

Eureka County School District Accountability Analysis

The Eureka County School District Report continues to improve over that presented in previous years. All required information was found. Several data errors were found and it is recommended that a clear linkage between accountability data and planning is established in 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 Students

According to data presented in the State School Accountability Data Tables for the 1998-99 School Year, the Eureka County School District experienced a decline in enrollment to 358 students, 5.3% less than enrollment the previous year. These students attended two elementary schools and one high school that served grades seven through twelve.

Student Attendance Rate

The district-wide attendance rate remained steady at 95% in 1998-99.

Teacher Attendance Rate

The average daily attendance of teachers was 96% in 1998-1999, an improvement of 3% from the year before.

Dropout and Non-Promotion Rates

There were no dropouts in the district in 1998-99, a significant improvement from the previous year when ten percent of secondary students dropped out. The reported rate of non-promotion for kindergarten, first grade, and second grade was zero. The retention rates reported for the grades three through six showed that less than one percent of students were retained in grade. The report indicated that 0.5% of students were retained in fourth and sixth grades and 0.1% in the third grade.

Truancy Rate

The 1998-1999 district truancy rate of 0.28% was down slightly from the year before.

Transiency Rate

The 1998-1999 district transiency rate remained at 21%, the same as the previous year.

Student/Teacher Ratios

Teacher/student ratios were low throughout the district during the 1998-1999 school year. The ratio was 1:11 in kindergarten, 1:13 in first and third grade classrooms, 1:10 in second grade, 1:14 in fourth grade, 1:17 in fifth grade and 1:22 in sixth grade. The average size of secondary English classes was 20 students. Core science classes averaged 16. In mathematics the average class size was 14, and in social studies the average was 19. These class sizes, overall, were more balanced than in the previous year when the range was much wider.

Student/Counselor Ratios

Counselor/student ratios were slightly improved from the previous year, due to the reduced enrollments. The ratios were 1:272 and 1:268 at the two elementary schools and 1:616 at the high school level. One of the three guidance and counseling programs designed to improve mentoring, the Big Brother/Big Sister Program, had to be placed on hold due to the reduced availability of revenues caused by declining enrollments. The other two counseling programs, Conflict Management Skill Training and the Natural Helper Program were continued. Critical personal counseling was provided to those students most in need.

Suspension/Expulsion Rate

In 1998-1999 the district reported six suspensions/expulsions due to violence to other students but no other suspensions or expulsions. All six of these incidents were at Eureka High School. The previous year saw three expulsions with one for violence to students, one for drug possession, and one for violence to staff.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova, Fourth Grade

Terra Nova Results 4th 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	15	17	16.7	23	25	16.7	53	62	54
Language	15	12	29.2	41	36	37.5	60	68	54
Math	20	8	17.4	12	33	17.4	45	64	52
Science	11	0	12.5	7	40	16.7	51	73	52

The district reported that 100% of eligible fourth grade students completed the TerraNova tests. When enrollments are very small, as they are in Eureka, year-to-year comparisons of average achievement may reflect more about the particular students in the classes than about the school or the teaching. For instance, while fourth grade scores were higher in 1998, the scores in 1997 and 1999 were very similar. In 1999, the average reading scores were at the 54th percentile while both math and science scores were at the 52nd percentile. In reading, mathematics and language more Eureka County fourth graders scored in the top quarter than in the bottom quarter. In language the proportion of students (38%) scoring in the top quarter was well above the national norms.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova, Eighth Grade

Terra Nova Results 8th 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	5	0	10.0	35	58	45.0	71	81	67
Language	5	5	5.0	40	53	60.0	76	80	73
Math	11	5	5.3	22	47	36.8	61	77	66
Science	0	0	20.0	47	40	30.0	69	75	58

