

Lander County School District Accountability Analysis

The Lander County School District's 1998-99 accountability report was greatly improved over previous reports. The panel recognizes this effort and provided several recommendations for further improvement and full compliance with state and federal reporting requirements.

1. Summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to 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 Lander County School District reported an enrollment of 1,534 students. This number represented a 10% decrease from the previous school year.

Student Attendance Rate.

The district-wide attendance rate for Lander County schools improved from 94.4% in the previous year to 95.4% for the 1999-2000 school year.

Teacher Attendance Rate.

The rate of teacher attendance dropped slightly over the previous year with an attendance rate of 94.6% compared to 93.9% in the current year.

Dropout and Non-Promotion Rates

The district-wide dropout rate in Lander County was 3.4% compared to 4.4% in the previous year. The percentages of students retained in grade level were from 1% in kindergarten and in grades three, five and six, 3% in first grade, 4% in grades two, four, and eight, and 10% in seventh grade. Two percent of ninth graders had not accumulated enough credits to be considered as tenth graders at the beginning of the next school year.

Student Completion Indices

Seventy-one students or 89.9% of the seniors received standard diplomas in Lander County. Adjusted diplomas were awarded to 7.6% of the seniors and 2.5% received certificates of attendance.

Transiency Rate.

The transiency rate in the school district improved from 19% in the previous year,

to 17.5% during the current school year.

Student/Teacher Ratios.

The average student-to-teacher ratio for the elementary level dropped slightly due to declining enrollment. Ratios were 19:1 in kindergarten, 14:1 in first grade, 13:1 in second grade, 20:1 in third grade and 24:1 in grades four, five, and six. Secondary average class sizes increased in all areas. They ranged from a low of 16:1 in science to a high of 20:1 in social studies.

Student/Counselor Ratio.

The Lander County student to counselor ratio dropped from 568:1 in the previous year to 511:1 for the 1999-2000 school year.

Suspension/Expulsion rate.

District-wide, there were 119 incidents of suspension or expulsion, of which 106 were for violence to other students. More than half of these incidents of violence to other students occurred at LeMaire Elementary School with 59 such cases, far more than the four incidents the prior year. The number of such incidents also increased at Black Elementary School (from 0 to 20) and at Pierce Elementary School (from 1 to 9). There were no suspensions or expulsions for violence to other students at either Austin Elementary School or Austin High School. Battle Mountain Junior High School reported three, the same as in the previous year, and Battle Mountain High School increased one incident for a total of 15 cases of violence to students. The district reported a total of four instances of suspensions or expulsions due to threats or extortion, three for violence to staff, and three for drug possession.

Numbers of Habitual Disciplinary Problem Students.

The Lander County School District reported no cases of students expelled as habitual disciplinary problems.

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	16	24.2	15.1	23	15.8	21.4	54	48	55
Language	13	20.8	13.4	27	18.3	23.6	56	49	58
Math	20	24.4	18.8	17	9.2	21.1	49	42	51
Science	8	13.8	14.8	23	22.8	24.2	59	52	57

Of elementary schools in Lander County only the Lemaire Elementary School fourth grade enrollment was large enough to be reported as a separate school. District-wide, performance on all four test areas improved from the prior school year. Reading increased from the 48th average percentile rank for the previous year to 55th average percentile rank for the current year. Language improved from an average percentile rank of 49 to 58. Mathematics scores increased from an average percentile rank of 42 to 51, as did science with an average percentile rank during the previous year of 52 increasing to 57. In reading, language, and science Lander County fourth graders' scores exceeded the state average. The percentage of eligible fourth graders' tested was 98.4.

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	17	21.8	12.9	23	21.8	28.0	52	50	59
Language	17	11.9	11.8	28	28.7	33.0	57	57	61
Math	23	22.7	15.1	17	18.6	31.2	47	49	60
Science	8	24.5	11.8	18	22.4	25.8	56	52	60

The 8th grade test scores in Lander County improved, district-wide, from the previous year. For the reading test, the average percentile rank rose from 50 in the previous year to 59 in the current year. Language performance increased from an average percentile rank of 57th to the 61st percentile. Mathematics also rose from an average percentile rank of 49 in the previous year to 60 in the current year. The science test showed an increase in average percentile rank from 52 in the previous year to 60 for the current year. The percentage of students scoring in the bottom quarter decreased across all tests and those scoring in the top quarter similarly increased in all tests. Lander

County scores significantly exceeded state average percentiles of 50 in reading, 57 in language and math, and 47 in science. One hundred percent of eligible eighth graders were tested.

