

Logan County Schools Special Circumstance Review Update

July 2024



Background

At the specific request of the State Superintendent of Schools, the Office of Support and Accountability conducted an unannounced special circumstance review of Logan County Schools, commencing September 15, 2022, to investigate official complaints regarding board governance and central office leadership submitted to the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), in addition to documentation submitted to the WVDE through a routine Federal Programs Monitoring. Additionally, the county superintendent met with the State Superintendent of Schools and requested support regarding the recent actions of some county board of education members and the assistant superintendent circumventing the superintendent.

The review process was conducted as outlined in West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) Policy 2322: West Virginia System of Support and Accountability. The Review included interviews with central office and school-based personnel, in addition to a review of documents and data made available to the team. A team consisting of staff members from the WVDE compiled the data collected during the Review to identify the findings and recommendations contained in this report. The report was presented to the WVBE at a Special Meeting on October 27, 2022, resulting in an immediate and ongoing intervention by the WVBE. The WVBE was last updated on Logan County Schools on December 13, 2023.

Notable Areas of Progress

- » Principals at all programmatic levels have been asked to incorporate a “skill block” into the master schedule for students to receive targeted instruction for specific standards based on data analysis.
- » High school staff members requested a review of existing credit recovery policy and procedures. The director of secondary education will be working with a committee of high school stakeholders during the 2024-2025 school term to determine next steps.
- » Secondary master schedules for the 2024-2025 school year were requested to be developed by February 1, 2024. Principals met individually with both the director of secondary education and superintendent to address any concerns or obstacles, to brainstorm best scenarios, and to receive feedback on future plans.
- » Central office administrators worked in partnership with a team of principals from each programmatic level to establish an updated online template for completing Walk-Throughs. Form “look fors” for the elementary template are based on the Science of Reading and the Mathematical Habits of Mind with the secondary template based on Marzano and Hattie strategies. Principals have the expectation of being in the classroom daily to monitor instruction.

- » To help ensure that all professional and service staff members believe that they are supported by the central office, the awards programs to nominate and select the Logan County Schools Teacher of the Year and the Logan County Schools Service Personnel of the Year have been revamped to be more inclusive of all employees and to encourage each school and/or department within the district to participate in the nomination process. An Employee of the Year Awards Banquet was held to honor all nominees and to announce the respective winners moving on to represent Logan County Schools at the state level.
- » Planned principal meetings include activities such as award presentations, team-building activities, and networking opportunities among administrators. This has resulted in the building of trust, increased communication, and has solidified the importance of working together.
- » To give all professional staff a voice, a five-question survey was created in December 2023 with questions focusing on student achievement (positives, negatives, and changes needed). The survey was anonymous and distributed to approximately 550 staff members via email with 201 professional staff members (37%) responding. The results are being used for planning purposes and will assist in guiding several decisions moving forward.
- » The practice of administrators being evaluated by a panel of central office staff members was disbanded in the spring of 2023. School principals prepared for their summative evaluations by reviewing their work related to standards and yearly goals which were established in the fall, providing a self-rating, and compiling supportive data. An evaluation conference was conducted with the superintendent and the director having supervisory responsibility for that programmatic level. By using the West Virginia Educator Evaluation System to address performance expectations and performance for school leaders, the evaluation process promotes professional growth.
- » To continue efforts in maintaining the primary focus on student achievement and to assist with planning for professional development for the school administrators, each month during regularly scheduled principal meetings, attendees are asked to respond to a question related to leadership goals, school practices, student achievement, etc. The responses are compiled and used to inform future professional development. An example of this practice is the request from secondary school principals for more training on WVBE Policy 2510: Assuring the Quality of Education. On April 25, 2024, Joey Wiseman, WVDE Director of Student Enrichment, presented information and addressed questions regarding updates and changes to this policy.
- » In February 2024, the federal programs director began conducting monthly collaborative meetings with all Title I Teachers to support the implementation of the Science of Reading, diagnostic tools, deep dives into data, and further understanding of policy and expectations.
- » To meet the needs of staff members in providing quality instruction leading to increased student learning, several months of preparation have occurred to provide a 2024 Logan County Schools Summer Teacher Academy the week of July 22 (secondary 6-12) and July 29 (elementary PK-5). Follow-up dates are set for September which will also include support for school administrators in monitoring the implementation of the instructional strategies. A full day of review has been set aside in October for all instructional staff and administrators.
- » At the closing principal meeting for the 2023-2024 school year, school administrators were reminded that student achievement must be everyone's top priority.