Eighth grade TerraNova test scores revealed that the average performance remained strong. The average achievement rankings ranged from the 58th percentile in science to the 73rd percentile in language. The proportions of eighth grade students whose achievement placed them in the top quarter on national norms were 45% in reading, 37% in mathematics, 60% in language, and 30% in science. This contrasted positively with proportions of students scoring in the bottom quarter – 10% in reading, 5% in mathematics, 5% in language, and 20% in science. One hundred percent of the eligible students took the tests. The caveat on year to year comparisons with small numbers made in the previous section are appropriate here as well

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova, Tenth Grade

Terra Nova Results 10th 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	14	5	0.0	36	53	46.4	67	78	80
Language	9	0	7.1	32	34	28.6	59	73	70
Math	23	14	7.1	18	19	35.7	49	59	68
Science	4	0	3.6	39	34	25.0	73	70	67

Tenth grade TerraNova test results, based on 100% participation of eligible students, indicated achievement similar to or higher than that in the lower grade levels.

The following average percentile ranks were attained by Eureka County School District tenth graders in October, 1999: reading, 80th percentile; mathematics, 68th; language, 70th; and science 67th percentile. The proportions of students scoring in the top quarter on national norms were 46% in reading, 29% in language, 36% in mathematics, and 25% in science. The proportions of students scoring in the bottom quarter were 7% or less in all four areas.

State Mandated Tests: Writing Examinations

**Writing Examination
4th and 8th Grade**

MEASURED TRAIT	PERCENT PROFICIENT					
	4 TH GRADE			8 TH GRADE		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Ideas	NA	NR	52.0	63.3	75.0	92.0
Organization	NA	NR	64.0	62.6	70.0	88.0
Voice	NA	NR	56.0	59.8	80.0	81.0
Conventions	NA	NR	52.0	67.3	85.0	85.0

Fourth Grade: On the fourth grade writing examination, which was administered for the first time in Eureka County School District in 1998-99, the percentages of students demonstrating proficiency were 52% in Ideas, 64% in Organization, 56% in Voice, and 52nd percent in Conventions.

Eighth Grade: Results of the eighth grade writing examination in 1998-1999 reflected greater levels of proficiency than in the year before in two areas: Ideas with 92% of students proficient, and Organization with 88% proficiency. Percentages of students proficient in Voice (81%) and in Conventions (85%) were comparable to performances the year before.

State Mandated Test Results: High School Proficiency Examination

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
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	NA	NA	0.0

At the twelfth grade level on the Nevada High School Proficiency Examination, 100% of Eureka County High School seniors passed in reading, writing, and mathematics. Thus no students were denied graduation on the basis of this assessment.

ACT/SAT Results

ACT Results

% SENIORS TAKING ACT			ACT COMPOSITE SCORE		
1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
79	62	74	20.3	20.7	19.2

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
76	41	52	469	490	477	465	536	480

The average score for the 74% of high school students taking the ACT in 1999 was 19.2, which was down slightly from the year before. Fifty-two percent of graduating seniors took the SAT, with an average verbal score of 477 and an average mathematics score of 480, both slightly below the national average. Eleven percent of Eureka County High School graduates enrolled in remedial UCCSN classes during the summer or fall of 1999.

Special Programs

Participation in elementary special education programs included 23% of students. The proportion of Eureka County elementary students who qualified for free- or reduced-price meals was 27% in 1998-99. No students were enrolled in classes for English as a Second Language, migrant education, gifted and talented, or after school care programs. Sixty-seven percent of elementary students received art instruction and 33% participated in music classes. All elementary students took both computer education and physical education classes.

At the secondary level 18% of students were in special education programs. Music classes enrolled 21% of the students and art classes, 34%. Forty-seven percent of secondary students in Eureka County participated in athletics. Seventy-nine percent of students were enrolled in occupational education courses. No secondary students were involved in classes for English as a Second Language, student parenting, migrant education, advanced placement, or gifted and talented programs. The participation rate in foreign language courses was 21% during 1998-99, consistent with the prior year. The list of high school course offerings shown in the high school report represented a wide variety of options, especially in the Vocational Agriculture and Agricultural Mechanics areas. The range of extra-curricular activities offered was also broad for a relatively small rural school district.

