

## **Churchill County School District Accountability Analysis**

The Churchill County School District Accountability Report for School year 1998-1999 was in compliance with both the spirit and letter of the law. There is congruency between data and those areas reported an exemplary and well as those areas reported to be in need of improvement. Several suggestions are made for improving the content and process of future reports.

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to the evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted to the State Board of Education and LeBEAPE in Part I school reports and Part II district-wide reports.*

### **Number of Pupils**

The Churchill Country School District served 4,824 students in 1998-1999, an increase of 1% over the previous year. Students attended schools at eight different locations, including a pre-school, five elementary schools, a junior high, and a high school.

### **Student Attendance Rate**

The attendance rate for the 1998-1999 school year was 93.7%, just slightly lower than the rate of 93.9% for the previous year. Attendance rates for individual schools varied from 92.5% at Churchill County High School to 95.6% at West End Elementary.

### **Teacher Absence Rate**

The teacher attendance rate in 1998-1999 was 92.9%, a slight increase over the rate for the 92.6% previous school year.

### **Dropout and Non-Promotion Rates**

The district reported a dropout rate of 4.0%, down from 6.6% the previous year. The district reported an overall rate of 1% of students being retained in grade level; the highest non-promotion rate reported was first grade, which had a 5% retention rate.

### **Truancy Rate**

The district reported a truancy rate of 2.6%; the two schools with the highest rates were Churchill County High School (7.0%) and Lahontan Elementary School (4.6%).

### **Transiency Rate**

The district showed a transiency rate of 25%, the same as the previous year. Lahontan Elementary had the highest rate in the district (37%), followed by Numa Elementary (32%); while Northside Elementary and Churchill County Junior High had the lowest rate (18%).

## Student/Teacher Ratios

Teacher/student ratios in most elementary grades had a range of three or less; first grade classes, for example, showed a low of 1:15 and a high of 1:17 and fifth grade classes ranged from 1:27 to 1:29. There were some exceptions: Lahontan Elementary had a 1:25 ratio in the sixth grade, whereas the sixth grades in the four other schools had a 1:29 ratio. High school ratios in core courses ranged from 1:23 to 1:29. In general, the ratios were comparable to those from the previous year.

## Student / Counselor Rate

The Churchill County School District showed a counselor/student ratio of 1:482, which is a slight increase over the previous year. The range was 1:358 to 1:693.

## Suspension / Expulsion Rate

The district reported 201 instances of students being suspended or expelled; of these, 156 disciplinary actions (77.6%) were taken for violence to other students. Most suspensions for violence toward students in 1998-99 took place at the junior high (53), followed by the high school and West End Elementary (34 each). The previous year's report showed only 80 students being suspended/expelled for incidents in this category district-wide.

## State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova: Fourth Grade

### Terra Nova Results 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
<b>Reading</b>	37	21	18.9	15	15	22.6	39	49	54
<b>Language</b>	39	28	23.8	18	19	28.6	39	44	53
<b>Math</b>	35	22	17.4	12	23	29.5	39	52	59
<b>Science</b>	31	13	14.9	17	22	24.1	42	56	57

District scores at the fourth grade showed a consistent pattern of improvement over the three- year-period from 1997 to 1999. These trends were also notable on a school-by-school basis; for example, E. C. Best Elementary, which had been designated as a school "In Need of Improvement" in 1997-1998, lowered its percentage of students in the bottom quarter in reading from 44% to 21 %, while doubling its percentage in the top quarter from 8% to 16%.

**State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova: Eighth Grade**

**Terra Nova Results  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Reading	22	16	18.4	27	27	34.4	55	56	59
Language	23	24	20.7	26	23	26.6	52	51	55
Math	26	27	21.8	28	26	31.1	50	51	56
Science	17	12	17.4	26	20	27.1	55	54	57

Test scores at Churchill County Junior High showed a trend toward improvement in all four tested areas. Though changes were not large, they were still notable.

**State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova: Tenth Grade**

**Terra Nova Results  
10<sup>th</sup> Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Reading	16	17	17.7	32	32	31.1	60	61	60
Language	16	16	16.8	26	30	28.6	55	58	58
Math	17	25	22.6	28	30	26.9	57	53	55
Science	10	7	12.5	37	30	38.6	66	64	66

Average percentile ranks at Churchill County High School also showed small but steady growth over the three-year-period. Such growth was particularly notable since the school started with above-average scores; for example, the percent of students scoring in the top quarter in science improved from 37% to 40% during this time.

**State Mandated Test Results: Writing Exam**

**Writing Examination  
4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

MEASURED TRAIT	PERCENT PROFICIENT					
	4 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE			8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Ideas	NA	NR	62.1	56.0	83.0	80.4
Organization	NA	NR	58.9	57.0	81.0	76.1
Voice	NA	NR	59.7	53.0	75.9	76.4
Conventions	NA	NR	57.0	66.0	72.3	66.5

Over half of the students in Churchill County, at both 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, showed proficiency in each of the four categories measured by the state writing examination. **Eighth grade** scores were consistently higher than those for 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

### State Mandated Test Results: High School Proficiency Exam

High School Proficiency Examination									%		
PERCENT PASSING									DENIED DIPLOMA		
READING			MATH			WRITING					
96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99
98.0	92.8	99.1	100.0	96.0	98.3	100.0	96.8	99.1	NA	NA	2

After a decline in all three areas in 1997-98, the district showed an improvement in all three measured areas in 1998-99. Ninety-eight percent of seniors passed the proficiency examination.

