

Storey County School District Accountability Analysis

While high achievement by students in the Storey County School District continues there is a need to improve the district reporting system. New federal regulations make this need more imperative. This report, however, represents a significant improvement over the reports of the previous two years. A number of suggestions/recommendations are contained in this review to assist the district in moving forward towards meeting state and federal reporting requirements.

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

Number of Pupils

The Storey County School District is comprised of two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The district served 458 students in 1999-2000, a 9.7% decrease in enrollment from the previous year.

Student Attendance Rate

The district-wide attendance rate was 94%, the same as the prior year's rate. The attendance rate at Hillside Elementary School was 96%, while it was 93% at the other three schools in the district.

Teacher Attendance Rate

The teacher attendance rate was 88% compared with 91% in the previous year. Per the school district, the lower attendance rate was attributed to 1.5 FTE teachers being absent for most of the school year due to illness (1.5 FTE represents approximately 4% of certified staff).

Dropout and Non-Promotion Rates

The dropout rate for grades 9-12 was 1% compared with the previous year's 3.3%. No students were retained in 1999-2000. In the previous year this category was not reported. According to page 229 of the state data tables, 5% of ninth graders had accumulated too few credits to be considered tenth graders the following school year. This was inconsistent with the data on page 9 of the state data tables. The district report showed that no ninth graders had credit deficiencies, and this was consistent with page 9 of the state data tables.

Student Completion Indices

All 20 seniors at Storey County High School received a standard diploma.

Transiency Rate

The district transiency rate rose to 29% compared to the previous year's 27%. Gallagher Elementary School led the district with a 44% rate, while Hillside Elementary School reported a rate of 39%.

Student/Teacher Ratios

According to state data tables, Storey County student-to-teacher ratios were 10:1 in kindergarten, 11.8:1 in grade one, 14.5:1 in grade two, and 16.5:1 in grade 3. The fourth grade had a 23.5:1 ratio, while the fifth grade had a 14:1 ratio, and the ratio in sixth grade was 13:1. Inaccuracies were evident in the school reports of student-to-teacher ratios at the two elementary schools. The two schools listed identical ratios, but different ratios were listed for the district as a whole. The state data tables reflected the district-wide ratios given in the district report. The district report listed average class sizes for each elementary content area at the two elementary schools – average class sizes of eight for Hillside and 17 for Gallagher. These numbers were not consistent with the ratios listed in the state data tables or in reports for the two individual elementary schools.

In the state data tables secondary class sizes were listed, ranging from nine in high school math classes to 20 in middle school social studies classes. These sizes were consistent with those in the district report.

Student/Counselor Ratio

The district student-to-counselor ratio was 204:1, one of the lowest ratios in the state.

Suspension/Expulsion Rate

District-wide, the elementary schools reported 14 suspensions or expulsions due violence to other students, all of these occurring at Gallagher Elementary School. At the secondary level, there was one case of violence to staff, three incidents of weapon possession, seven cases of alcohol possession, four cases of alcohol/drug distribution, five incidents of drug possession, and 17 instances of student-to-student violence. The district report listed a total of 42 suspensions for these violations, but the individual entries totaled 51.

Numbers of Habitual Disciplinary Problem Students

Though the state data tables listed 42 students as expelled as habitual disciplinary problems, the district reported that there were no habitual disciplinary problem students.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova: Fourth Grade

**TerraNova Results
4th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Reading	10	0.0	6.7	13	47.8	33.3	55	73	72
Language	24	8.7	6.7	14	39.1	40.0	48	72	72
Math	16	19.2	5.9	13	26.9	23.5	52	64	64
Science	13	0.0	0.0	22	38.5	44.0	59	68	70

The reading average percentile rank was 72 – the highest for any district in the state. Language achievement has been at the 72nd percentile for two consecutive years. Math and science scores, at the 64th and the 70th percentiles, were also the highest for any district in the state. One hundred percent of eligible fourth graders were tested. Four of the 17 fourth graders were exempted due to special education classification.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova: Eighth Grade

**TerraNova Results
8th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Reading	0	3.2	5.3	34	45.2	47.0	68	71	71
Language	11	16.1	18.4	21	32.3	39.5	55	61	67
Math	23	19.4	18.4	32	45.2	39.5	55	66	67
Science	4	6.5	5.3	31	32.3	47.4	63	65	77

Reading was well above the state average at the 51st percentile with a district average at the score of 71st percentile. Language scores rose to the 67th percentile, well above the state average at the 51st percentile. Math, at the 67th percentile, was also well above the state average percentile. In science, the average Storey County eighth grade score at the 77th percentile was much higher than the state average at the 48th percentile. Of eligible eighth graders, 97.4% were tested, according to state data tables.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova: Tenth Grade