Teachers

The percentage of teachers holding master's degree rose from 10% in 1998 to 14% in 1999 while those with only bachelor's degrees (86%) decreased by 4%. The highly-experienced teaching staff included 72% with ten or more years, 14% with four to six years, 8% with seven to nine years, the remaining 6% being new to the profession. The proportion of the teachers who taught completely within their license and/or endorsement areas was 94% but none of the teachers of English, math, science, social studies or occupational education classes were assigned outside their license or endorsement areas.

Technology/Computers

The Superintendent's section of the district report revealed that Eureka County town schools had access to the Internet via a T-1 digital line to the Nevada Schools Network (NSN) in Reno. Student access for Eureka Elementary School and Eureka County High School Students was directly connected 24 hours a day, seven days per week with a speed throughput of 1.44 MSs. Crescent Valley Elementary School accessed the Internet through the NSN dial-up modem pool in Reno through 8 modems with a speed throughput of 28.8 MBs. All access was provided within the school libraries and computer labs but not in the classrooms. All elementary students had at least one half hour direct use of computers per week that was tied to instruction and curriculum. Thus 100% of students district-wide had such access. The number of instructional computers in use was 91 and the student-to-computer ratio was 4:1 in Eureka County elementary schools and 2.2:1 in Eureka County secondary schools.

Remedial College Courses (UCCSN Class Enrollments)

The Eureka County School District reported that 11% of their recent graduates enrolled in remedial courses.

Expenditures

The average per-pupil expenditure for instruction in Eureka County School District was \$8,647.00. Other per-pupil expenditures included \$2,560 for administration, \$149 for operations, \$188 for staff support, and \$1,042 for student support. Expenditures in each category were considerably above state averages but well below those of the previous year. The sources of revenues reported by percentages consisted of local funds (74.5%), federal funds (0.1%), and opening balances (25.5%). No revenues were received from state funds.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement, as reflected in the first scheduled parent/guardian/teacher conferences, was 87% at each of the elementary schools and 36% at the high school. Other opportunities for parent involvement included fifth and sixth grade science and math parent afternoon (90% participation) at Crescent Valley Elementary School as well

as a parent volunteer program and a Back-to-School Open House Night. At Eureka Elementary School parents were surveyed as to their support for the school's mission and programs and a 28% return rate was attained. High positive responses were noted on "my child's education" and "quality of education at Eureka Elementary School." Need for improvement showed up relative to "communication between parents and teachers".

Parental involvement at the high school level included memberships on an Academic Review Committee and a Technology Committee as well as a Booster Club, which included 43 people. Four school newsletters were sent to parents during the year. Eureka County High School also conducted a survey of parents and guardians. The survey consisted of two questionnaires, each made up of several items with a five-point scale of possible responses and 5 being the most positive response on each. The first survey asked what "most people" think about the school in 10 major areas. Results, using the five-point scale, showed the most favorable ratings to be on security and maintenance (4.12), student activities (4.10), guidance (4.06), and student/peer relationships (4.00). Less positive responses areas were parent/community/school relationships (3.40), administration (3.23), and student behavioral values (3.13). The second survey asked parents to rate their own satisfaction with the school. Results showed the most positive responses in regard to teachers (3.80), school buildings (3.70) support services (3.68) and student discipline (3.51). Less satisfaction was expressed with school administrators (3.10) and school information services (2.90).

- 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.*

Every Eureka County High School senior passed the Nevada High School Proficiency Examination in all three areas. In general students at the secondary level attained scores on achievement tests that compared favorably with students across the nation.