### ACT / SAT Results

#### ACT Results

% SENIORS TAKING ACT			ACT COMPOSITE SCORE		
1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
51	40	53	22.1	21.9	21.9

#### SAT Results

% SENIORS TAKING SAT			SAT VERBAL AVERAGE			SAT MATH AVERAGE		
96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99
30	14	16	418	508	578	508	496	560

The percentage of seniors taking the ACT examinations decreased in 1998-99 from 1997-1998 an increased slightly for those taking the SAT. Scores on the ACT have remained steady at 22 over the last three years. Scores of 1999 graduates on the SAT represented an improvement on both the Verbal and Math portions over those of the prior year, resulting in an average composite score of 1138. Churchill County students' average scores exceeded the national average on both these tests.

### Special Programs

District-wide in Churchill County, 18% of elementary students participated in special education programs, an increase of 3% over the previous year; participation at the secondary level was 11%. At the elementary level, 100% of students participated in art, music, physical education, and computer instruction. Thirty-percent of elementary

students participated in the free-and-reduced price meal program.

At the elementary level, 5% of students were in the gifted and talented program; at the high school, 4% of students were in advanced placement courses, and 37% took a foreign language course. Special education participation was up 1% at both secondary schools from 12 to 13 percent at the junior high school and from 9 to 10 percent at the high school

### **Teachers**

All of the teachers in Churchill County hold licenses in their teaching fields. Data on teacher education and experience reflected a stable teaching force. Although nearly half of the faculty (49%) has ten or more years of experience, comparatively few teachers hold advanced degrees, as previously noted. Persons outside their respective area of licensure taught none of the core secondary courses.

### **Technology / Computers**

The overall computer/student ratio in the district was reported at 1:8 with 1:10 being the highest at any school. All computers available for student instructional use were at the Pentium level and use Windows 95. Internet connectivity greatly increased, and the number of classroom computers (as opposed to those in labs) grew from 64 to 254. District fiscal commitment for technology remained high, and the district took significant steps to meet recommendations given in the previous report.

### **Remedial College Courses (UCCSN Class Enrollments).**

The Churchill County School District reported that 7% of their recent graduates enrolled in remedial courses.

### **Expenditures**

For the 1998-99 school year, the district showed a per-pupil expenditure for instruction at \$3,924, slightly lower than the state average, and a decrease from \$4,063 the previous year. On the other hand, per-pupil expenditures for administration rose \$521 to \$712, about \$100 above the state average. Increases were also noted in the areas of operations, staff support, and student support.

### **Parent Involvement**

The percentage of parents attending the first school conference was reported as 47%, similar to the 48% reported in the previous year. At the elementary level, these figures ranged from a low of 51% at Numa Elementary to a high of 96% at West End. The figures for the junior high (15%) and the high school (7%) were significantly below those for the earlier grades. The previous year each secondary school showed an 11% rate of involvement, and this continued to be quite low.

- 2. Areas the School Districts' Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year and evidence that the areas were exemplary or improved.*

The Churchill County School District showed considerable improvement in student achievement as measured by required examinations. Staff development was provided in several areas to support faculty with curriculum improvement and integration of technology. Over the three-year period covered in this report, the high school dropout rate was reduced from 11% to 4%; new alternative education programs were used in this effort. Churchill County High School reported that all advanced placement English students who took the national test in 1999 scored high enough to receive college credit for their work. (The number or percent of these students who took the national AP English test was not reported which the review panel believes to be of importance and interest.) The district also made considerable progress in the area of technology use.

- 3. Areas the School Districts' Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site(s) and evidence for any deficiencies addressed.*

The district had identified student attainment of academic skills as a major priority, and took steps at both the district and school level to improve results. Honors programs were expanded, and alternative education programs established. Technological capacity within the district was also been greatly enhanced.

Each school report gave solid evidence of progress toward goals in these areas and outlined the steps taken to achieve such growth.

- 4. Summary of the School Districts' plan for improvement at the school site.*

District-wide and at the individual schools, there were clear presentations of past goals, and data relevant to the achievement of such goals were provided. Schools reports provided evidence of activities such as the implementation of a writing improvement plan and expansion of tutoring programs. These are commendable. What would be useful, however, is to supplement the look backward with a look forward what are the goals for the future and what steps are being taken to reach them?

- 5. Sources of information to be used in determining effectiveness of the plan for improvement.*

The district report relied upon scores on state-mandated exams, attendance rates, fiscal information, etc. This material was presented accurately and in clear, accessible formats.

- 6. Missing or incomplete data.*

Except as noted in section 4 above, the Churchill County School District provided all data required for the accountability process.

7. *Recommendations of Panel members for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school level and, if applicable, at the district level.*
1. Statements of past goals and progress toward them were well covered in the report. However, given the timing of the accountability process, the district should also be able to provide insight on future goals and the activities planned to achieve them. No doubt, given recent accomplishments, such plans exist, and inclusion of them would reinforce the focus on continual improvement, which the district appears to be implementing.
2. Parental involvement in the district, especially at the secondary level, continues to be quite low. The district should develop plans at the individual school level to increase such involvement, using a variety of methods, especially at the secondary level. Although this report used data only from the first parent conference, other indicators could be developed at the local level.