**TerraNova Results
10th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Reading	10	12.1	7.9	23	45.5	39.5	58	72	69
Language	21	15.2	7.9	21	30.3	23.7	47	56	60
Math	20	19.4	17.6	17	25.8	32.4	47	57	58
Science	6	12.1	10.3	34	51.5	64.1	66	73	77

Reading scores have improved over the two-year period from the 58th to the 69th percentile, and were well above the state average percentile. Language scores also improved from the 56th percentile to the 60th percentile. Math scores were in the same situation, improving from the 57th percentile to the 58th percentile. Science scores in this two-year period remained well above the state average percentile and increased from the 73rd percentile to the 77th. State data tables were confusing as to the percent of eligible tenth graders at Virginia City High School who were tested. Though enrollment at time of testing was listed as 38, forty students were reported to have been tested, for a report of 108.1% of eligible students tested. The school report showed that two students did not take the tests.

State Mandated Test Results: Writing Exams

**Writing Examination
4th and 8th Grades**

MEASURED TRAIT	PERCENT PROFICIENT					
	4 TH GRADE			8 TH GRADE		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Ideas	NR	NR	50	72.1	82.9	85.4
Organization	NR	NR	45.9	72.1	71.4	83.8
Voice	NR	NR	41.7	65.1	80	75.6
Convention	NR	NR	56.5	67.4	74.3	81.1

Storey County did not report fourth grade scores for the two prior years. The district report did not include district-wide percentages of fourth graders proficient in each of the four writing traits or the percent of fourth graders proficient in all four writing traits in 2000-2001. The data above came from the state data tables. The individual

school reports included the percentages of students proficient in all four writing traits, 12.5% at Hillside and 50% at Gallagher. However, these school reports labeled the writing exam report, "Percent of Students Proficient in the Four Content Areas." Such a label would be confusing to parents since all four areas tested are writing traits, not content areas.

At the eighth grade level, the traits of Ideas, Organizations, and Conventions showed substantial improvement over the two-year period. Voice, however, showed a slight decline as compared with the previous year. The percent demonstrating proficiency in each trait was higher than the statewide average. The district did not report the percent proficient in all four writing traits.

State Mandated Test Results: High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE)

High School Proficiency Examination									% DID NOT EARN DIPLOMA		
PERCENT PASSING											
READING			MATH			WRITING					
97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
96	96	100	96	96	100	96	96	100	NA	0.0	0.0

For the school year 1999-2000, 100% of Storey County seniors demonstrated proficiency in all three areas tested.

ACT/SAT Results

ACT Results

% SENIORS TAKING ACT			ACT COMPOSITE SCORE		
97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
43.5	13.1	45	19.2	20.9	21.0

The percentage of seniors taking the ACT exam jumped from 13.1% in the previous year to 45% in 1999-2000. The ACT composite average remained about the same.

SAT Results

% SENIORS TAKING SAT			SAT VERBAL AVERAGE			SAT MATH AVERAGE		
97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
13.0	3.6	5.0	592	508	440	580	456	470

The percentage of seniors taking the ACT exam jumped from 13.1% in the previous year to 45% in 1999-2000. The ACT composite average remained about the same. The

percentage of seniors taking the SAT exam showed a slight increase from 3.6% to 5.0%, still considerably below the state average participation rate of 34%. The SAT verbal average for Storey County seniors dipped from 508 to 440; the SAT math average increased from 456 to 470. The statewide SAT averages were 510 on the verbal measures and 517 on math measures. Because of the small number of students taking these college entrance exams, no meaningful conclusions can/should be drawn.

Special Programs

The curriculum is typical of a small school system. All the elementary students have art, music, and physical education. Computer education programming included 87% of Gallagher students and 71% of Hillside students. Twenty-three percent of elementary students were enrolled in special education programs. Enrollment in gifted programming included 3% of Gallagher students and 7% of Hillside students. Thirty percent of elementary students received free or reduced-price lunches. After-school care was provided for 11% of students.

State data tables showed "NR" for secondary school special education participation, though the district report showed 18% at Virginia City Middle School and 17% at Virginia City High School. No advanced placement classes were offered. The district report showed that 100% of middle school students and 40% of high school students were enrolled in computer education. Occupational education was provided to 7% of the students at Virginia City High School. The district report showed a district-wide average of 66% in athletics, but this was inconsistent with the 65% listed for Virginia City Middle School and the 27% listed for Virginia City High School. Secondary music and art participation declined dramatically from the prior year. Music enrollment dropped from 100% to 25% at Virginia City Middle School and from 41% to 2% at Virginia City High School. Art enrollment dropped from 100% to 27% at Virginia City Middle School and from 27% to 4% at Virginia City High School.