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	12	12.9	11.0	27	22.6	24.2	60	57	59
Language	11	14.0	14.0	31	26.9	29.0	61	57	62
Math	19	24.0	10.9	30	26.0	32.6	58	53	64
Science	3	14.4	7.5	25.2	18.6	31.2	64	53	66

The average tenth grade test scores in Lander County improved in all four areas tested when compared to the previous year. The average percentile rank on the reading test rose from 57 in the previous year to 59 in the current year. The language test showed an increase from 57 in the previous year to an average percentile rank score of 62 in the current year. There were important gains on both the math and science tests for the tenth grade students. Math performance increased from the 53rd percentile to the 64th percentile rank and science scores rose from an average percentile rank of 53 to the 66th percentile. Consistent gains are seen with fewer students scoring in the bottom quarter of the test and a higher percentage scoring in the top quarter across all four tests. The performance of Lander County tenth graders exceeded state averages in each area tested. The percentage of eligible tenth graders tested was 100.

State Mandated Test Results: Writing Exam.

4th and 8th Grade

MEASURED TRAIT	PERCENT PROFICIENT					
	4 TH GRADE			8 TH GRADE		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Ideas	NR	71.0	59.8	80.2	79.8	76.4
Organization	NR	59.7	59.0	77.6	77.8	71.9
Voice	NR	60.5	63.2	76.7	64.6	70.9
Conventions	NR	64.5	66.7	72.4	75.8	77.5

The current year of the 4th grade writing exam showed a modest decline from the previous years. The percent proficient for Ideas dropped from 71 to 59.8, for Organization from 59.7 to 59, for Voice 60.5 to 63.2, though the percent proficient in Conventions rose from 64.5 to 66.7. The average district proficiency in all four traits was at 41%, which was an increase over the 32% proficiency reported in the previous testing. The state average for proficiency in all four traits was 33.1 percent.

The eighth grade scores increased in two of the four traits measured. The average proficiency in the area of Ideas dropped from 79.8% to 76.4% and for Organization from 77.8% to 71.9% in the current year. Proficiency on the trait of Voice increased from 64.6% to 70.9% and on Conventions from 75.8% to 77.5%, respectively. The average percent proficiency on all four traits for 8th graders was reported at 60%. The state average for proficiency in all four writing traits was 56%.

State Mandated Test Results: High School Proficiency Exam.

High School Proficiency Examination

PERCENT PASSING									% DID NOT EARN DIPLOMA		
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
96.0	97.2	93.5	95.1	88.2	87.1	96.9	95.6	93.4	NA	8.1	2.7

In the High School Proficiency Examination, the percent passing declined slightly over the three areas tested; however, while there were fewer instances of diplomas being denied because of failure to pass all three areas testing. The percent passing for the reading test dropped from 97.2% the previous year to 93.5%. The math test showed a slight drop from 88.2% to 87.1% for the current year and the reading test showed movement from the previous year's 95.6% to the current year's 93.4%. The percent of denied diplomas dropped importantly from 8.1% in the previous year to 2.7%.

ACT/SAT Results.

ACT Results

% SENIORS TAKING ACT			ACT COMPOSITE SCORE		
97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
52	61	64.2	20.0	20.7	18.8

The percentage of seniors taking the ACT exam continued to grow in Lander County. For the current year 64.2% of seniors took the exam, in comparison with only 40.2%, statewide. The composite score of ACT dropped to 18.8 when compared to the previous year's 20.7. The statewide average score on the ACT was 21.5.

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
0	1	2.5	NA	700	460	NA	530	425

The percent of seniors taking the SAT exam also increased from 1% to 2.5%. However, student participation in the SAT was significantly lower than the state average of 34%. With so few seniors participating, comparisons between years are not appropriate.

Special Programs.

State data tables were not consistent with the district report in special program participation rates. The district reported that 97% of elementary students were enrolled in music classes, including 100% of students at Austin, Black, and Lemaire Elementary Schools and 92.6% of students at Black. In contrast, the state data tables reported no music participation at Austin Elementary School and 93% at Pierce. The district reported that 100% of students at Austin and Black were enrolled in art instruction, as well as 41.6% of the students at Pierce. State data tables listed 100% for Austin and Lemaire, 41.6 for Black, and 42% for Pierce. The State Data Tables reported 100% participation in physical education at Austin and Lemaire, but none at Black or Pierce, while the district reported 100% participation at Black. District and state data were consistent for computer education. Computer education participation was at 100% at Austin Elementary School and Lemaire, while Black and Pierce Schools reported no computer education.

