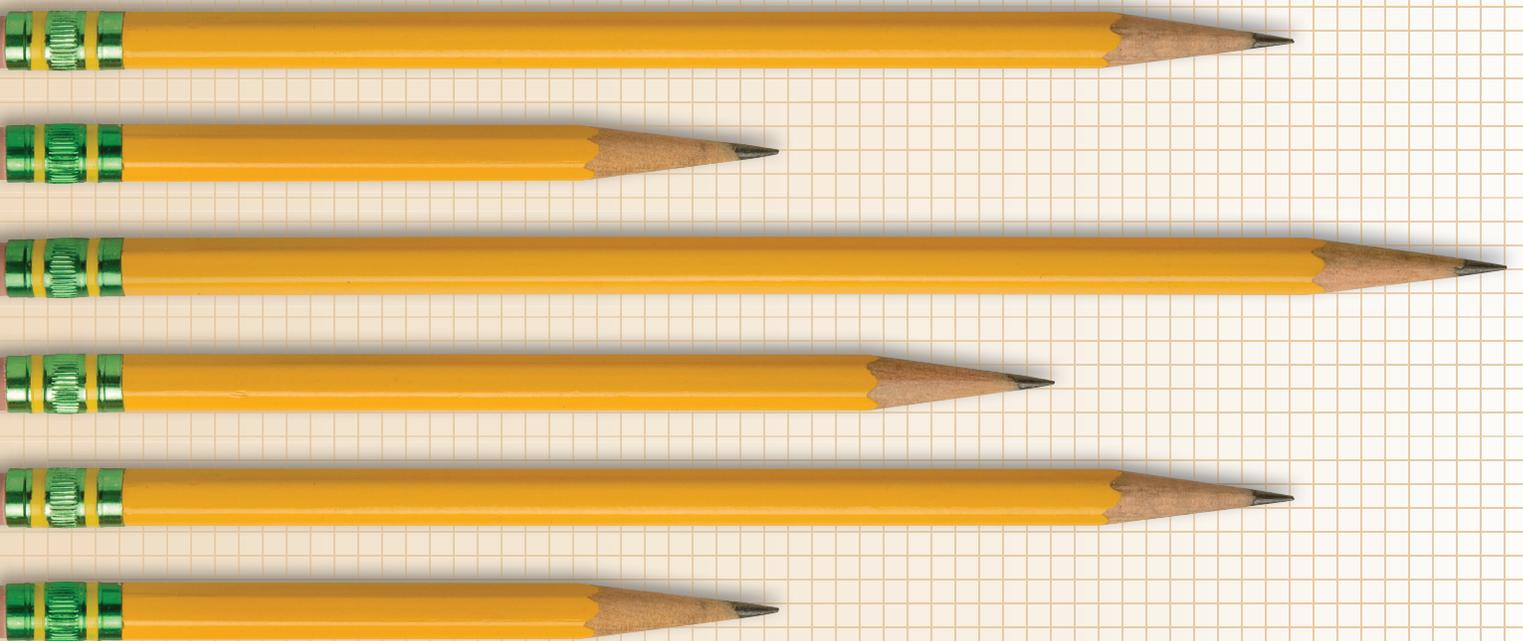


Sustaining Coherent Reform

An Evaluation Guide
for Districts and Schools



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Introduction



Reform has been part of the experience of educators for the extent of their careers. The present emphasis on aligned instruction, community engagement, excellence in teaching, turning around low-performing schools, excellence in leadership, and a positive and safe school environment is not new. Educators have watched various reform strategies, including “continuous school improvement,” “effective schools,” “whole school reform,” and “comprehensive school reform,” come and go. Today, these and other models are subsumed under the promise “to turn around low-performing schools.” This interpretation promises a far deeper, more extensive, and more sustained change effort than reforms of the past. Reform, no matter the performance level of the school, needs to be sustained to have an effect on student achievement. Evaluation can and should be a tool for sustaining school reform efforts, as well as measuring progress and impact.

The use of data, which is a central component of the ARRA reform strategies, needs to include data for strategic decision making at the school level. Although evaluation must be solidly based on data, evaluation should go beyond data to examine the larger context of policy and practice, which either fosters success or sets the course for failure. An effective evaluation does not just assess the outcomes and impact of new strategies; it guides the process of implementing and refining reform programs.

We come to this point in the history of education reform better equipped with research-based practices and with more access to them than ever before, through such resources as the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>) and the U.S. Department of Education Doing What Works website (<http://dww.ed.gov>). There certainly will be new directions and innovations in education in the future, but that does not mean that current methods for creating better schools will have been proven wrong. Rather, it means that educators will have acquired new knowledge about how to make schools successful. More important, it means that researchers and educators have not tired of trying to make the nation’s schools the very best in the world.

Although it might seem that for the foreseeable future, most of the attention and available resources will be deployed at the state level or for those schools identified as struggling or persistently lowest-achieving, at another level, America’s place in the global economy is at stake. To assure success in the global arena, we must be able to respond to a rapidly changing environment that demands new knowledge, new skills, and flexibility to meet emerging challenges. Every local school plays a role in assuring these new global challenges are met at a national level.

Introduction

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 sets out nationwide goals for the improvement of American education: increasing student achievement, narrowing achievement gaps, and increasing high school graduation and college enrollment. It is built around four areas of reform: (1) internationally benchmarked college and career readiness standards; (2) improvement in the collection and use of data to inform decision making; (3) increase in teacher and leader effectiveness and improvement in distribution; and (4) support for struggling schools, with a focus on turning them around.

Yet, the present ARRA school reform attempts to move beyond previous efforts by bringing together much of what has been learned about creating better schools. ARRA assumes the need for ambitious reform measures; provides additional, practical fiscal resources; and continues to hold the education system accountable for realizing the improved performance of all students.

Ambitious policy reforms—including comprehensive school reform, which went beyond piecemeal improvement efforts by integrating strategies—have often fallen short of encouraging substantial increases in student outcomes. As educators David Cohen, Susan Moffitt, and Simona Goldin (2007) point out, “Policies aim to solve problems, yet the key problem solvers are those who have the problem. Governments devise instruments to encourage implementation, but they help only if used well by those with the problem” (p. 515). This guide seeks to encourage local educators to use the reforms well through collection and interpretation of data within a systematic evaluation plan.

Purpose of This Guide

This guide helps districts and schools, whether or not they have been designated as persistently low-achieving, to evaluate their reform efforts—both to meet requirements for external accountability and to meet their own needs for useful evaluative information. The information provided is applicable to any local jurisdiction that wants to know how well its turnaround initiatives are working and what additional changes are needed.

We assume that your district or school has decided to implement a school reform initiative and has identified a model or a set of strategies to begin the process. We also assume that a plan is in place, funding is available, and that you are now facing challenges related to data collection and evaluation. Almost certainly, your new program will add a layer of data collection responsibility to an already overburdened staff. It is tempting in this situation to simply meet the external data requirements and stop there. However, conducting an ongoing evaluation allows you to better understand what is working and what isn't, to make changes, and to report progress as your reform effort unfolds.

Generating the information needed is completely under your control. Therefore, the evaluation challenges you face are a powerful opportunity for informed decision making at the local level. This guide will assist you through the process of program evaluation so that you will be better able to

- conduct a focused, practical school-reform evaluation;
- develop a detailed evaluation design;

- conduct an evaluation of school-reform implementation and impact;
- report key findings in formats useful to key audiences; and
- encourage use of evaluation findings for program improvement.

The purpose of this guide is to provide practical information, tips, and tools, which collectively serve as a resource for novice evaluators as well as a reference for expert evaluators.

Using This Guide

Evaluation is never a “one size fits all” proposition. The specific details of each locally designed evaluation of school reform varies, depending on the approach crafted and the goals and benchmarks established to assess progress. This guide organizes the array of evaluation activities into a five-stage evaluation process that is consistent in timing and purpose:

1. Planning for the evaluation
2. Designing the evaluation
3. Conducting the evaluation
4. Reporting the findings
5. Encouraging use of the findings

Your evaluation team may photocopy and use Worksheets 1–8 (see Appendix A) during the evaluation process. Throughout this guide, Exhibits 1–8 provide examples of how the completed worksheets might look. The exhibits are not exemplars of what a particular district or school should try to create; they are illustrations of a range of situations, responses, and data options that could emerge.

If you are an experienced evaluator who is primarily interested in utilizing the worksheets, you may quickly reference the corresponding exhibits by scanning for the headings in *brown italics* (e.g., “*Using Worksheet 1 to Align Requirements*”) or finding these headings in the table of contents. In addition, look for the shaded boxes of “evaluation tips” that appear at the end of the text for each stage.

Each main section in this guide focuses on a particular stage of evaluation. The stages are presented in the sequence in which they are typically conducted. If you are just beginning an evaluation, it may be most beneficial to read through the chapters in sequence. If you have already begun an evaluation, you may want to begin with the stage that best matches the evaluation stage you are in, returning to earlier chapters as needed. Regardless of the stage of evaluation that your school or district is involved in, as the evaluation progresses, you may revisit chapters to help as you modify your original design, data collection methods, or analysis plan.

