

# SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE

## ON-SITE REVIEW REPORT

---

***Jefferson County  
High School Counseling – Six Month Update***

February 2022

---



Office of Support &  
Accountability



**West Virginia Board of Education  
2021-2022**

**Miller L. Hall**, President  
**Thomas W. Campbell, CPA**, Vice President  
**F. Scott Rotruck**, Financial Officer

**Robert W. Dunlevy**, Member  
**L. Paul Hardesty**, Member  
**Daniel D. Snavelly, M.D.**, Member  
**Debra K. Sullivan**, Member  
**Nancy J. White**, Member  
**James S. Wilson, D.D.S.**, Member

**Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Ph.D.**, Ex Officio  
Chancellor  
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education

**W. Clayton Burch**, Ex Officio  
State Superintendent of Schools  
West Virginia Department of Education

# Table of Contents

Background .....2

Onsite Review Team Members.....2

    Focus Area 1: Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP) .....3

    Focus Area 2: Grading, Transcribing, and Scheduling..... 4

    Focus Area 3: Communication and Customer Service ..... 6

    Focus Area 4: Central Office Support .....7

Conclusion ..... 8

    Recommended Next Steps: ..... 8

# Background

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Office of Support and Accountability conducted a Special Circumstance Review of Jefferson County Schools, June 1-3, 2021, to obtain specific information regarding the efficiency and operation of the counseling programs at each of Jefferson County's two high schools. The review process was conducted as outlined in West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) Policy 2322: *West Virginia System of Support and Accountability*.

The report from that visit was presented to the WVBE on July 14, 2021. WVBE Policy 2315, *Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP)*; WVBE Policy 2510, *Assuring the Quality of Education: Regulation for Education Programs*; W. Va. Code; and local policy served as the framework for the initial review. Findings and points of noncompliance, along with recommendations and corrective actions, were provided to inform stakeholders in decision making to maximize student success.

Following the initial review, an action plan to address points of noncompliance with WVBE policy was collaboratively created and housed in a digital platform accessible by both Jefferson County and WVDE personnel. In addition to monthly progress update meetings with Jefferson County Schools' personnel, the WVDE also provided professional learning and support throughout the six-month period following the initial review.

A Team consisting of staff members from the WVDE returned to Jefferson County January 19-21, 2022, to assess progress made in addressing findings and points of noncompliance identified during the initial review. This progress update will be presented to the WVBE at the February 9, 2022 meeting.

*Note: Revisions to WVBE Policy 2315 were approved by the WVBE on January 13, 2022. The revised policy takes effect February 13, 2022. This report references the previous version of the policy.*

## Onsite Review Team Members

Jonah Adkins, Coordinator, Office of Accountability, WVDE

Alexandra Criner, Coordinator, Office of Accountability, WVDE

Stephanie Hayes, Coordinator, Office of Student Support and Well-Being, WVDE

Matthew Hicks, Director, Office of Accountability, WVDE

Derek Lambert, Manager, Office of Leadership Development and Support, WVDE

## **Focus Area 1: Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP)**

### **June 2021 Points of Noncompliance:**

- The Team determined an Annual CSCP Plan was not developed in order to coordinate and implement a counseling program designed to address student needs.
- Consistency of interview responses confirmed school level administrators do not support and monitor the development of an Annual CSCP Plan aligned with WVBE policy requirements.
- The Team requested a sample of 72 randomly selected Personalized Education Plans (PEPs). Of the requested plans, 33 were produced and made available to the Team. No plans had been reviewed annually, nor were they signed and dated by the student, parent, advisor, and counselor.
- Evidence did not support school counselors spending at least 80 percent of work time in a direct counseling relationship with pupils, with no more than 20 percent of the workday devoted to administrative activities.
- Evidence and data collected did not support the use of the WV Educator Evaluation System by school leadership to promote professional growth and development for school counselors and ensure the effectiveness of the CSCP.
- The Team determined the WV School Counseling Audit is not utilized effectively to assess the school counseling program in comparison with the WV School Counseling Model.

