedure decisions. Three school facilities of the five in the county are sorely lacking and maintenance at all facilities is desperately needed. One school has been condemned and portable classrooms are on site. The county does not have an approved Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan and has been unable to reach consensus on what is needed.

Documentation is mostly insufficient to determine if laws are being followed to hire the most qualified applicants. Board minutes, however, reflect that the school board is trying to micro-manage, essentially replacing their administrators' and county superintendent's recommendations with their own, leading to a flawed hiring, transferring, and reduction in force system. Numerous questionable and irregular decisions are being made by the board prompting distrust and suspicion.

Other problems observed were 16 licensure and authorization issues, several irregularities in personnel evaluations, incomplete mentor programs for new employees, inadequate physical education program, incomplete policies, and illegal preference for local individuals in hiring.