Introduction

School Reform Under ARRA

With the passage of ARRA, funding for school improvement greatly increased. As the programs within ARRA have unfolded, school improvement has consistently been defined and applied in each of them. Thus, while we draw from the guidance for the School Improvement Grants (SIGs), the recommendations we make can be applied across all ARRA reform areas.

Requirements for awarding and monitoring SIGs were published in the *Federal Register* (School Improvement Grants, December 10, 2009). Although not all schools and districts have received or will receive a SIG, the guidance contained in the *Register* can assist all districts in knowing whether a reform intervention results in improved student achievement. As the *Federal Register* (School Improvement Grants, August 26, 2009) reminds,

Local educators need the data on an ongoing basis to evaluate the extent to which effective reform strategies are being implemented, to monitor the impact of changes, to track progress against their own goals, and to identify areas where, during implementation, assistance or adjustments are needed. (p. 43107)

For purposes of assessing the SIG program, the federal government has proposed data collection in three categories: **(1)** the intervention being implemented, **(2)** leading indicators (minutes per school year and teacher attendance rate), and **(3)** student achievement outcomes (average scale scores on state assessments for the “all students” group, for each achievement quartile, and for each subgroup and number of students enrolled in advanced courses).

Background Assumptions

Your school or district may not have received a SIG, nor been identified as a persistently low-achieving school. Nonetheless, the four core areas of reform outlined in ARRA reflect the best thinking for reform at this time. All schools are well advised to plan their reforms in this context. The models of intervention for states to implement in turning around struggling schools include major structural changes. These changes even include replacement of staff; yet, reconstituted staff still need to implement the reforms. Thus, four areas are relevant to all schools: **(1)** developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness, **(2)** comprehensive instructional reform strategies, **(3)** increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools, and **(4)** providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

The evaluation of a reform initiative is built on the plans, strategies, and particulars of the interventions that the school or district has in place. Before you begin planning the evaluation, obtain copies of all reports or documents used in choosing or shaping the reform interventions.

What You Should Know About Evaluation

Often, the best approach to carrying out educational evaluations is an eclectic one, combining what appears to be best from various methods rather than adhering to a particular evaluation model. The visibility of an evaluation can be increased by considering it an integral component of the overall reform effort. The evaluation should provide information to all stakeholders about progress toward stated goals and about the impact and outcomes realized. Because many outcomes take considerable time to emerge, it is important to maintain a continuous flow of evaluative information, making corrections and adjustments along the way to increase the likelihood that outcomes will be realized. Four suggestions follow.

Examine the process and the impact. An effective program evaluation documents the intermediate and long-term outcomes of the reform effort. It also examines the adequacy of implementation processes in view of the outcomes observed. In short, a truly useful evaluation provides feedback to decision makers and participants about needed modifications and improvements. Evaluation, then, needs to be an integral and ongoing part of the reform program and to be embedded in program operations—rather than tacked on as an additional administrative task to meet someone else’s requirements. Thus, evaluation planning is best begun in the early stages of the program, during the start-up phase.

Create a flexible design. Just as you will adjust the reform program when necessary, so too you will modify the evaluation design as needed. Your design, then, must be flexible enough to allow for modifications. A flexible design empowers you to respond to feedback about unanticipated problem areas. If a program element is not working well, you must be able to adjust your evaluation plan in order to obtain the needed evaluative information. For example, if an instructional reform is not being embraced and implemented in classrooms as expected, you could revise the evaluation to include a focus group of teachers to assess the nature of the problem and to surface their concerns.

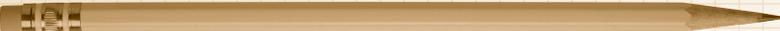
Keep the design realistic. Keep the evaluation effort as comprehensive and rigorous as possible, yet realistic in scope and demand, given available resources. There are many aspects of a complex program that can be evaluated. Your job is to identify the most important questions and give them priority. Data collection can be expensive, but time and money are almost always limited, so direct resources to learning about the most critical program components and issues.

One strategy for using scarce resources wisely is to be clear about why particular information is being collected. It is also useful to know in advance how data sets will be used to answer *specific questions*. If there is no clear reason to collect a data set (other than that it is available or relatively easy to obtain), eliminate it from the evaluation design. A carefully chosen evaluation consultant, brought in at the design stage, can help identify cost-effective ways to focus your evaluation so that you can maintain acceptable standards while maximizing available resources. (see Stage 1, Step 4 for more about selecting consultants.)

Establish an evaluation team. An evaluation team is essential to the successful design and ongoing maintenance of an evaluation effort. Establish a small, core team of staff members, and plan opportunities for frequent discussion and coordination throughout the building. Also give each team member release time to focus on these new duties.

Designate one person as the point of contact for evaluation-related issues and questions; this team leader is responsible for convening the evaluation team and ensuring that others are included in all stages of the evaluation effort as appropriate. The team as a whole is responsible for acquiring outside expertise and assistance as needed. A larger team that includes community members can serve as an advisory group for the core team.

Stage I



Planning for the Evaluation

Discussing the details of an evaluation design (e.g., evaluation questions, measures, methods, analysis) is often where evaluators begin the evaluation process. Resist this temptation; take time to think and plan first! Considerable time and effort can be saved by completing four planning steps:

- Step 1. Define the purpose(s) of the evaluation.
- Step 2. Identify program evaluation requirements.
- Step 3. Understand the evaluation context.
- Step 4. Consider using a consultant.

Step 1. Define the Purpose(s) of the Evaluation

Be clear about what you expect your evaluation to accomplish. At a minimum, an effective evaluation provides the data needed to meet the reporting requirements of the reform initiative. Equally important, however, is the evaluation of outcomes—and the evaluation processes used to attain them. Your evaluation should examine progress, assess the accomplishment of intermediate objectives, and provide findings in a timely manner so you can make needed programmatic adjustments as you move forward. Record your purpose on Worksheet 1.

Step 2. Identify Program Evaluation Requirements

Among your first tasks is the identification of all evaluation requirements to be met. Requirements for designing your school reform evaluation are plentiful and come from several sources, including

- district and/or building constituents,
- state departments of education,
- other funder requirements, and
- the federal government.

Federal and state evaluation requirements are important, but if you are at the school level, there may be other requirements from the reform program chosen or your local school board may have set requirements.

Federal guidelines. A review of the federal rules and regulations for SIGs found in the *Federal Register* (School Improvement Grants, December 10, 2009) reveals the following requirements:

- An LEA must use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that take into account data on student growth and other factors, such as observation-based assessments of performance and collections of professional practice, and

Stage 1

that are designed with teacher and principal involvement (p. 65620).

- The continuous use of student data to inform and differentiate instruction must be promoted to meet the academic needs of individual students (p. 65635).
- An LEA must make progress on the leading indicators (minutes per school year and teacher attendance rate) and establish annual goals for student achievement on the state's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics (p. 65641).
- An LEA may also conduct periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective (p. 65651).

In addition, the *Federal Register* (School Improvement Grants, 2009) encourages LEAs to “collect and use any data above and beyond these requirements that they believe will assist in the effective implementation of the four school intervention models” (p. 65648).

Appendix B includes a list of the data which are collected by *EDFacts*: some are new, collected under the Stimulus Fund data requirements for state education agencies (SEAs). Other data are to be collected by any LEA that receives a SIG.

State and district requirements. State department of education solicitations for proposals are another source of specified evaluation guidelines to meet. Also, your state probably has required the districts and buildings it funds to address evaluation in a specific way. Although you may feel that your proposal has responded completely to state requirements, it is worth another look. Continued funding may

Four Types of School Improvement Models

Turnaround: Replace principal and rehire no more than 50% of the staff; adopt new governance; begin a new or revised instructional program; implement interventions that take into account the recruitment, placement, and development of staff; execute schedules that increase time for students and staff.

Restart: Close the school and restart under the management of a charter-school operator, charter management organization, or EMO; admit (within school's grades) former students who wish to attend.

School Closure: Close the school and enroll the former students in other higher performing schools in the LEA.

Transformation: Implement comprehensive instructional programs using achievement data; extend learning time and create community-oriented schools; provide operating flexibility and intensive support.

depend on compliance with evaluation and other accountability requirements.

Reform model requirements. This guide is primarily responsive to the school-improvement funding authorized under ARRA, but it also is useful to any school undertaking an improvement effort. Under the ARRA funding, four types of school improvement models (see sidebar, “Four Types of School Improvement Models”) are defined: turnaround, restart, school closure, and transformation. The turnaround and restart models focus on major organizational change. In both cases, after the requirements for staff changes are met, reforms must be planned and evaluated. For the school closure model, the district may choose to track the placement and subsequent achievement of the relocated students. In regard to the transformation and turnaround models,

EXHIBIT 1: Example of Completed Worksheet | *Worksheet 1: Alignment of Evaluation Requirements*

Evaluation Plan For: <i>John Dewey School</i>		Date: <i>11/30/2010</i>
Planning Team: <i>Jane Smith, principal</i> <i>John Green, special ed teacher</i> <i>Mary Brown, curriculum specialist</i> <i>Susan Jones, 4th grade teacher</i>		Reform/Initiative to be Evaluated: <i>RTI for grades 3 through 6</i>
Purpose of Evaluation: <i>To monitor implementation of the program for consistency, identify roadblocks to program success and plan how to remove those, and to record and report results.</i>		
Program Evaluation Requirements		
Federal/State	District	Building
<i>No new requirements</i>	<i>Use of DIBELS beginning and end of school year annually</i>	<i>Teachers' union asked for student attendance data</i> <i>Teachers want an interpretation of DIBELS results</i>
		Other <i>School board expects progress monitoring</i>

Stage 1

you can expect major changes in four areas: developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness, comprehensive instructional reform strategies, increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools, and providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

Using Worksheet 1 to Align Requirements

Use **Worksheet 1: Alignment of Evaluation Requirements** to organize and align the various evaluation requirements that your reform must meet for federal, state, and local agencies. Exhibit 1 illuminates the sets of evaluation requirements that overlap. Recognizing this redundancy at the outset can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your evaluation design. Exhibit 1 does not include the required student-outcome data already being submitted through *EDFacts* (see Appendix B).