Average scores on the TerraNova tests at all three grade levels - fourth, eighth, and tenth - were above the national averages. On all four areas of the eighth and tenth grade tests and on the fourth grade language tests, more students scored in the top quarter than on the national norms. Also, district-wide, at all three grade levels, smaller proportions of students were in the bottom quarter than on national norms with only one exception, that of fourth grade language.

Eureka County schools offered a safe environment for its students with a very low number of reported incidents of violence and/or possession of weapons or use of controlled substances or alcohol.

The efforts made to involve parents within the district and at all school sites showed concern and sensitivity to their opinions and the desire to help parents be positive resources for improving the educational programs of the schools.

The elimination of student dropouts at all levels of instruction throughout the school system was noted and celebrated.

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.*

Crescent Valley Elementary School identified a need for instruction and practice on test-taking skills and study skills. In 1998-99 each student was evaluated relative to learning style and this information was disseminated to classroom teachers. A need was recognized to provide professional development on how best to use this information to benefit students. The school also recognized a need to recruit parent involvement for a learning "partnership".

Eureka Elementary School's list of needs included developing and annually using a wide array of performance assessments, differentiated and specified at each grade level, and especially at the conclusion of the sixth grade. Another need identified was longitudinal analysis of data from standardized tests and other sources to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional programs and to more accurately identify needs.

Only two areas for improvement were cited in the high school report. The first was to work more closely with the elementary schools to improve students' basic core subject knowledge and performance levels. The second was to involve the outside community more in the school community.

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

The Eureka Elementary Education Plan for Excellence (1998-2000) was included in Part III of the report. It was in the process of being updated for the next three-year period. For the first time in many years, the district had formulated school improvement plans for each of its three schools and included these in Part III along with the 2000 District Impact Survey. The Eureka Elementary School Plan included a vision for sixth grade student performance and means of assessing accomplishments, but did not detail how improvements were to be accomplished. The plan for Crescent Valley Elementary School listed its intentions to assess and plan for improvement, but did not detail specific steps beyond referring students to Title I or special education services and use of diagnostic information in planning remedial efforts.

The need to assist low achieving students as identified by their TerraNova scores in the fourth grade at both elementary schools was to be addressed with tutorial assistance, the use of Success Maker computer software and targeted student instruction.

Secondary achievement was to be addressed by dividing classes to provide more individualized instruction, providing tutoring programs for students scoring in the lower quarter on all sections of the eighth grade TerraNova tests, and use of computer software

to help identify instructional needs and plan remedial efforts.

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

While school accountability data would continue to be the major source of information, the Eureka County schools were moving to supplement these data with local and individualized performance measures, additional test results and alternate measurement strategies. This portion of the Part III report of the district also needed to be more pointed, clear, and explicit.

6. *Missing or incomplete data.*

There was a discrepancy between the data reported in the District Accountability Report and that in the *School Accountability Data Tables* for 1998-99 relative to the percentages of students scoring in the lowest quarter on the TerraNova tests at the fourth grade level.

In reporting student retention figures, an apparent error was made either in calculating the percentages for grade levels where students were held back or in recording these. The percentages shown were in each of three cases less than 1%. Taking into account the number of students at each of these grade levels, this would mean that less than one student was retained.

The cover page of the District Accountability Report listed Neil G. Stevens as the Superintendent, though the State Department of Education and the Legislative Council Bureau indicated that Mr. Bob Aumaugher was the Superintendent when the 1998-99 report was submitted. Some clarification was needed to assist citizens in knowing who to contact with questions or concerns about the district.

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

The Eureka County School District's Accountability Reports were clear and readable. They showed improvement over the previous year and a conscientious intent to address all requirements. The reports complied with state accountability guidelines in most instances.

Three recommendations are offered to encourage even further improvement.

1. Work to ensure that data are correct and congruent with the Statewide Data Tables.
2. Continue to work on providing clear linkages between accountability data and plans for improvement.
3. Provide more explicit plans for improvement and to cite the sources of data to be used in determining the effectiveness of those plans.