After school care was available at all of the elementary schools except Austin Elementary School. Participation in after school care ranged from 7% to 18%. District-

wide, 24% of elementary students participated in the free or reduced-price meal program, with rates ranging from 3% at Austin Elementary to 27% at Lemaire Elementary. The district-wide gifted and talented rate of participation was 2% at the elementary level with the highest rate – 3% – being at Lemaire Elementary. Migrant education was provided to 2% of students, district-wide, with the highest participation rate of 4% at Pierce Elementary School. The district rate of elementary participation in English as a Second Language was 3%, with the highest incidence – 8% – at Pierce Elementary. The elementary schools had an 11% participation rate in special education programs, district-wide, with a range from 10% at Black Elementary School to 13% at Austin Elementary School.

The secondary schools reported strong participation in athletics with a range from 100% at Austin High School to 39% at Battle Mountain Junior High. The district-wide participation rate in foreign language classes was 18%. Secondary participation in art ranged from 100% at Battle Mountain Junior High to 22% at Austin High School. Participation in music classes involved 26% or 27% at each of the secondary schools. Of students at Battle Mountain High School, 65% participated in occupational education, while no occupational education was provided at Austin High School or Battle Mountain Junior High. Among the secondary schools, only Battle Mountain Junior High School reported gifted and talented programming with a participation rate of 3%. Migrant education is not provided at the secondary level. Participation in ESL involved 1% of students at Battle Mountain Junior High and at Battle Mountain High School. The participation range for special education programs varied from a high of 22% at Austin High School to 9% at Battle Mountain Junior High School.

Teachers.

Lander County reported that 83% of its teachers hold bachelor's degrees and 17% hold advanced graduate degrees. Ninety-one percent of the district's teachers taught within their areas of licensure, which was down slightly from 95% reported in the previous year. Previously 4% of math classes were taught out of licensure and during the current year none were taught out of license. The percent of science classes taught out of licensure increased from 18% to 21%, and the percent of social studies classes taught out of license increased from 0% to 10%. Forty-nine percent of the district's teachers have taught from 11 to 20 years and only 4% were new or had less than three years of experience.

Technology/Computers.

The Lander County School District average student to computer ratio has decreased slightly from the previous year at 9:1 to 8:1 for 1999-2000. Gains were been made at Black Elementary School, Pierce Elementary School, and Battle Mountain Junior High School. All of the schools reported Internet access.

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

Of the 25 recent high school graduates from Lander County enrolled in Nevada universities and community colleges, 46.2% were enrolled in remedial college courses.

Expenditures.

The total per-pupil expenditure of the Lander County School District increased from \$6,106 for the previous year to \$6,627 for 1999-2000. Expenditures for instruction, administration, and operations increased moderately, while the per-pupil expenditure for staff support decreased from \$521 to \$352. The per-pupil expenditure for student support also decreased from \$536 to \$535. Extremely high per-pupil expenditures were noted at Austin Elementary School (\$15,236) and at Austin High School (\$16,542). Because of small enrollment, instructional costs at that location were exceptionally high as were the per-pupil building operation costs. The Lander County School District received 48.8% of its revenue from state sources and 32.8% from local property taxes. The federal government contributed 5.6% of the school's district's revenue. The district received \$90,188 for Title I funds during the current year. The migrant education program was funded at \$25,275, drug free schools at \$24,077, and remedial education tutoring received \$11,385.

Parental Involvement.

The level of parental involvement is reported high at a district-wide rate of 92% in Lander County. The lowest parental involvement rates were reported at the Austin schools in the low range at 38%. The individual school reports contain strong evidence of efforts towards parental communication and increasing involvement with school programs.

- 2. Areas the school district's 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.***

Areas of exemplary achievement at the school site or areas of improvement in outcomes reported for Lander County were as follows:

Battle Mountain Junior High School: TerraNova test results in reading, math, language, and science and student scores on the Nevada writing proficiency for eighth grade were listed. Multi-year comparisons of TerraNova test scores were provided documenting improvement. The percentages passing in three of four content areas on the writing tests were also provided as evidence of improvement in outcomes.

Lemaire Elementary School: TerraNova test scores in reading, math, and language were specifically reported. A "homework helpers" after school remediation program was

also highlighted in the report.

Battle Mountain High School – the areas of exemplary achievement or improvement included the use of a “block schedule” and block schedule teaching practices as well as a significant improvement of building maintenance. The evidence of improvement provided includes improved grades and morale as well as an improved environment for teachers and students. Test scores were not relied upon nor reported for this school.

Battle Mountain Elementary Schools: TerraNova test scores in reading, math, and language were highlighted as well as the student wide behavior program. The evidence provided included specific test scores comparing the previous year with the current year. The number of office referrals for student misconduct also is documented as declining by 48% from the previous year’s 243 to the current year’s 118.

Austin Combined Schools: The areas of exemplary achievement or improvement reported were the percent of seniors graduating and scores on the Nevada writing and math proficiency exams. The evidence included 100% of the seniors graduating and reference to the passing percentage of content exams areas in the high school proficiency test.

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

Battle Mountain Junior High School: The areas in need of improvement cited were curriculum mapping for all classes, test results, increasing the passing percentage of students for the Nevada Writing Proficiency Exam rate, and improving the attendance rate. The evidence of deficiencies was realistic and tied to the test score results and attendance data of this school.

Lemaire Elementary School: The areas in need of improvement listed only TerraNova test results. The evidence relied upon was a 9% drop in fifth grade math scores.

Battle Mountain High School: Areas in need of improvement that were cited were school safety, athletic code, and proficiency test pass rate. The evidence of deficiencies are general concerns with the school safety procedures and currency of the athletic code, while the proficiency pass rate is tied to 25% of juniors failing the proficiency tests.

Battle Mountain Elementary Schools: The areas of improvement listed by these schools included student achievement in math and reading, school safety, parental involvement, and closing curriculum gaps. The evidence of deficiencies was tied to 15 to 20 percent of the students scoring in the lower quarter on TerraNova tests for reading and math, as well as the number of office referrals for playground disputes and a low return rate for parent surveys. Other evidence in the report raised the issue of congruency between instruction and testing.

Austin Combined Schools: The areas in need of improvement listed included curriculum mapping for all classes and TerraNova test results. The evidence of deficiencies raised relied on the general issue of congruency between instructional content and assessment practices. The tests provided direct evidence that 11 to 15 percent of the students scored in the lowest quarter.

4. *Summary of the school district's plans for improvement at the school sites.*

Battle Mountain Junior High School: Plans for improvement include a three-day workshop on curriculum mapping, after school tutoring remediation plan, staff development on writing tests "traits" proficiency, and a school wide focus and recognition of attendance. The plans listed are specifically targeted to areas of improvement of the listed deficiency.

Battle Mountain Junior High School: Plans for improvement include a three-day workshop on curriculum, after schools tutoring remediation plan, staff development on writing test "traits" proficiency, and a school wide focus and recognition of attendance. The plans listed are specific targeted to areas improvement of the listed deficiency.

Lemaire Elementary School: School plans for improvement include a training workshop on Nevada math standards provided by the Nevada Department of Education and a review of the current math curriculum moving toward the adoption of a new math test.

Battle Mountain High School: Plans for improvement at this facility include the formation of a safety team, the development of a school safety plan, implementation and training regarding a safety plan, forming an athletic code revision committee and establishing an extended day tutoring program. Battle Mountain High School's plans are general in nature and do not rely on any specific assessment data.

Battle Mountain Elementary Schools: The plans provided in the Part III report include the adoption of a phonics supplemental reading program and the development of a staff advisory committee to oversee the school improvement process as well as playground issues. They also provide for the establishment of the parents' day and suggest lesson plan review and a continuation of the curriculum mapping process.

Austin Combined Schools: The school improvement plan listed is a three-day workshop on curriculum mapping.

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

In each school's plan there is an emphasis given to instructional issues. With the exception of Battle Mountain High School and the Austin Combined Schools, these plans are tied directly to test score and assessment data. The Austin Combined Schools and Battle Mountain High School offer more general issues and broad categories for

improvement. It is clear that the district is involved in significant curriculum mapping activities dealing with the linkage of Nevada State Standards and the school district's curriculum guides.

6. *Missing data or incorrect data.*

The Lander County School District's accountability report provides substantial information to be well within compliance for the accountability system for Nevada Schools. This report is clearly an improvement over previous year's reports and demonstrates significant effort on the part of school district personnel. The information provided in the school district report is consistent with the state data tables with the exception of special program enrollment at the elementary schools and state rounding procedures. The district provided figures with an additional decimal place for a number of categories.

Though the district report included participation rates in art, music, physical education, and computer education, none of the individual schools provided this data.

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

The Lander County School District is commended for this improved version of its accountability report. The district has clearly accomplished the two major recommendations made by last year's reviewers. Essentially, they established stronger ties between the analysis of assessment data and the areas in need of improvement for their instructional programs. For the first time they employed the use of discreet building reports in Part III using a well-conceived tabular format. Additionally, the accuracy and consistency of the data reporting was at an appropriate level and the improvement is appreciated. The district's commitment to curriculum mapping and articulation, the strong evidence of the integration of remedial programs, and the emphasis on an instructional focus in building plans demonstrated that this district is benefiting from accountability information. Evidence of professional development programs is also commendable.

The most important recommendations for improving the report would be to expand the building reports and focus on instructional decision making that results from the current curriculum mapping and implementation of state standards process. Alignment and revision of current instructional practices will be an important next step for continued instructional improvement.

In addition, the district should consider addressing issues such as the high remedial class enrollment in the UCCSN and the violence at Lemaire Elementary School in Part III.