Step 3. Understand the Evaluation Context

It is important to understand the local context in which your program and the evaluation are to be implemented. Contextual factors may affect your choice of evaluation design and data-collection strategies, as well as how key stakeholders use the results. Thus, the objective of this step is to “get the lay of the land” and set the boundaries of your evaluation.

Using Worksheet 2 to Organize Planning Information

To organize your planning, consider four areas: (1) local needs, (2) program elements, (3) stakeholder expectations, and (4) evaluation

resources and expertise. Use **Worksheet 2: Evaluation Planning Questions** to respond to questions related to these four areas and to organize the information you develop as a result. Exhibit 2 offers possible responses to each question to stimulate thinking and illustrate the types of responses you can expect to encounter. Worksheet 2 will help you organize the planning information you collect in interviews and document review.

Local needs. To gain a clear understanding of needs or conditions that can be improved, examine school reports but also obtain the views of community members and school staff. Attempt to answer the following question:

What local education needs or conditions underlie the school’s current need for reform?

Program elements. When describing the intent of your reform, you may include a synopsis of classroom activities, support services, and model components. Your application (or LEA application) may be the best source of information to describe the intent of the reform. Upon review, you may find that descriptions in the application are not clear or not sufficient to meet planning needs; therefore, interpretation may be necessary. You may also need to consider additions or changes that have been made to the plan since the application was written. Attempt to answer the following two questions:

What are the goals and objectives of the reform?

What are the major elements of the reform that are pertinent to the evaluation?

Stakeholder expectations. Stakeholders are those people who will be involved in the reform or who are concerned with its success. These

EXHIBIT 2: Example of Completed Worksheet 2 *Worksheet 2: Evaluation Planning Questions*

1. What local education needs or conditions underlie the school's current need for reform?

Achievement gaps between ethnic minority and Anglo students in reading and math at all grade levels *Low graduation rates*
Community concern over poor math scores of 8th graders

2. What are the major elements of the reform that are pertinent to the evaluation?

Student growth to be used to evaluate teachers and principal *Parent involvement/community support of reform*
Fidelity of implementation of instructional strategies

3. What are the goals and objectives of the reform?

80% students proficient in math at 8th grade *Increased parent involvement in children's education*
50% increase in extended time opportunities

4. Who is interested in the reform?

District administrators **What do they expect?**
Teachers *Improved tests scores*
Parents *More time for preparation*
Community *Children's enthusiasm for school*
Better information about results

5. What will be accepted as credible evidence of progress and impact by each individual or group?

Improved student performance on state tests *Perceptions of teachers, parents, and community*
Effective implementation of instructional strategies

6. What resources and technical expertise are available to support the evaluation?

District has an external evaluator who will work with us *New, improved data-collection processes are in place*
We have professional-development days for teachers

7. What additional resources and expertise are needed?

Time for evaluation team members
Assistance with communication methods both internal and to community

Stage I

individuals or groups will have much to say about your efforts and their results. By identifying them early in the evaluation process, you can involve them in the evaluation design process as much as possible. One way to begin identifying stakeholders is to learn who was involved in planning and writing the SIG or other application. Identifying stakeholders and their expectations is only part of the task. You also will want to discern what will convince them that the reform is successful. Attempt to answer the following questions:

Who is interested in the reform and what do they expect from it?

What will be accepted as credible evidence of progress and impact by each individual or group?

Resources and expertise. Before design-

ing your evaluation, determine the extent of financial and personnel resources available to the evaluation effort. Think beyond the design phase to the need for ongoing data collection, analysis, and reporting. Funds for evaluation may have been earmarked in your district's application or not considered at all.

What budget can be allocated for evaluation? You may need to include several categories, such as salaries, material development, copying, postage, printing, and consultants. Estimating costs before a detailed design is in place is always difficult; however, experience shows that a reasonable evaluation budget can be estimated at 10 percent of the total reform cost. Costs will be somewhat less if you can pool resources

Tips for Planning the Evaluation

- When considering the purposes of your evaluation, be sure to include monitoring and modifying the efforts as well as demonstrating outcomes.
- Start thinking now about how and by whom evaluation findings will be used.
- To get a feel for local conditions, review school reports and local newspaper articles; and/or interview community members, parents, administrators, and teachers.
- To learn about the purposes of your reform, examine the application and talk with those who wrote it.
- Find out who has an interest in the outcome of the reform and what they expect. If differences exist between reform goals and stakeholder expectations, stop planning and resolve the discrepancies immediately.
- Identify staff time, expertise, and resources allocated to complete the evaluation.
- If resources are insufficient to conduct an adequate evaluation, consider working with nearby schools, districts, colleges, or education service agencies that may be able to contribute staff time or material assistance as part of their required programming.
- Identify key time frames for evaluation information, such as federal and state reporting cycles, community forums, and legislative sessions.

and develop designs and materials that multiple schools or districts can use. It is easier and advisable to estimate or reassess the cost of evaluation after you have completed your design.

Finally, talk with those you expect to be members of the evaluation team. Assess the evaluation skills and experience of the team in order to decide whether or not to use an outside consultant (see Step 4 for more about consultants). In reviewing the application and discussing evaluation expectations, attempt to answer the following questions:

What resources and technical expertise are available to support the evaluation?

What additional resources and expertise are needed?

Step 4. Consider Using a Consultant

An outside consultant can assist at virtually every stage of your evaluation. During the early phases, the consultant can help frame the evaluation questions and identify or modify existing data-collection instruments. Later in the process, the consultant can train staff in data-collection methods, develop additional instruments, and create systems for organizing and monitoring the evaluation process. Finally,

the consultant can assist with analyzing and interpreting results and help design the multiple reports for different stakeholder groups. Consider the tasks to assign to the consultant and the phases of the evaluation in which you will need assistance.

There is no licensing or credentialing system for evaluators or consultants. Therefore, gather as much information about prospective consultants as possible. Obtain a résumé or vitae and get references directly from those who have worked with them. Ask the consultant for the names of former clients whose projects are similar to yours. Have the consultant submit a two- or three-page brief that describes how he or she is particularly qualified to assist you with your evaluation, what approach or method will be used, and what key issues need to be discussed and resolved to complete a successful evaluation. Before making a final selection, consider the adequacy and appropriateness of each prospective consultant in view of his or her

- formal preparation in evaluation,
- relevant experience,
- philosophy or orientation to evaluation, and
- personal style and characteristics.

Stage 2

Designing the Evaluation

In Stage 2, you will design an evaluation of program context, implementation, and outcomes. Stage 2 recommendations are based on the assumption that you have clarified the context and purpose of your program and have established an implementation strategy. Typically, the implementation strategy recognizes not only the goals or intended long-term outcomes but also the immediate outcomes, such as increased teacher knowledge. You must know the purpose, context, and implementation strategy before you can select appropriate measures of *intermediate outcomes and impact* (to assess progress) and appropriate measures of *long-term outcomes and impact* (to assess the value of time and money invested).

There are many steps involved in designing an evaluation, and most of them are interrelated. What you learned in Stage 1 and documented with Worksheets 1 and 2 serves as a starting point for developing an evaluation design. Use the information to check the adequacy of your final evaluation design. Four steps are completed in the design stage:

- Step 1. Link the evaluation to the program.
- Step 2. Identify the evaluation questions.
- Step 3. Choose data sources, variables, and measures.
- Step 4. Move from planning to action.

Step 1. Link the Evaluation to the Program

In a comprehensive reform initiative, the program components are expected to work together toward the ultimate goal of improved student achievement. To make connections among components, use **Worksheet 3: Comprehensive School Reform Program Logic Model** to develop a *program logic model* that specifies the assumptions that link program components. The program logic model usually begins on the left side of the page with the context of the reform, and then it lists the persons or conditions that the program seeks to change. Next, it identifies the activities that will cause change. Finally, it indicates the changed realities the program intends to accomplish.

Review the logic of your program and identify gaps and inconsistencies. Will the activities logically result in the changes? Remember that the outcomes are only one focus of the evaluation; you will also focus on the implementation of the program and the school or district context. For each of these areas of focus, develop evaluation questions to frame the design (see Step 2 in this section for more about developing these questions).

The logic model clarifies underlying assumptions of a program and specifies intermediate outcomes.

Stage 2

After you have developed your program logic model, you will be able to develop the program evaluation questions. Figure 1 illustrates how the program logic process leads to the identification of evaluation questions about context, implementation, and outcomes.