Teachers

The district lowered the percentage of teachers holding only a bachelor's degree from 73% to 67%. Thirty-three percent of Storey County teachers held advanced degrees. State data tables showed "NR" (No Report) for the teaching experience for Storey County. The district report showed 15% of teachers were new, 26% had one to three years of experience and 59% had four or more years of experience. These are distinctly different categories than those prescribed for the state report. Only 3% of the teachers were teaching out of their areas of licensure. The only instance of a class taught out of a teacher's licensed area was one class of government at Virginia City High School.

Technology/Computers

The student-to-computer ratio for the district ranged from 2:1 at Gallagher Elementary School to 6:1 at Hillside Elementary School. The state data tables showed

“NR” for the student-to-computer ratios for the secondary schools, but the district reported ratios of 5:1 at the middle school and 4:1 at the high school. Three-fourths of the district’s students have computer classes. There is one computer in each classroom, computers in administrative offices, libraries, and a computer lab in each secondary school, most of which have Internet access. A filter for the same has been provided. Hillside Elementary School did not have connections to the district network or the Internet. This effort represents considerable progress in this area.

University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN) Remedial Class Enrollments

Of the recent graduates of Virginia City High School enrolled at Nevada colleges and universities, 37.5% percent were enrolled in remedial classes at UCCSN.

Expenditures

Total per-pupil expenditure was \$8,185, an increase over the \$7,049 spent in the prior year. Per-pupil expenditures for instruction totaled \$4,200, an increase from the previous year’s instructional expenditures of \$3,663.

Storey County received Title I funds of \$19,308 and state remediation funds of \$57,143. The Nevada Gaming Board provided \$80,000 for an after-school remediation, program in 1999-2000. Grants and donations provided funds for improving school grounds, facilities, and technology purchases.

Parent Involvement

The attendance at parent-teacher conferences rose to a “high” attendance rating compared with the previous year’s 50%. Ninety-five percent of the elementary school parents attended a conference. A variety of activities involving parents were cited in the individual school reports.

2. *Areas the school district’s Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievements at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year.*

Specific improvements listed in the Hillside Elementary School report were the hiring of a part-time music teacher, software additions, and an aide working with at-risk students in math and reading. Gallagher Elementary School featured teacher in-service in technology and purchase of software, increased attention to building maintenance, and an administrative reassignment, which freed up time for the principal.

At the secondary level, both the middle school and high school did curriculum mapping and teaching to state curriculum standards. School maintenance and renovation were also featured. Gains were made on the HSPE and a computer-based information

system was installed at Virginia City Middle School. The high school developed a two-week inter-session for enrichment. Remediation courses for the HSPE were also held.

3. *Areas in the school district's Part III Report identified in need of improvement at the school sites and evidence for any deficiencies addressed.*

Technology implementation, teacher training and software purchasing have been ongoing concerns in the district. The hiring of a technology coordinator has been a step forward. The condition of the physical plant is of major concern. Overhaul of the heating and ventilation systems at the high school, and playground and lighting improvements have eased the situation somewhat.

4. *Summary of school district's plan for improvement at the school site.*

A technology coordinator was hired and has been successful. The Artists-in-Residence program has a good track record. A variety of career days, parent workdays, and increased technology in-service and purchasing software are planned.

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

No specific sources of information were included.

6. *Missing or incorrect data.*

Though achievement scores on the TerraNova tests were among the highest in the state in fourth, eighth, and tenth grades, none of the schools identified this performance as exemplary. The areas of improvement and evidence of improvement listed were mostly administrative and focused on means rather than educational outcomes.

While percentages of fourth and eighth graders demonstrating competency in each of the four writing traits were reported, no data were provided in the district report on the percentages proficient in all four writing traits, though the table in the district report was headed "Writing Exam, % Passing all FOUR Traits." The district report did not provide district-wide percentages on individual writing traits, but rather listed each elementary school separately. Individual school reports mistakenly labeled the writing traits as "content areas."

The student-to-computer ratios appeared to have been listed in reverse in the district report, giving the impression that there were more computers than students.

The total number of expulsions or suspensions was not consistent with the numbers of individual infractions listed in the district report.

Average class sizes were inconsistent in different parts of the district and school reports.

A number of other data inconsistencies appeared between the state data tables and the district and school reports, and many of these have specified above.

7. Recommendations of Panel members for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school site and, if applicable, at the district level.

Though the Storey County accountability process has improved, further improvement is needed with more attention to clarity and accuracy and more focus on educational outcomes rather than administrative measures or physical changes.

The Storey County School District should develop and implement a plan to improve teacher attendance, which at 88% is far below any other district in Nevada.

It is recommended that the district avail itself of the services provided by the Regional Professional Development Programs.

Storey County should develop a more direct link between district and individual site goals, program development, and evaluation of program effectiveness.

The district needs to use accountability data to implement state standards and to determine professional development needs of teachers and administrators.

The district should begin addressing other issues tied to student performance such as the high percentage of students needing be enroll in remedial courses in the USSCN.