### **January 2022 Status Update:**

- Both Jefferson High School and Washington High School completed an Annual CSCP Plan utilizing a new WVDE template. These plans were submitted to the WVDE for review at the time of the visit, in accordance with the action plan.
- Documentation and consistency of interview comments revealed each school has established a School Counseling Advisory Council comprised of stakeholders to provide feedback on the school's CSCP Plan and the general function of the counseling department.
- Principals and counselors described a collaborative, data-driven approach was used to create the Annual CSCP plans. While one staff member may have been tasked with entering information into the template, input was sought from multiple stakeholders, including Local School Improvement Councils (LSICs) and School Leadership Teams.
- Principal interview comments indicated counselors are making progress toward established goals in the action plan. Counselor evaluation goals for the Educator Evaluation System have been submitted and reviewed.

## **Focus Area 2: Grading, Transcribing, and Scheduling**

### **June 2021 Points of Noncompliance:**

- Master Schedules for both schools contained course codes with “C” in the fifth position, indicated students are receiving an embedded credit.
- Review of school master schedules and the Jefferson County Schools Program of Study Handbook showed incorrect use of course code numbers and course titles in school master schedules. Course code numbers, course titles, and course descriptions are WVEIS standards assigned by the WVDE Office of Data Management and Information Systems.
- Teachers were assigned and teaching AP courses without completing the required AP Summer Institute prior to teaching the courses.
- Staff members were working outside the areas of endorsement specified on their certificates.
- Teacher of record data was not entered into WVEIS in an accurate manner. One school master schedule indicated an administrator was assigned students for classes every period of the school day.
- An administrator tasked with conducting professional evaluations held a Provisional Administrative Certificate and had not attended the required Evaluation Leadership Institute.
- Students and parents were not given the opportunity to develop and update individualized course selections through the PEP process.
- Some students were not scheduled in credit-earning courses to fulfill graduation requirements for a full instructional day.
- Students in some CTE courses received too many credits for work completed while attending school. Students cannot receive credit for the same course twice.
- It was not verified the principals and school personnel monitor and update records of student progress for student, parent, and teacher information.
- As indicated in a letter to Jefferson County parents, student transcripts and grade point averages had to be corrected due to data not entered into WVEIS in a timely and accurate manner.
- Jefferson County Schools transcribed Pass/Fail grades for students testing out of classes. Students received credit, but the grade was not computed in the student’s grade point average.

### **January 2022 Status Update:**

- A total of thirty-nine student PEPs were reviewed by the Team.
  - » Of those thirty-nine PEPs: a career cluster had been selected on twenty-five; the career interest portion was complete on sixteen; and a program of study or CTE program of study had been completed on sixteen.
  - » All grade nine and ten students should have completed the two-year plan. The two-year plan was complete on thirty-three of the thirty-nine PEPs submitted.
  - » All grade eleven and twelve students should have completed the three-year plan. Of the twenty-five PEPs requiring completion of the three-year plan, ten were complete. The “first year after high school” portion of the PEP was complete on fourteen of twenty-five applicable PEPs.

- Counselor interviews indicated a copy of the PEP is sent home with the student to obtain parent input and a parent signature. Eleven of the thirty-nine PEPs submitted for review had been signed and dated by the student, parent, advisor, and counselor.
- Interview comments revealed the process of reviewing PEPs with students has been difficult but is approximately fifty percent complete. Counselors indicated review meetings with students are driven by conversations with students about their future goals. Some counselors mentioned they find the process of reviewing PEPs beneficial, as it allows them the opportunity to spend time with each student. Many students reported having meetings to review PEPs; however, some students did not articulate awareness of the PEP plan or its purpose.
- Counselors described the process to enroll a new student varies based on factors such as the student's grade level, the transferring state or district, and the availability of the student's transcript.
- Principal interview comments revealed scheduling nights, phone calls, and inviting parents are methods utilized to seek parent and student input into the scheduling process. One principal reported the number of parents entering the building to meet with school counselors has increased this year, with a counselor confirming during interviews, "I have parents who email or message me with scheduling requests all the time."
- Documentation added to the digital action plan platform indicated the administrator with incorrect certification had attended the Evaluation Leadership Institute but his status had not been updated. Central office interviews indicated the Human Resources office assisted in ensuring proper certifications for all administrators. WVDE Office of Certification records confirmed all administrators currently hold the appropriate certification.
- Interview comments described efforts to address the need for certified teachers include promoting the district as a positive work environment, providing mentorship and coaching, and supporting substitutes and new teachers in obtaining certifications.
- During the January 2022 visit, Team members conducted collaborative transcript review sessions with the counselors, principals, the Director of High Schools, and the WVEIS Support Facilitator. The results of this process indicated further support in the area of transcribing appropriate credits is necessary in order to ensure compliance with WVBE Policy 2510 and state and local graduation requirements.