Using Worksheet 3 to Create a Program Logic Model

Exhibit 3 shows how **Worksheet 3: Comprehensive School Reform Program Logic Model** was used to develop a logic model for a program to guide the development of the evaluation design and evaluation questions. In order to complete Worksheet 3, you will need your application, materials about implementation from the reform planners, and a completed Worksheet 2. The first step

in completing Worksheet 3 is to list the local conditions, issues, or concerns that may influence the success of your reform effort (see the *Contextual Issues* column).

The next step is to use the *Program Elements* column to list the key aspects of the program. It is not necessary to link specific program elements to specific issues listed in the *Contextual Issues* column. The program elements should not be specific tasks (such as “schedule the professional development sessions”). Rather, they should be broad; for example, “professional development” or “curriculum and assessment alignment.” Entries in the *Assumptions and Intermediate Outcomes* columns should be explicit statements of the underlying logic about how program elements lead to goals and outcomes. List the assumptions and intermediate outcomes underlying each program element in the boxes adjacent to each

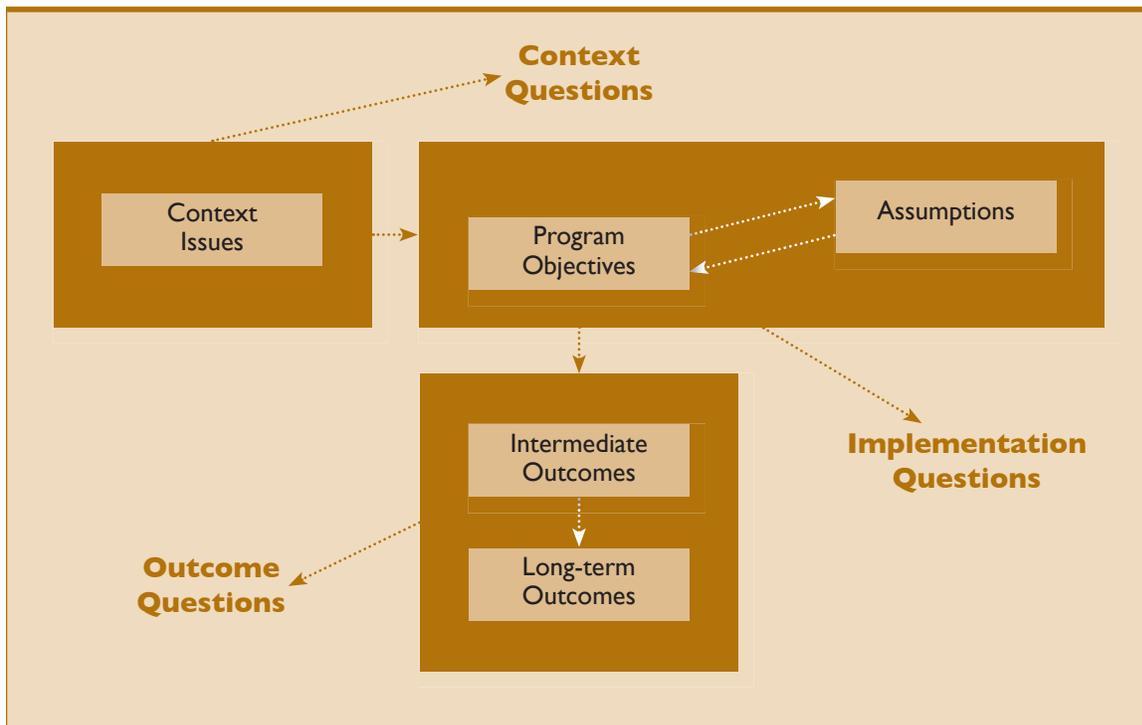


FIGURE 1: Identification of evaluation questions

EXHIBIT 3: Example of Completed Worksheet 3 *Worksheet 3: Comprehensive School Reform Program Logic Model*



Stage 2

element. You may want to write them as if/then statements (as shown in Exhibit 3). For example, if professional development is a program element, your assumption might be “If teachers receive training in classroom management, then students will be on task more often.”

For the program aspects and underlying assumptions you have specified, identify one or more intermediate outcomes associated with each, as shown in Exhibit 3. These outcomes are the “then” part of the if/then statement. If you need to establish more frequent benchmarks, then generate several if/then statements that create a sequence of events leading toward improved student achievement. Keep in mind, however, that you must collect data to determine if each outcome is being realized; therefore, it is best to limit the number of benchmarks to a carefully crafted set. Remember, all of the outcomes should move your school or district toward the ultimate goal of improved student achievement.

Review your logic model one last time. Does your planned program make logical sense? If the intermediate outcomes are realized, will you

accomplish your goals for improved student achievement? Are the assumptions underlying if/then statements research based or lacking support? Are these the right set of activities to accomplish the intermediate goals? Are there gaps in the comprehensiveness of the model? Remember, there is little point in conducting an evaluation if the program is not well designed to accomplish its goals.

Step 2. Identify the Evaluation Questions

Using Worksheet 4 to Summarize Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions provide the framework of the evaluation design. Exhibit 4 includes examples of three types of evaluation questions—context, implementation, and outcomes—to be recorded on **Worksheet 4: Summary of Evaluation Questions**:

Context questions address the factors that may influence your program and concerns related

Tips for Designing the Evaluation

- Focus initial evaluation efforts on implementation questions. The findings obtained can be used to improve program operations.
- Plan for and schedule the collection of baseline data early in the project.
- Plan to use secondary data (i.e., existing data) whenever possible and integrate evaluation data collection into established site-specific procedures as much as possible.
- Coordinate the data collection and reporting requirements of your reform initiative with the requirements of other programs already in place.
- Look for opportunities to use the same measures to address multiple evaluation questions.

EXHIBIT 4: Example of Completed Worksheet 4 *Worksheet 4: Summary of Evaluation Questions*

Context Questions	Implementation Questions	Outcome Questions
<p><i>What special student needs do the disaggregated data identify?</i></p> <p><i>Is the reform occurring in a context of parent and community support?</i></p> <p><i>Are potential extended-time partners supportive of new relationships?</i></p>	<p><i>Did teachers actively participate in the training?</i></p> <p><i>Have the news blasts been accessed and comments received?</i></p> <p><i>Have partnerships been established?</i></p> <p><i>Is the new instructional program being implemented with fidelity?</i></p>	<p><i>Are all students benefiting from the reform?</i></p> <p><i>Are parents working with students to increase learning?</i></p> <p><i>Are students more engaged in school?</i></p>

Stage 2

to the unique characteristics of your school (e.g., changes in population or changes in the economic make-up of the district).

Implementation questions are more practical and action-oriented. The overarching implementation question is, “Did you do what you said you would do?”

Outcome questions focus on what has resulted from the program. “Have the intended goals or objectives been realized?” or “What impact has the program had?”

Draft a list of questions for each of the three question types. Then revisit completed Worksheets 1 and 2 to be certain you have included all the questions to address.

Step 3. Choose Data Sources, Variables, and Measures

One of the most important aspects of evaluation design is determining the best sources of information for answering the evaluation questions (see Figure 2). Documents, people, and events all are likely sources. The best sources are those that are closest to the issue or topic you are evaluating, but using them may not be possible or cost effective. What you want to learn from each data source is defined by the variables and measures.

Using Worksheet 5 to Create an Evaluation Design Matrix

The evaluation design matrix is one of the primary components of the evaluation design.

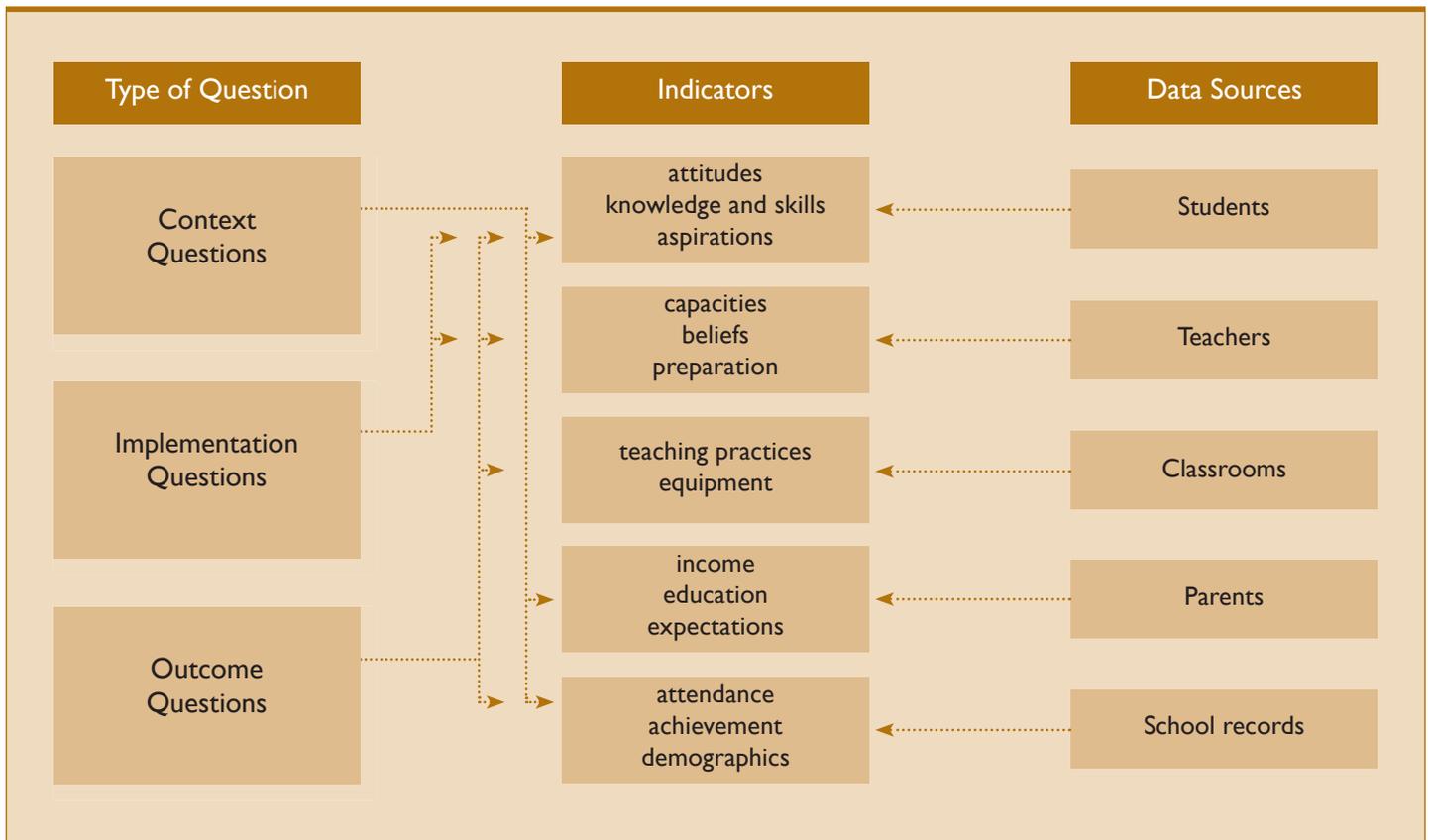


FIGURE 2: Relationship among data sources, types of information, and evaluation questions

EXHIBIT 5: Example of Completed Worksheet 5 *Worksheet 5: Evaluation Design Matrix*

Evaluation Question	Possible Data Sources	Variables	Measures	Available
C O N T E X T				
<i>What special student needs do the disaggregated data identify?</i>	<i>Disaggregated test results for students</i>	<i>Performance by race and gender</i>	<i>Test scores</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Are parents and community members supportive?</i>	<i>Parents Community leaders</i>	<i>Parent support Community support</i>	<i>Participation in meetings News reports</i>	<i>N Y</i>
<i>Are potential extended-time partners supportive?</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Partner support</i>	<i>Partner survey</i>	<i>N</i>
I M P L E M E N T A T I O N				
<i>Did teachers actively participate in the training?</i>	<i>Professional development</i>	<i>Teacher participation</i>	<i>Attendance/observation</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Have the news blasts been accessed and comments received?</i>	<i>Web data</i>	<i>Access and comments</i>	<i>Activity reports</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Have partnerships been established?</i>	<i>Memoranda of Understandings</i>	<i>Number and nature</i>	<i>Number and positive relations</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>Is the new instructional program being implemented with fidelity?</i>	<i>Classroom sessions</i>	<i>Use of strategies</i>	<i>Instructional practices</i>	<i>N</i>
O U T C O M E				
<i>Are all students benefiting from the reform?</i>	<i>Disaggregated test results Students</i>	<i>Performance by race and gender Student attitudes</i>	<i>Test scores Grades</i>	<i>Y Y</i>
<i>Are parents working with students to increase learning?</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Parent awareness</i>	<i>Parent survey</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>Are students more engaged in school?</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Student engagement</i>	<i>Student survey</i>	<i>N</i>

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Exhibit 5 provides an example of **Worksheet 5: Evaluation Design Matrix**. Begin Worksheet 5 by transferring the questions from Worksheet 4 to the first column. Then consider the best sources of data for each of the evaluation questions. As shown in the examples in Exhibit 5, sources of data may include existing records and documents (e.g., student test scores, equipment inventory), people (e.g., teachers, students, parents), and events (e.g., meetings, classroom teaching sessions).

For each question and data source, identify the relevant variables and measures. The variables operationalize, or make specific, the evaluation questions. For example, for the context question “Are all students benefiting from the reform?” (see Exhibit 5), the variables are *student attitudes* and *performance of students by race and gender*.

As shown in Exhibit 5, *measures* are the specific means you will use to assign values to the variables. Using multiple measures of student performance is good practice. In addition to state assessments of student performance, review local- or school-developed assessments if they are available. These may be better aligned with your local curricula. Include additional measures of student and school performance in your evaluation to obtain a broad view of the value of your reform. Choose measures that reasonably can be related to program goals. Examples include attendance; grade promotion; graduation, suspension, and expulsion rates; course-taking patterns; and parent time in classrooms. When you have completed the *Variables and Measures* columns, you will know exactly what information you will use to answer the evaluation questions.

Step 4. Move from Planning to Action

With the questions and related data identified, you are now ready to specify what will be done, by whom, and when. This step involves defining meaningful tasks and realistic time lines. An important issue is deciding when to collect baseline data, which are needed to answer program impact and outcome questions. In some cases (e.g., in the case of student test scores), data can be collected any time during the project. In other cases (e.g., teacher attitudes), data must be collected when the project begins in order to provide a reference point for later comparisons. Also review data reports that have already been completed in order to make use of existing data in your study.

Check with your state coordinator to discuss state plans for evaluation. Again, data may be available through the work of a statewide evaluation and you may be able to add questions to an already planned survey or interview. If these arrangements can be made, you will save considerable time not only for the data collectors but also, in some cases, for teachers, students, and parents—who are the sources of the information. Identify logistical issues that must be resolved (e.g., access to records, classrooms, and teachers) and specify areas where an outside consultant could be helpful. All of the external requirements (listed on Worksheet 1) for evaluating the reform must be addressed in this design stage.

Using Worksheet 6 to Create a Schedule and Responsibilities for Evaluation Tasks

Exhibit 6 offers examples of how to use **Worksheet 6: Task and Responsibility Schedule** to organize evaluation tasks, designate

EXHIBIT 6: Example of Completed Worksheet 6 *Worksheet 6: Task and Responsibility Schedule*

Evaluation Task	Schedule	Responsibility	Evaluation Questions Addressed
<i>Review of student records</i>	<i>Fall 2009 baseline; every year thereafter</i>	<i>Mrs. Jones, Assistant Principal</i>	<i>What special student needs do the disaggregated data identify? Are all students benefitting from the reform?</i>
<i>Parent survey</i>	<i>Fall 2011, 2012, 2013</i>	<i>Ms. Brown, External consultant</i>	<i>Are parents and community members supportive? Are parents working with students to increase learning?</i>
<i>Student survey</i>	<i>Fall 2010 baseline, every fall thereafter</i>	<i>Mrs. Jones, External consultant</i>	<i>Are students more engaged in school?</i>
<i>Classroom observations</i>	<i>Spring 2012, 2013</i>	<i>Evaluation team</i>	<i>Is the new instructional program being implemented with fidelity?</i>
<i>Web data review</i>	<i>Two weeks after news blasts are launched</i>	<i>Mr. Green, Webmaster</i>	<i>Have the news blasts been accessed and comments received?</i>

Stage 2

responsibilities, and plan a schedule. To generate your list of evaluation tasks for the first column of Worksheet 6, review the evaluation questions and group them around data sources. Write the questions in the last column. Next, designate the primary task or tasks associated with the evaluation questions. Assign task oversight to members of the team, according to their connection to the data source or their area of expertise.

By grouping evaluation questions that have common aspects, rather than working with them one by one, the evaluation—and, consequently, data collection—will be more efficient. One natural grouping is questions that rely on the same information source. For example, if there are several questions that can be answered by teachers, perhaps a single teacher survey is the most appropriate evaluation tool to efficiently

collect the data needed to answer them. An alternative may be to group questions with a common focus. For instance, a context question about staff commitment may be conceptually connected to an implementation question about use of new materials. Thus, you may choose to collect data on commitment during interviews about use of materials. Of course, some questions will necessitate the use of more than one data collection method.

In short, the intent of grouping questions is to organize and streamline the data-collection process. Still, your evaluation plan needs to be flexible, and this is one area you will want to refine as the evaluation proceeds. Defining and assigning the tasks as part of planning initiates the process. The next section, Stage 3, provides guidance on selecting and implementing data-collection methods.

Stage 3

Conducting the Evaluation

It is time to get down to business and put the results of your planning and designing efforts into practice. Conducting the evaluation entails the following steps:

- Step 1. Select or create data collection instruments.
- Step 2. Collect the data.
- Step 3. Prepare the data for analysis.
- Step 4. Analyze the data.

Step 1. Select or Create Data Collection Instruments

Data collection is the most time-intensive part of the evaluation. It is important to do all that you can to make it efficient. If staff members with the appropriate expertise are not available in-house, then secure consultants to oversee instrument development, data collection, and data analysis.

Given the time and cost associated with developing data-collection instruments, you should use available instruments whenever possible. The instruments you need will likely include surveys, checklists, observation tools, and interview protocols. Even if an existing instrument does not quite address all the data needs you have, it is easier to adapt it than to develop a new one from scratch. If you must develop your own

instrument, be sure to pilot test it to identify and correct unclear instructions and confusing items. This can be done with a sample of respondents from the same or a parallel source (e.g., a few teachers from a different grade level than that needed for the evaluation). After you make necessary changes, the instrument is ready to use.

Table 1 lists the advantages and disadvantages of common data-collection instruments. Concerns to keep in mind include protecting the confidentiality of respondent identities, minimizing the time demands on both respondents and data collectors, and training those who will collect data. Interview guides and checklists are a fairly straightforward way to ensure consistent data collection across collectors and periods. However, it is more difficult to ensure data consistency with observations (e.g., of classroom teaching). The use of observation as a data-collection method requires a data-coding protocol and training of observers.

Assuring confidentiality helps respondents feel comfortable with being honest because they know there will not be retribution for expressing less positive views. It also means that they can comment on another person's performance without fear of damaging their relationship with that person. If your design calls for a pre- or

Stage 3

TABLE 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Data-Collection Instruments

Instrument	Advantages	Disadvantages
Self-administered questionnaires	Inexpensive. Can be quickly administered if distributed to group. Well suited for simple and short questionnaires.	No control for misunderstood questions, missing data, or untruthful responses. Not suited for exploration of complex issues.
Interviewer-administered questionnaires	Interviewer can probe to ensure question is understood. With good rapport, may obtain useful open-ended comments, including evidence to support response.	Confidentiality is an issue. May require hiring interviewers. Training is needed to establish consistency, nature, and use of probing questions.
Open-ended interviews	Usually yield richest data, details, new insights. Best if in-depth information is wanted.	Same as interviewer administered questionnaires. Often difficult to analyze.
Focus groups	Useful for gathering ideas and different viewpoints, discovering new insights, and improving questions design.	Not suited for generalizations about population being studied.
Tests	Provide hard data, which administrators and funding agencies prefer. Relatively easy to administer. Good instruments may be available from vendors.	Available instruments may be unsuitable. Developing and validating new project-specific tests may be expensive and time consuming. Objections may be raised because of test unfairness and bias.
Observations	If well executed, best for obtaining data about behavior of individuals and groups.	Usually expensive. Needs well-qualified staff. Observation may affect behavior being studied.
Documents, records, and student work	Existing materials can be used to develop data at a convenient time.	Checklists or rubrics for generating data from written material must be created. Careful definitions must be established to ensure consistency.

Note: Adapted from *User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation* (p. 44), by F. Stevens, F. Lawrenz, and L. Sharp (n.d.), Directorate for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation.

post-survey or test and you wish to maintain confidentiality, assign ID numbers to the respondents and keep a confidential file linking names with numbers for use at the time of the post-test. Confidentiality makes handling the data more cumbersome, given the procedures necessary to protect identity. Anonymity is easier to assure—there is no identifying name or information on the instrument—but then you definitely cannot report the same kinds of information. And you cannot easily remind those who have not yet completed the instrument to respond.

After you have selected or designed your instruments, it is important to reexamine them in view of the evaluation questions being addressed. Too often at this stage, the process and procedures of data collection take precedence over the substance of the questions to be answered. Be sure that all survey and interview items and observation protocols focus on the measures you have selected to answer each question. In

addition, because you likely will be relying on existing databases or records (e.g., measures of student academic performance or student attendance), you will want to develop a process for selecting the information you need and, in some cases, transferring it to a new database for use in the evaluation.

Step 2. Collect the Data

Data collection involves scheduling, initial and follow-up information gathering, and data management. Timeliness in completing major data-collection and analysis tasks—and reporting the results to key stakeholders—is most important. Specify when data will be collected, from whom, and the steps needed to complete the process in your data-collection plan.

Using Worksheet 7 to Plan Data Collection

With Worksheet 6, you prepared a broad overview of the evaluation tasks. To ensure

Tips for Conducting the Evaluation

- Create a list or database of contact information for various groups of individuals who will serve as sources of data to make ongoing data-collection more efficient.
- Carefully plan data analysis procedures at the outset. Consider using a consultant to start on the right foot if this expertise is not available in-house.
- Document data collection and data analysis procedures early in the evaluation process. You will need this information for reporting and for making revisions to the evaluation plan.
- Schedule regular team meetings to check on progress with evaluation tasks and the need for revision of timelines or for extra support for a task.
- Set up a schedule for reporting both for interim reports and final reports. Determine deadlines for draft reports and back up from there to assure analyses are completed in time. Also allow for quality assurance review of the draft before the team makes it available to others.

Stage 3

consistent data collection across all sites and data collectors, you can develop precise protocols, checklists, logs, and standardized forms using **Worksheet 7: Data Collection Plan** (see Exhibit 7). In addition, districts and schools may consider providing appropriate staff development opportunities to build staff members' skills in data collection and analysis.

Step 3. Prepare the Data for Analysis

Data come in multiple forms. If you have designed your instruments well, you will have simplified the preparation steps. Quantitative data—from questionnaires, checklists, or extracted from records—are generally ready to be entered into your database and used in analysis.

Some checking for data-coding problems is needed. Determine and consistently apply strategies for handling missing data and obviously incorrect data (e.g., a child's age reported as 30). In addition, convert survey questions that require a brief narrative response into a form suitable for analysis. For example, perhaps you asked teachers to list their most frequently used teaching methods. In order to reduce the data to meaningful categories, you will

need to compile a list of responses and then look for repeated methods. Assign each category a unique identifier (number or letter) so that you will be able to report the frequency of each method. The person who creates the list must be able to determine when different wording indicates the same method.

Qualitative data require a more labor-intensive preparation and analysis process. You may want to select software to help prepare and analyze data (for a discussion of qualitative analysis programs, see Fielding & Lee, 1998). For example, preparation of qualitative data is necessary if you conduct parent interviews and include open-ended questions about parents' confidence in the school. The responses will likely vary in length and substance. Preparation of the data entails transcribing interviewer notes into a consistent format and then establishing a set of categories into which the responses can be organized and coded. Responses, for example, might be coded on a scale from "no confidence" to "extremely confident" that the school is providing a quality education.

Step 4. Analyze the Data

Too often, schools and districts gather evaluation data without having considered how the data will

More Tips for Conducting the Evaluation

- Don't rely solely on statistical analysis; in some cases, qualitative analysis may better serve your needs.
- Allow sufficient time to conduct thoughtful and in-depth analyses and interpretation.
- As a team, ask, "Do the results make sense? What are the possible explanations of findings and how will the results help us decide what actions to take?"
- Involve others in interpreting the results in order to gain insights from their experiences and maintain their interest and involvement in the evaluation.

EXHIBIT 7: Example of Completed Worksheet 7 (for the year 2010) *Worksheet 7: Data Collection Plan*

Task	Sources	Steps to Accomplish	Schedule
<i>Review of student records</i>	<i>Disaggregated tests results Student grades reports</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Identify tests, grade levels to monitor.</i> 2. <i>Create data entry format.</i> 3. <i>Enter data.</i> 4. <i>Collect records.</i> 5. <i>Enter data.</i> 	<p><i>ASAP for baseline</i></p> <p><i>Summer of each year, when results available</i></p>
<i>Parent survey</i>	<i>Parents of 3rd through 12th graders</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Determine sample to be surveyed.</i> 2. <i>Develop survey.</i> 3. <i>Determine method of delivery.</i> 4. <i>Determine how to increase response rate.</i> 5. <i>Launch survey.</i> 6. <i>Follow up with nonrespondents.</i> 7. <i>Enter data.</i> 	<p><i>Sept 2011</i></p> <p><i>Oct 2011</i></p> <p><i>Oct 2011</i></p> <p><i>Oct 2011</i></p> <p><i>Nov 2011</i></p> <p><i>Dec 2011</i></p> <p><i>Jan 2012 Repeat in 2012, 2013</i></p>
<i>Student survey</i>	<i>Students in 3rd through 12th grade</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Determine sample to be surveyed.</i> 2. <i>Develop survey.</i> 3. <i>Determine method of delivery.</i> 4. <i>Determine how to increase response rate.</i> 5. <i>Launch survey.</i> 6. <i>Follow up with nonrespondents.</i> 7. <i>Enter data.</i> 	<p><i>Sept 2010</i></p> <p><i>Oct 2010</i></p> <p><i>Oct 2010</i></p> <p><i>Oct 2010</i></p> <p><i>Nov 2010</i></p> <p><i>Dec 2010</i></p> <p><i>Jan 2011 Repeat in 2011, 2012</i></p>

Stage 3

be analyzed and the results interpreted. If you have kept your design reasonably simple, a first step is to report descriptive information. In the case of quantitative data, descriptive information typically includes frequencies of response (e.g., how many selected “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” or “neutral”) and the average, or mean, response value. The results of your analysis could be reported for all respondents or reported for selected subgroups of respondents (e.g., teachers, administrators, parents). More complex statistical analyses can be used to compare groups or subgroups or to note how people who responded to one set of questions responded to another, related set of questions.

At its simplest level, analysis is the process of combining data from individuals into a common result. At another level, analysis involves interpreting sets of findings and looking across the data to better understand them and create a more comprehensive answer to an evaluation question. Interpreting data entails arriving at a reasonable explanation for the results obtained. To arrive at the best and most plausible interpretation of findings, consider rival explanations and then systematically rule out invalid options.

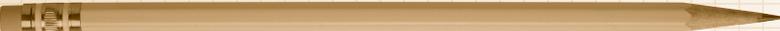
To illustrate, if survey results reveal that parents are not comfortable with the reform process, a reasonable conclusion might be that change often is difficult and not supported by all stakeholders.

Another explanation might be that only parents who were unhappy with the nature of the reform chose to respond to the survey questions. This explanation can be checked by examining the process used for selecting parent respondents. If a variety of parent responses were obtained, the responses better represent the views of all parents. If, in addition to parent survey responses about the reform, the findings from a focus group indicate that parents did not like to see things change, the conclusion that change is difficult for parents is supported.

The coded qualitative data also provide descriptive findings. You will be able to report the major themes that result from the data collection and whether groups differ in how they respond. Qualitative data can often make sense of discrepancies found in the quantitative data and be used to validate or invalidate alternative explanations. The analysis and interpretation tasks are among the most important and most challenging of the evaluation process itself.

The team works together to develop explanations for the results and to validate them across all the data sources relevant to the topic. By presenting a draft of interpretations to key stakeholders, such as teachers or administrators, you may incorporate their comments and suggestions for a more complete report. This analysis and interpretation process frequently engages stakeholders in developing recommendations for improvement.

Stage 4



Reporting the Findings

Now that the hard work is done, the really hard work begins. It is time to let stakeholders know just what you are learning about the program, its outcomes, and impact. Effective reporting of evaluation findings includes the following steps:

- Step 1. Organize the study findings.
- Step 2. Select the reporting media and formats.
- Step 3. Frame the findings as recommendations.
- Step 4. Deliver/disseminate the findings.

Step 1. Organize the Study Findings

Audiences for the evaluation findings may include district administrators and board members; parents and community members; and state, district, and school staff. With Worksheets 1 and 2, you described the data needs and expectations of these various stakeholder groups. Use this information to determine the types of reports you need to develop to best convey your findings and recommendations. Most audiences prefer a fairly succinct report; some may be interested in only one aspect of the information.

Create a master data file or report that compiles all background information, evaluation questions,

analysis, results, findings, and recommendations. This master report provides a foundation for meeting various tailored reporting needs. You might also keep evaluation reports completed by the state department of education or by other schools in your district.

Consider preparing shorter, successive evaluation reports that document the progress of implementation and immediate or interim outcomes. Providing feedback to administrators and staff in a timely manner will help them make mid-course corrections in program implementation.

Step 2. Select the Reporting Media and Formats

It is important to ensure that evaluation results are formatted in a way that stakeholders can readily access and use. Develop reports to connect findings to particular issues and concerns of government agencies, school boards, parents, and other stakeholders. For example, principals might prefer to receive computer-generated summaries of assessments, disaggregated by student groups receiving different types of instruction. School boards or state officials, on the other hand, might prefer statistical progress reports with charts and

Stage 4

graphs that compare student performance across years or buildings. Parents might prefer a narrative report that is formatted to respond to the key concerns they have already identified. In addition, be sure to develop reports in the languages that are relevant to your school community.

Step 3. Frame the Findings as Recommendations

The evaluation is an integral part of the reform process; it should be used to make program adjustments and improvements. One of the most important ways this can be realized is to reframe the findings as specific recommendations for program improvement. If you engage stakeholders in the interpretation process, recommendations may emerge from that discussion. Suggestions for modification or change, then, will not come as a surprise to these stakeholders.

Nevertheless, putting recommendations in writing will give them more weight and visibility with decision makers who have not been as directly involved in the evaluation process. For example, if there are aspects of the reform effort that are not

working well, including the recommendations for change rather than merely presenting a set of findings in the evaluation report will encourage participants to make the changes. Developing recommendations is neither an easy task nor one without consequence for the evaluation team—especially when there is substantial resistance to change. Working through the implications of the recommendations with key decision makers before the report is released is important.

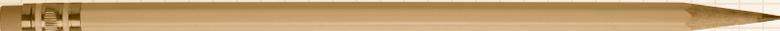
Step 4. Deliver/Disseminate the Findings

If you expect individuals or groups to take action, simply providing a written report is seldom sufficient. When your findings are important for one or more groups to hear, consider presenting those findings orally and engaging each group in a forum or question-and-answer session. Seek out occasions (perhaps as part of previously scheduled meetings) to keep your audiences informed. Placing articles in newsletters and posting information on available websites are effective strategies for keeping stakeholders informed and interested.

Tips for Reporting Evaluation Findings

- Create a master report or data file that compiles all the local context, program characteristics, baseline data, and evaluation findings. Such a file is relatively easy to update with new data and findings as necessary.
- Use the master report to create reports and presentations tailored to key audiences. Consider developing (at least)
 - a written executive summary of the findings,
 - an oral presentation supported with overheads or a computer-based presentation, and
 - a briefing paper that highlights key evaluation findings and recommendations.
- Don't forget to include recommendations for program adjustments and improvements in your reports and presentations. They are the blueprint for the future.

Stage 5



Encouraging Use of the Findings

At this point, you've completed all the steps for the first four stages and have reported the findings. You are in the home stretch, but you're not quite done. That's because reporting the findings does not ensure that they will be used in any meaningful way. The value of the work you have accomplished so far rests in improving the program *each time* the evaluation indicates an adjustment is needed. Encouraging stakeholders to use the findings means enabling them to sharply focus their practices for an even better result. In order to encourage stakeholders to put the evaluation to use, consider taking the following steps:

- Step 1. Create opportunities to discuss findings.
- Step 2. Follow up with stakeholders to determine how findings are used.
- Step 3. Revise the plan for ongoing program evaluation as necessary.

Step 1. Create Opportunities to Discuss Findings

Create opportunities to discuss evaluation findings and their use with stakeholder groups. Be sure to ask that sufficient time be made available to present findings and to discuss recommendations. Keep your presentation short, but be specific about suggested changes. Allow ample time for discussion, especially with the teaching staff. You may even choose to provide a draft of the report to the group and offer to incorporate feedback in the final version. In addition, you might enlist the help of students in reporting findings to parents, especially if they have had a role in data collection.

Using Worksheet 8 to Summarize Actions

Exhibit 8 illustrates how to use **Worksheet 8: Summary of Actions to Encourage Use of Findings** to plan and track your efforts. Building a broad base of support for the recommendations helps everyone, including administrators, take action. Therefore, be sure to plan to present the

Stage 5

recommendations to a variety of audiences and key individuals.

Step 2. Follow Up with Stakeholders to Determine How Findings Are Used

Follow up with key members of stakeholder groups to determine how they are using the findings and what other information needs they may have. On Worksheet 8, record the actions your team takes to encourage application of the findings. This is an essential step because, if evaluation findings are not used in the early stages of the program, the reform may not be fully implemented. For example, if teachers lack needed materials and no attempt is made to

supply them, they cannot possibly implement the program as planned. In later stages of program implementation, more outcome results become available, so you will know even better what works and what does not work. Incorporate these findings and recommendations into your long-range school-planning efforts.

Step 3. Revise the Plan for Ongoing Evaluation as Necessary

Once you have determined how the findings were used and what other information might be helpful to stakeholders, revise the evaluation plan. Of course, the evaluation plan also needs to be revised whenever the reform program itself is revised.

Tips for Encouraging the Use of Findings

- Be sure that findings and recommendations are tailored to be used by specific stakeholder groups.
- Be specific and give examples of what might be done in the future in your presentations and reports.
- Let each stakeholder group know that using the findings is important and that you will be following up with them to determine if you can be of assistance.
- Always talk with key members of stakeholder groups to gain new insights about what is important to them and what might be added to the ongoing program evaluation.

EXHIBIT 8: Example of Completed Worksheet 8 *Worksheet 8: Summary of Actions to Encourage Use of Findings*

Team Member	Action Planned	Date Planned	Date Completed	Outcome
<i>Tom Johnson</i>	<i>Give written evaluation report to superintendent.</i>	<i>1-10-11</i>	<i>2-20-11</i>	<i>Teacher release time increased.</i>
<i>Mary Smith</i>	<i>Give brief presentation to school board.</i>	<i>4-10-11</i>	<i>9-12-11</i>	<i>Board approved follow up surveys.</i>

Appendix A

Evaluation Team Worksheets

Worksheet 1: Alignment of Evaluation Requirements

Evaluation Plan For:		Date: 7	
Planning Team:		Reform/Initiative to be Evaluated:	
Purpose of Evaluation:			
Program Evaluation Requirements			
Federal/State	District	Building	Other

Worksheet 2: Evaluation Planning Questions

1. What local education needs or conditions underlie the school's current need for reform?

2. What are the major elements of the reform that are pertinent to the evaluation?

3. What are the goals and objectives of the reform?

4. Who is interested in the reform?

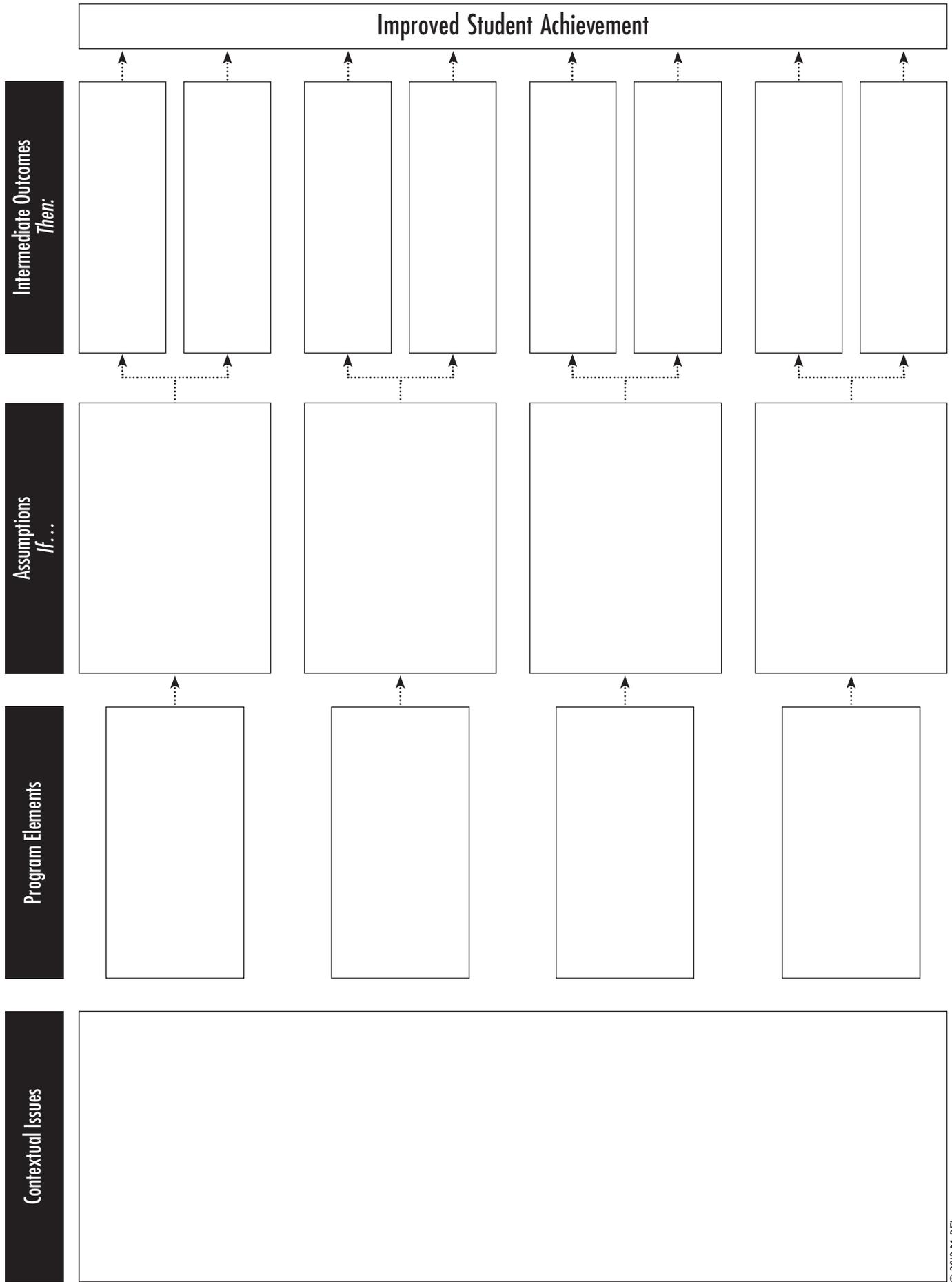
What do they expect?

5. What will be accepted as credible evidence of progress and impact by each individual or group?

6. What resources and technical expertise are available to support the evaluation?

7. What additional resources and expertise are needed?

Worksheet 3: Comprehensive School Reform Program Logic Model



Worksheet 4: Summary of Evaluation Questions

Context Questions	Implementation Questions	Outcome Questions

Worksheet 5: Evaluation Design Matrix

Evaluation Question	Possible Data Sources	Variables	Measures	Available
CONTEXT				
IMPLEMENTATION				
OUTCOME				

Worksheet 6: Task and Responsibility Schedule

Evaluation Task	Schedule	Responsibility	Evaluation Questions Addressed

Worksheet 7: Data Collection Plan

Task	Sources	Steps to Accomplish	Schedule

Worksheet 8: Summary of Actions to Encourage Use of Findings

Team Member	Action Planned	Date Planned	Date Completed	Outcome

Appendix B

Reporting and Evaluation Requirements for School Improvement Grants

APPENDIX B: Reporting and Evaluation Requirements for School Improvement Grants

Metric	Source	Achievement Indicators	Leading Indicators
S C H O O L D A T A			
Which intervention the school used (i.e., turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation)	NEW SIG		
AYP status	EDFacts	✓	
Which AYP targets the school met and missed	EDFacts	✓	
School improvement status	EDFacts	✓	✓
Number of minutes within the school year	NEW SIG		✓
S T U D E N T O U T C O M E / A C A D E M I C P R O G R E S S D A T A			
Percentage of students at or above each proficiency level on state assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics (e.g., Basic, Proficient, Advanced), by grade and by student subgroup	EDFacts	✓	
Student participation rate on state assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup	EDFacts		✓
Average scale scores on state assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by grade, for the “all students” group, for each achievement quartile, and for each subgroup	NEW SIG	✓	
Percentage of limited-English-proficient students who attain English language proficiency	EDFacts	✓	
Graduation rate	EDFacts	✓	
Dropout rate	EDFacts		✓
Student attendance rate	EDFacts		✓
Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB), early-college high schools, or dual enrollment classes	NEW SIG HS only		✓
College enrollment rates	NEW SFSF Phase II HS only	✓	

Metric	Source	Achievement Indicators	Leading Indicators
S T U D E N T C O N N E C T I O N A N D S C H O O L C L I M A T E			
Discipline incidents	EDFacts		✓
Truants	EDFacts		✓
T A L E N T			
Distribution of teachers by performance level on LEA's teacher evaluation system	NEW SFSF Phase II		✓
Teacher attendance rate	NEW SIG		✓

Resources

Books and Articles

- Augustine, C. H., Gonzalez, G., Ikemoto, G., Russell, J., Zellman, G., Constant, L., Armstrong, J., & Dembosky, J. W. (2009). *Improving school leadership: The promise of cohesive leadership systems*. Retrieved from www.wallacefoundation.org
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- Murphy, J. (2009). Turning around failing school: Policy insights from the corporate, government, and nonprofit sectors. *Educational Policy*, 23(6), 796–825.
- Sanders, J. R. (2000). *Evaluating school programs: An educator's guide* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.
- Stevens, F., Lawrenz, F., & Sharp, L. (n.d.). *User-friendly handbook for project evaluation: Science, mathematics, engineering and technology education*. Washington, DC: Directorate for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation.
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. Oxon, England: RoutledgeFalmer.
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation. (1998). *Evaluation handbook*. Battle Creek, MI: Collateral Management Company.

Websites

Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center (AACC)

<http://www.aacompcenter.org/cs/aacc/print/htdocs/aacc/home.htm>

The AACC implements, evaluates, and improves assessment and accountability systems so that states and districts can reach the goal of academic proficiency for all students.

Center for Data-driven Reform in Education (CDDRE)

<http://www.cddre.org>

CDDRE conducts research into how school districts can use data-driven reform to improve student achievement.

Center on Innovation and School Improvement

<http://www.centerii.org>

This site provides access to many resources and serves as a clearinghouse for state school improvement teams and efforts.

Center on Instruction

<http://www.centeroninstruction.org>

This site serves as a gateway to a collection of scientifically based research and information on K–12 instruction in reading, mathematics, science, special education, and English-language learning.

McREL

<http://www.mcrel.org>

This site provides information related to the wide range of products and services provided by McREL, a Denver-based private, nonprofit corporation dedicated to making a difference in public education.

National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST)

<http://www.cse.ucla.edu>

This site provides information about the development, validation and use of sound data for improved accountability and decision making and explores technological applications to improve assessment and evaluation practice.

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center)

<http://www.tqsource.org/>

This site has resources related to improving the quality of teaching, especially in high-poverty, low-performing, and hard-to-staff schools.

National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research

<http://www.betterhighschools.org/default.asp>

This site is devoted to research and best practices for high schools and serves the regional comprehensive centers.

Regional Education Laboratory Program

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>

This site provides an overview of and access to the information and resources available to states within each of the ten regional education laboratories.

U. S. Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov>

School Improvement Fund

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>

This page provides access to the necessary information and resources related to School Improvement Fund formula grants.

Helpful ED and ED-funded Publications and Resources

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/publications.html>

This page provides access to resources related specifically to the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and the related funding and school reform efforts.

Comprehensive School Reform Program

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/compreform/index.html>

This page describes the CSR program and types of projects it entails. The CSR program is authorized to provide formula grants to SEAs to award competitive grants to LEAs on behalf of schools. However, in FY 2008, funding was appropriated only for the CSR Clearinghouse, which provides support for comprehensive school reform activities.

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