### **Focus Area 3: Communication and Customer Service**

#### **June 2021 Points of Noncompliance:**

- The Team determined responsive services, as described in WVBE Policy 2315, Section 5.1.c., were not provided in a consistent and timely manner to those students requiring immediate and expert response to assist with an academic, emotional, or behavioral crisis.
- Evidence revealed a negative climate and culture within the counseling office prevented the effective coordination of student support services.

#### **January 2022 Status Update:**

- Counselors indicated wait time for a student to see a counselor is between zero and twenty-four hours, depending on the urgency of the student's need. Adjustments have been made to the counselors' work schedules to ensure a counselor is present from 7:30am-4pm. Additionally, counselors have staggered lunch times to provide additional accessibility. Interview responses indicated the addition of a clerk in the counseling office of each school has provided for more efficient and timely service to students.
- Some student interview comments indicated the continued perception of long wait times and a lack of responsiveness from the counseling departments. One student articulated the procedure for seeing the school counselor is "to make an appointment on the kiosk and hope they get back to you." Another student stated when they email counselors, the counselors rarely respond. Another student reported waiting three weeks to see a counselor.
- A counseling exit survey has been implemented within the counseling office of each school. After a student has seen the school counselor, the counseling clerk reminds the student to fill out the survey before returning to class. Most respondents to the survey indicated they were greeted upon arrival to the counseling office. Additionally, most respondents reported the school counselor was able to resolve their concerns.



## ***Focus Area 4: Central Office Support***

### **June 2021 Points of Noncompliance:**

- School Annual CSCP Plans were not monitored by the central office to ensure they met WVBE policy requirements and supported student success. Staff did not articulate specific processes for ensuring those requirements were met.
- The Team determined not all school counselors have access to high quality county level professional and personalized learning experiences that focus on their individual professional growth. From April 2020 through June 2021, twenty-two virtual school counselor meetings were hosted by WVDE staff. Of those twenty-two meetings, at least one Jefferson County high school counselor participated in nine.

### **January 2022 Status Update:**

- The superintendent reported meeting monthly with lead counselors to obtain progress updates and provide support.
- A plan was developed at the district level, in collaboration with counseling staff, to complete CSCP Plans, PEP and transcript reviews, and goal-setting.
- The Program of Studies Handbook was revised through a Program of Studies Review Committee with the support of the Director of High Schools and WVDE staff. The Program of Studies is published and available for review on the Jefferson County Schools website.
- A WVEIS Support Facilitator has been hired at the central office to provide one-on-one support for accurate data entry, including WVEIS course codes.
- The High School Counselor job description has been revised to align with WVBE Policy 2513 and the American School Counseling Association (ASCA).
- Jefferson County Schools has created and advertised a central office position to support counseling services within the schools. At the time of the review, a suitable candidate had not been retained to fill this position.

## Conclusion

- The WVDE School Counseling Coordinator has reviewed each school's CSCP Plan draft and will be meeting with school counselors to make suggestions for revision and provide ongoing support for the implementation of the CSCP Plans.
- While the satisfaction survey tool is providing perceptual data from those students visiting the counseling department, the Team recommended the survey be expanded to include the perceptions of all stakeholders on the effectiveness and efficiency of the counseling services provided to students in Jefferson County's high schools.
- Throughout interviews, the Team observed resistance to the process and interview respondents did not articulate a collective understanding of the rationale for improvement to current practices.
- The Team recommended district leadership identify the root causes of the observed resistance and work to create and ensure a collective understanding and commitment to the improvement process.
- During follow-up conversations, Jefferson County central office staff indicated the process of revising and correcting student transcripts has been negatively impacted by the resistance of some staff to follow WVDE recommendations.
- While both schools have made progress in addressing the identified deficiencies in the original report, the Team determined additional time and support from the WVDE is needed to fully address the recommendations. Support and monitoring for an additional six months is recommended.





W. Clayton Burch  
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools