EVALUATION SYSTEMS IN THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM: THE ROLE OF QUALITY INDICATORS

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Division of Adult Education and Literacy
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EVALUATION SYSTEMS IN THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM:
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Like other publicly funded programs, adult education has faced increasing demands to demonstrate its effectiveness and the value of the instruction it offers. Over the last several years, amendments to the Adult Education Act, the federal legislation governing the adult education program, have strengthened accountability requirements. The 1988 reauthorization of the Act increased state requirements for local program evaluation by specifying six topic areas that evaluation should address and by mandating the use of standardized test scores in evaluation. The National Literacy Act of 1991 took a further step by requiring states to develop indicators of program quality within two years and to use them in evaluation of their local programs. The indicators were to assess programs' success in recruitment, retention and improving students' literacy skills. The Act also required the Department of Education to develop model indicators of program quality to guide states in the development of the indicators.

Fulfilling its legislative mandate, the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) published *Model Indicators of Program Quality for Adult Education Programs* in 1992 that presented eight quality indicators. Besides addressing the three required topic areas, the indicators described elements of quality for program planning, curriculum and instruction, staff development and support services. Within the next year, all states had revised their state plans to incorporate the quality indicators they had developed.

Besides presenting the indicators themselves, DAEL's publication also provided a general framework to guide states' development and use of the indicators. The framework distinguished indicators from measures and performances standards, and related them in a hierarchical, four-step process:

1. ***Select topic areas to focus indicators.*** The National Literacy Act required indicators in recruitment, retention and literacy gains. However, states had the option to add other topics.

2. ***Develop quality indicators in each topic area.*** A quality indicator was defined as a variable that reflects efficient and effective performance of the adult education program.

3. ***Establish measures for each indicator.*** A measure is a way to assess the indicator in an observable and quantifiable way.

4. ***Develop performance standards for each measure.*** A performance standard was described as a level of acceptable performance on the measure, stated as a specific numeric criterion.

Figure 1 demonstrates the use of the framework for the topic of student retention in the program. In this example, the model indicator *students remain in the program long enough to meet their educational needs* is measured by hours of instruction received, with a performance standard of 50 hours of instruction.

Figure 1

Framework for Developing Quality Indicators, Measures, and Standards: The Example of Retention
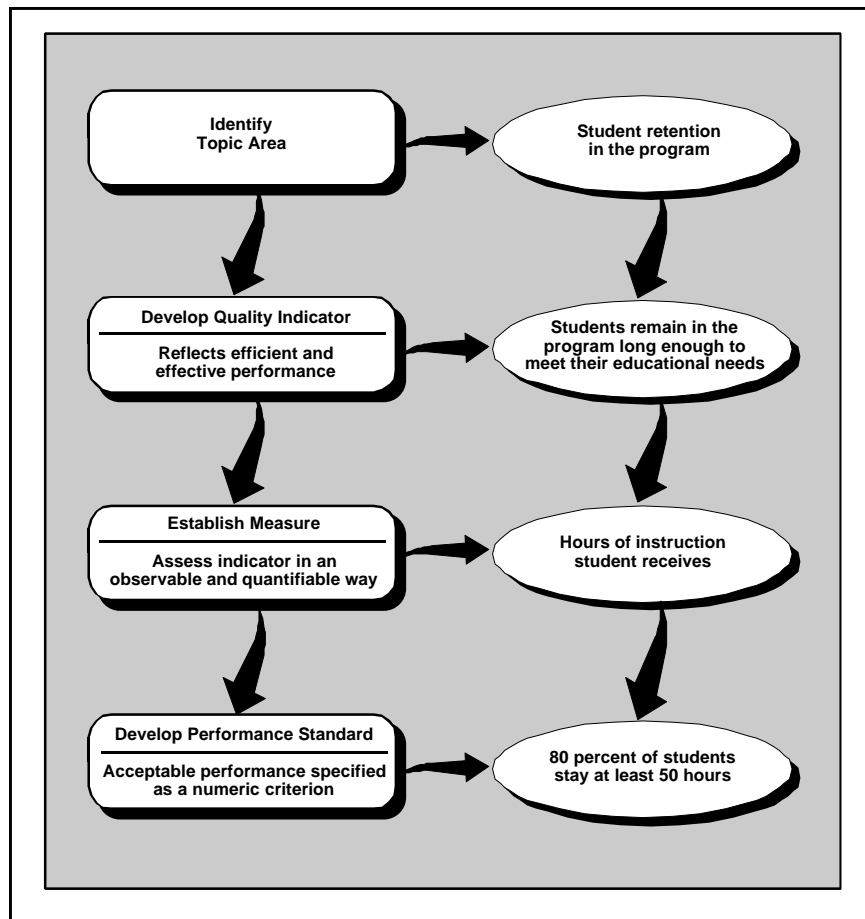
Since their adoption, the quality indicators have become central to the program evaluation systems of most states. The indicators have helped states define the components of program quality and enabled them to develop measures for evaluating programs to ensure effective practice. This paper presents a summary of state implementation of the quality indicators, focusing on the development of measures and standards for the indicators and the impact they have had on state accountability systems and program quality. The paper also discusses how states are using the quality indicators and presents a summary of the indicator measurement systems in six states.

Status of State Quality Indicator Measurement Systems

The National Literacy Act stipulated only that states develop indicators of program quality in the areas of recruitment, retention and literacy gains. A review of the 1993 amendments to state plans, however, revealed that states developed indicators that were very similar, and in some cases identical, to the broader DAEL model indicators. All states have gone beyond the three required topics and developed indicators in areas of program planning, staff development and curriculum. Most states have also developed indicators of support services and a few states have indicators in such diverse areas as fiscal responsibility and facilities and materials.

States also were required only to develop indicators of program quality to complete the first two steps of the indicator framework. A review of state activities in this area in early 1996, however, shows that the states have adopted the DAEL framework fully and continued, or are still continuing, the process through the development of measures and performance standards.

Table 1 shows state-by-state results of this review for 49 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico and Figure 2 aggregates the findings across states. A majority of states have completed the indicator measures and standards development process. Almost two-thirds of the states have implemented measures of the quality indicators and about half of the states have accompanying performance standards to these measures. An additional 10 states have developed, but not yet implemented, the measures and 8 states have developed, but not yet implemented performance standards. All states have at least begun the development of measures and all but five states have at least begun the development of performance standards.

Table 1

Status of Development of Measures and Standards for Quality Indicators

State	Measures			Standards		
	Beginning Efforts	Developed, Not Implemented	Implemented	Beginning Efforts	Developed, Not Implemented	Implemented
AREA I						
Connecticut			●			●
Delaware		●		●		
District of Columbia		●			●	
Maine		●			●	
Maryland		●		●		
Massachusetts		●		●		
New Hampshire			●		●	
New York		●				
Pennsylvania	●			●		
Puerto Rico	●			●		
Rhode Island			●	●		
Vermont	●			●		
AREA II						
Alabama			●	●		
Arkansas			●			●
Florida			●		●	
Georgia			●			●
Kentucky			●			●
Louisiana	●			●		
Mississippi		●			●	
North Carolina			●			●
Oklahoma		●			●	
South Carolina			●[1]			●[1]
Tennessee			●			●
Texas			●	●		
Virginia			●			●
West Virginia			●			
AREA III						
Illinois		●		●		

Table 1 *(continued)*

Status of Development of Measures and Standards for Quality Indicators

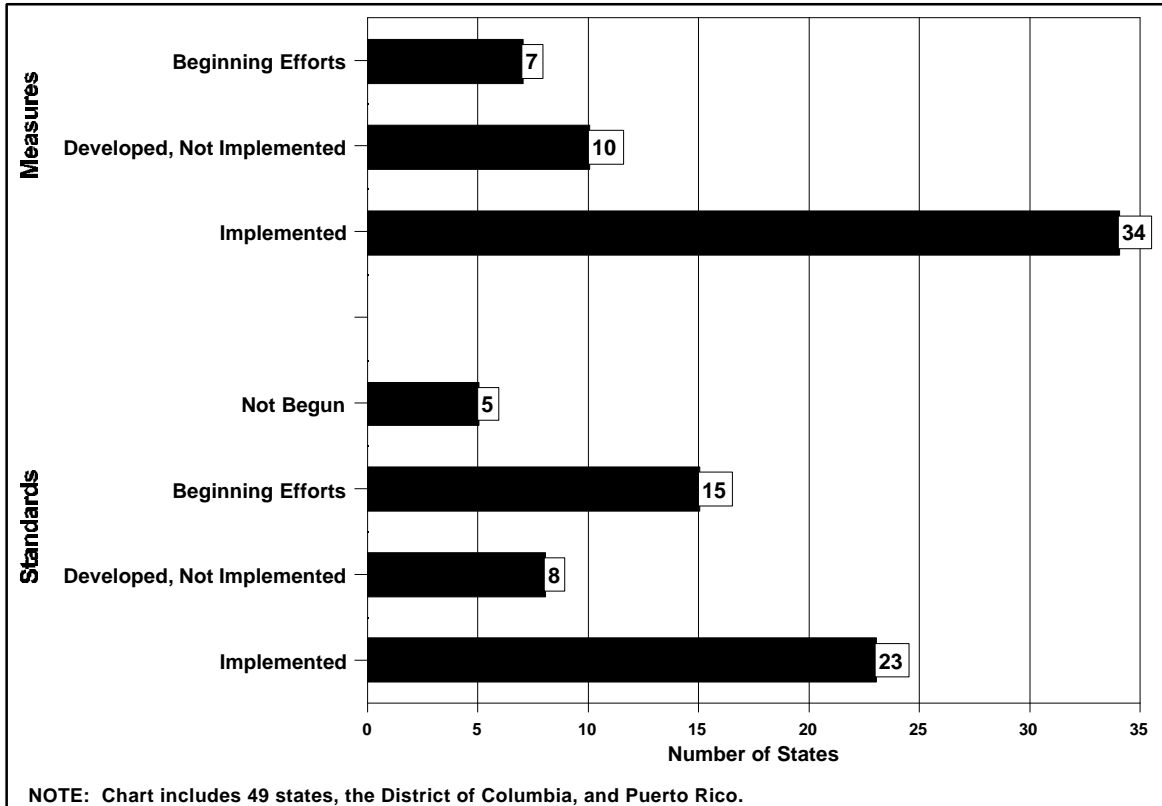| State	Measures			Standards		
	Beginning Efforts	Developed, Not Implemented	Implemented	Beginning Efforts	Developed, Not Implemented	Implemented
Indiana			●	●		
Iowa			●			●
Kansas			●			●
Michigan			●[1]			●[1]
Minnesota	●					
Missouri			●			●
Nebraska			●			●
North Dakota			●			●
Ohio			●			●
South Dakota			●			●
Wisconsin			●			●
AREA IV						
Alaska			●			●
Arizona			●			●
California		●			●	
Colorado			●			●
Hawaii			●			●
Idaho			●	●		
Montana			●			
Nevada			●			●
New Mexico	●			●		
Oregon			●			●
Utah			●			
Washington			●		●	
Wyoming	●			●		

[1]Measures and standards implemented on a pilot test basis.

NOTE: Blank row indicates the state has not yet begun developing measures or standards.

Figure 2

**Number of States Developing and Implementing
Measures and Standards of Quality Indicators**

NOTE: Chart includes 49 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Uses of Measures and Standards of Quality Indicators

The National Literacy Act is vague concerning how states are to use the indicators of program quality, specifying only that states are to use them to evaluate program effectiveness. While states do use indicator measures in this way, our review of the implementation of the indicators revealed three additional uses:

- *For program funding decisions*Local program performance on indicator standards can affect state decisions about continued funding.

- *To identify technical assistance needs*States can use measures and standards to identify local programs that need assistance and the areas where assistance is needed.

- *For program improvement.* By examining measures and standards for programs overall, the state can assess areas of strength and weakness in their delivery system and target weak areas for improvement. For example, measures could reveal that local programs are not meeting their recruitment targets, signaling the need for state redirection in this area.

Table 2 shows how each state uses or plans to use indicator measures and standards and Figure 3 summarizes uses across states. Perhaps most surprising, 13 states currently use, and an additional 15 states plan to use, the measures and standards in program funding decisions. Local programs in these states could lose all or some of their state funding if they fall below indicator standards. States that use indicator measures in funding decisions give programs one to two years to correct problems identified through the measures and only terminate funding if the program's problems continue past that time. The widespread use of the indicators for funding decisions demonstrates how seriously states have adopted the indicator system as a means of providing quality programming.

As required by legislation, virtually all states use indicator measures to evaluate program effectiveness. Almost all states also use the indicators to promote program improvement and to identify technical assistance needs of local programs.

State Implementation of the Indicators

As with other aspects of the quality indicators, the National Literacy Act leaves implementation of the quality indicators to the states, specifying only that the indicators should be incorporated into states' evaluation systems. The DAEL publication on the indicators also does not address implementation, but allows the states flexibility to use the process in the way that best meets their needs. To gain a more detailed understanding of how states have implemented indicator measures and standards, we contacted 10 of the 23 states that reported that they had fully implemented both measures and standards. The state directors in these states described how the indicators have been incorporated into the state's evaluation system, how the state developed measures and standards, and their impact on state accountability systems. The state directors also offered their opinions on what made the process work in their states.

Table 2

Current and Planned Uses of Measures and Standards of Quality Indicators

State	Use For:							
	Funding		Program Improvement		Technical Assistance		Program Effectiveness	
	Currently Use	Plan to Use	Currently Use	Plan to Use	Currently Use	Plan to Use	Currently Use	Plan to Use
AREA I								
Connecticut	●		●		●		●	
Delaware		●	●			●	●	
District of Columbia		●		●		●		●
Maine		●		●		●		●
Maryland		●		●		●		●
Massachusetts	●		●		●		●	
New Hampshire				●		●		●
New York				●		●		●
Pennsylvania		●	●			●		●
Puerto Rico								
Rhode Island		●	●		●		●	
Vermont		●		●		●		●
AREA II								
Alabama	●		●		●		●	
Arkansas			●		●		●	
Florida	●		●		●		●	
Georgia			●		●		●	
Kentucky	●		●		●		●	
Louisiana				●		●		●
Mississippi			●		●			●
North Carolina			●		●		●	
Oklahoma		●	●		●		●	
South Carolina		●		●		●		●
Tennessee		●	●		●		●	
Texas	●		●		●		●	
Virginia			●		●		●	
West Virginia	●		●		●		●	
AREA III								
Illinois		●	●			●		●
Indiana				●		●		●
Iowa				●		●		●
Kansas			●		●		●	
Michigan			●		●		●	
Minnesota				●		●		●

Table 2 *(continued)*

Current and Planned Uses of Measures
and Standards of Quality Indicators

State	Use For:							
	Funding		Program Improvement		Technical Assistance		Program Effectiveness	
	Currently Use	Plan to Use	Currently Use	Plan to Use	Currently Use	Plan to Use	Currently Use	Plan to Use
Missouri	●		●		●		●	
Nebraska			●		●		●	
North Dakota			●		●		●	
Ohio		●	●		●		●	
South Dakota		●	●		●			●
Wisconsin			●			●	●	
AREA IV								
Alaska	●		●		●		●	
Arizona	●		●		●		●	
California								
Colorado	●		●		●		●	
Hawaii			●		●		●	
Idaho	●		●		●		●	
Montana				●		●	●	
Nevada	●		●		●		●	
New Mexico								
Oregon			●		●		●	
Utah			●		●		●	
Washington		●		●		●		●
Wyoming		●		●			●	

NOTE: Blank row or column indicates state will not use, or is undecided about using, measures or standards for this purpose.

Figure 3

Number of States by Current or Planned Use of
Measures of Quality Indicators

NOTE: Chart includes 49 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
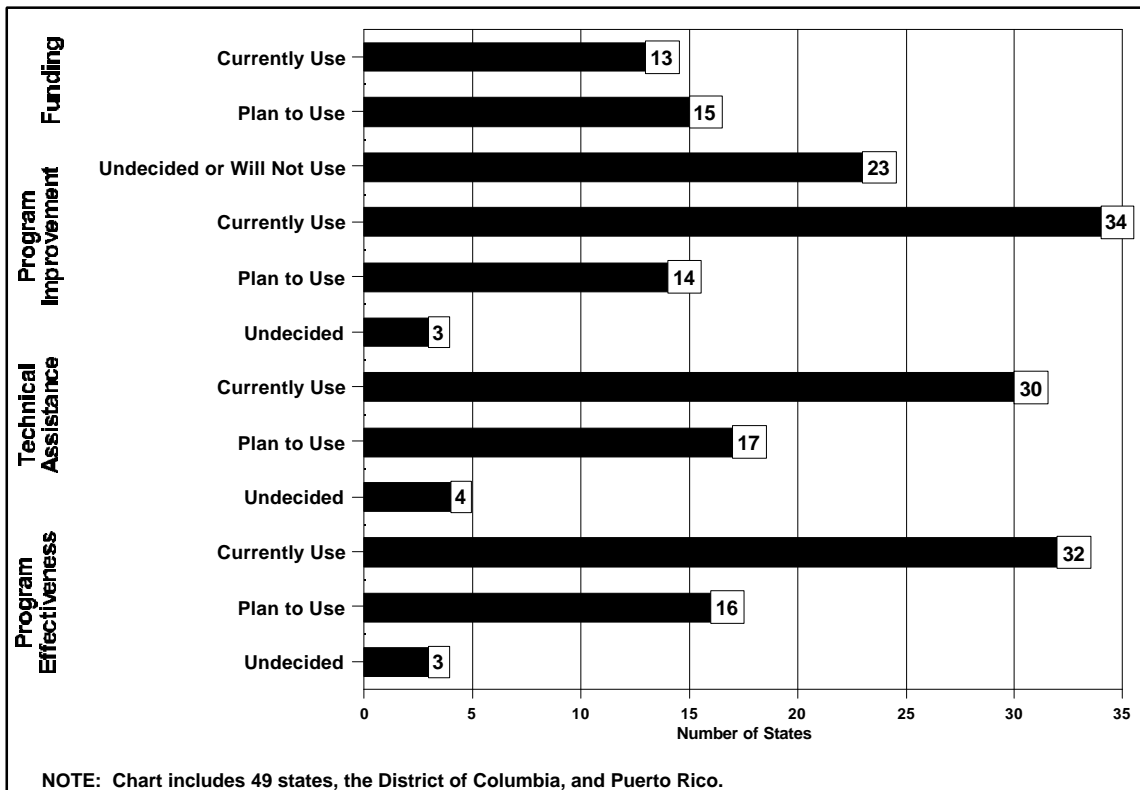
Incorporation of the Indicators

It is through the monitoring process that most states have incorporated measures of the quality indicators. States revised their monitoring instruments and self-assessment forms to include the indicator measures and assess local program quality. In accordance with Adult Education Act requirements, states monitor a minimum of 20 percent of their local programs annually in many of the same areas addressed by the quality indicators. The monitoring process usually includes a site visit by state staff that uses a structured monitoring instrument to rate the program in each area. In some states, local programs complete a self-assessment form annually and the state verifies information provided on the form during the monitoring visit.

Some states also collect indicator measures through a separate report submitted annually by local programs and through the application process. In this latter method, local programs provide the measures in their application for funding and the state evaluates them on how well they meet the corresponding performance standards.

Development of Measures and Standards

The states contacted all developed measures and standards of the indicators in the same way: through the use of working groups and committees established for this purpose. In some states, the committees were subgroups of larger state committees working on broader state accountability and assessment issues. With few exceptions, the indicator committees were interagency, typically including representatives from labor, social service and vocational education agencies, literacy councils and workforce development boards. Some states also included local practitioners and business leaders.

After developing draft measures and standards, the committees typically presented them to local program providers for comment and made revisions based on these comments. Several states then pilot tested the measures in a cross section of local sites before implementing the measures statewide. The usual time from development to implementation of the measures was one to two years.

Impact on State Accountability Systems

State directors uniformly noted that the measures and standards development process had a strong positive impact in their states. The main advantage identified was that the process raised awareness of program quality issues and gave state and local staff the opportunity to define and reach consensus on the characteristics of effective program operation. Measures and standards give direction and focus to program evaluation and provide programs with a way to evaluate themselves and work toward excellence, according to several state directors. By defining how they will be evaluated, the state also has made a statement on what programs should try to accomplish.

Another benefit to the process noted by several states was that local programs now know how to approach accountability issues in a serious way. This skill will help program staff explain their

program to outside agencies and audiences, and enables them to demonstrate program effectiveness more clearly. One state director noted that this skill will be a great asset in the current political environment, where the ability to demonstrate quality and positive results is essential to program survival.

Making the Process Work

The essential ingredient to successful implementation of the indicator measures and standards is broad inclusion of local programs in the development process. Most state directors emphasized that the success of the effort hinges on grass-roots support of the system. Local program involvement in development and review of the measures and standards ensures buy-in, support and understanding of the purposes of the indicators and the evaluation review process. Other factors cited as important include maintaining on-going communication with local programs, field testing the measures with staff that will be responsible for collecting and reporting the information and basing performance standards on research.

Once the measures and standards are developed, state and local staff that will be using them need to understand how to collect the measures, the purpose of the measures and how the state will use the information. Consequently, several state directors noted that professional development and training to staff is another essential, if sometimes overlooked, aspect of the process. The states contacted devoted time to explain the measures and standards at their state conferences.

The appendix to this report provides a detailed summary of the development and implementation experience of six states – Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Kentucky and South Dakota – that have innovative uses of indicator measures and standards. Included with the summaries are samples of the measures and standards used by each state.

Conclusion: Unique Aspects of the Implementation of Quality Indicator Measures

The implementation of indicator measures and standards is not unique to adult education programs. Most federally funded programs now have requirements for using quality measures and standards to demonstrate their effectiveness. For example, the most established and perhaps well known accountability system among federal programs is the performance standards system required by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Other programs that have formal performance measure requirements include vocational education programs, Food Stamp Employment and Training Programs and Job Opportunity and Basic Skills Programs.

While the existence of formal accountability system is not unusual, the way the adult education quality indicator system has evolved distinguishes it in the following significant ways from similar initiatives.

Voluntary implementation. Unlike the accountability systems of other programs, the implementation and use of measures and standards of quality indicators is not mandated by federal regulation. The only formal requirement is for states to develop indicators and incorporate them into the state's evaluation procedures. On their own, states have adopted DAEL's indicator framework to develop measures and standards and to use them as the basis for a formal system of program accountability.

Focus on program operation and instruction Many accountability systems measure only participant outcomes. For example, JTPA performance standards assess participant employment, wages and employment retention. While the indicators in adult education also address student outcomes, other indicators address a wide range of program variables, including program planning, quality of curriculum and professional development. These indicators specifically identify elements of quality related to the content and operation of programs. Student outcomes are not ignored – DAEL's model indicators include two indicators of student outcomes and most states have several measures of participant learning and advancement in the program – but adult education's specific focus on program elements in its accountability system is unique. This programmatic focus also goes beyond the legislative requirements for the indicators.

State use of the indicators. Unlike other federally funded programs, there are no requirements for states to report the indicator measures or standards to the federal government. Measures are also not used at the national level. By legislative design, the quality indicators are for use by the *states* for evaluation of local program effectiveness. States have complete latitude to use the indicators to best meet their needs.

Interagency involvement in development of measures and standards. Most states have developed their indicators and associated measures and standards in collaboration with other service agencies. Committees assigned the task of developing the measures typically include representatives from agencies that have a stake in adult education – employment and social service agencies, literacy councils and even business and industry. The interagency involvement at this level is not typical of other federally funded programs.

The quality indicator system has become the guiding framework for states in their efforts to define program quality and to hold programs accountable. Indicator measures and standards have also given programs the tools to demonstrate the value of their programs to students, other agencies and consumers of adult education services. Through their efforts developing quality indicator systems, adult education programs have become leaders in the movement toward demonstrating the value of publicly funded education and human service programs.

APPENDIX

State Indicator Measurement Procedures:

- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- South Dakota

ARKANSAS

Arkansas incorporates measures and standards of the quality indicators as part of its local program monitoring process. A peer review team visits about one quarter of local programs annually and assesses program performance in program planning, administration, curriculum and facilities, staff development, recruitment, retention and educational gains. The program receives from zero to two points for each performance standard, except for student educational gains standards, where a scale of zero to four is used. After the monitoring visit, the state office sends a letter informing the program on where it stands in each area, and if below standard, areas of improvement needed. Although there is only one formal monitoring visit every four years, each program receives an annual follow-up visit from state staff .

The state uses indicator measures to identify local programs that need technical assistance, to promote program improvement and to demonstrate program effectiveness. The measures are not tied to funding.

Development of the Measures and Standards

A state committee, consisting of state adult education staff, local program practitioners and state literacy council staff, developed the measures and standards for the indicators. Local programs across the state reviewed the initial draft of the measures and state and local staff pilot-tested the monitoring instrument in 26 local programs before it was finalized. After its first year of use, the state further refined the instrument.

Impact on State Accountability System

The indicator measures have improved the overall quality of local programs, according to the state adult education director. Programs now have better planning; improved administration, as measures by the quality of annual statistical information reported to the state; and better coordination with other agencies. State monitoring teams have also noticed improvement in program quality among community-based organization providers and in volunteer programs.

The indicator measurement process has also helped defined the meaning of quality programming for local providers and the raised awareness of quality issues. Program staff now has a better understanding of how to improve their programs.

Making the Process Work

Key to the success of implementing indicator measures and standards was involvement and buy-in of practitioners. It was essential to include local program staff in all aspects of the development process and to have ongoing communication and feedback from them. Pilot-testing of the measures in local programs was also important to understanding and acceptance. Successful implementation also required the involvement in the development and pilot testing of staff who will use the measurement instrument.

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COLORADO

Colorado collects indicator measures in three ways: through its monitoring procedures, on the program application, and through an annual report. Peer review teams use the state's local monitoring instrument, which was recently revised to collect indicator measures, in their annual review of approximately one-third of local programs. The instrument includes measures of educational gains, program planning, curriculum and instruction, staff development, support services, recruitment, retention, administration and facilities. On each performance standard, the program is assessed according to whether it does or does not meet the standard, exceeds the standard, or whether the standard does not exist for the program. Some of the more stable program measures, such as program planning, are also addressed in the program's application for funding. At the end of each program year, local programs submit a report that addresses the student outcome and recruitment measures.

Besides using the indicators for program effectiveness, program improvement and to identify technical assistance needs, the state uses indicator measures in its funding decisions. If a program fails to meet performance standards, it is given a year to improve. If the program fails to improve during that time, it can no longer receive state funds. The main problem programs have had in meeting standards have been in documenting student progress.

Development of the Measures and Standards

A task force of state staff, local program directors and teachers reviewed the indicators and developed draft measures. The program directors and teachers then presented these measures to their programs for comment and the full committee then revised the measures. The task force presented the final measures to all programs at the annual state conference. The development process lasted about 18 months.

Impact on State Accountability System

The main benefit of the indicator measurement system is that local programs are now well versed in program accountability issues. Because of their participation in this process, program staff understands how to describe program quality and can demonstrate program effectiveness. Since staff can now speak the language of accountability, they are in a better position to fight for continued funding. This ability to

sell their programs puts adult education in a good position in a block grant system, according to the state director.

Making the Process Work

The measures and standards development process was a success due to the integral involvement of practitioners. Keeping them informed and giving them credit for their contributions, was key to their buy-in and support for this system.

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CONNECTICUT

Connecticut's indicator measures are incorporated into its program monitoring instrument. Local programs first complete the monitoring form themselves, and a multi-agency team then reviews programs annually. The measures in the instrument assess the program in the areas of program planning and operations, recruitment, retention, educational gains, curriculum and instruction, support services and staff development. Some of the educational gains and retention measures—test scores and attendance— are taken from the state's management information system for each program.

The state uses the indicators to demonstrate program effectiveness to other agencies and audiences within the state and for program improvement. If a program falls below standards, the state targets technical assistance to the program in the deficient area. If the program does not make a good faith effort to correct its problems, funding can be reduced or eliminated. Connecticut's two year funding cycle for local programs strengthens the state ability to affect changes.

Development of the Measures and Standards

An interagency committee with representatives from labor, social services, local school districts, the workforce development board, business and state education staff developed the measures and standards for the indicators. A draft of the measures and standards was presented to local programs for comment prior to completion.

Impact on State Accountability System

The indicator measures and standards development process has served the state well by clearly defining the expectations for program quality and systematizing the state's evaluation activities. An added advantage is that local programs are now better prepared to describe their activities and report outcomes to outside agencies. Programs are better prepared for interagency collaboration, which will become increasingly important in the current programmatic environment.

<u>Making the Process Work</u>

The interagency involvement and collaboration contributed substantially to the success of the measures and standards development process. This broad involvement promoted understanding and acceptance of the evaluation system.

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IOWA

Iowa translated many of its quality indicators into benchmarks to assess whether the state's 15 community colleges, which provide adult education instruction, are achieving long-range strategic goals. The state established a total of 29 benchmarks in the areas of educational gains, program planning, curriculum and instruction, staff development, support services and recruitment/retention. Each benchmark describes a measure and a target for the year 2000 and a second target for 2005. For example, for educational gains, one benchmark is the "Percentage of adults 18 years and over who have attained a high school or equivalent diploma: 85% for 2000 and 90% for 2005." The state designated 16 of the benchmarks as "core" benchmarks to identify the basic values inherent in the adult basic education program. The benchmarks will be used to guide program policy and priorities, demonstrate program effectiveness and quality and to identify areas needing continued improvement through technical assistance.

The state will obtain the benchmark measures from multiple sources. Student educational gains, for example, will be drawn from the state's management information system. Many of the program measures, such as for the planning process, will come from program monitoring. Broader measures, such as the overall literacy levels in the state, will require the state to conduct research studies to assess progress. The benchmark system has just taken effect in 1996 and will be monitored annually by the state education office.

Development of the Benchmarks

The state used the same committee that developed the quality indicators, measures and standards to develop the benchmarks. The committee, was composed of state education staff and the basic education coordinators of the state's community colleges. Separate subcommittees worked on each benchmark.

Impact on State Accountability System

With its development of benchmarks, the adult education program is at the forefront of the program accountability process in Iowa. The benchmarks clearly communicate to other agencies and audiences what adult education is doing, its direction and what it plans to accomplish. The benchmarks

also help the local programs deal with their college administration in explaining the program and maintaining its visibility.

Making the Process Work

Local program coordinators themselves, in collaboration with the state, developed the indicators and benchmarks. This local involvement insured the understanding and acceptance of the measures and standards, as reflected in the benchmarks. Iowa's unique research base of information about student outcomes and its state literacy survey data enabled it to develop empirically based standards and benchmarks that are defensible and credible.

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KENTUCKY

Kentucky measures its indicators of program quality in two ways: through a self-evaluation that each local program performs annually and more formally through a program compliance review, conducted annually on one-third of programs by peer review teams. Indicator measures and standards assess educational gains, program planning and evaluation, curriculum, instruction and instructional setting, professional development, support services, recruitment and retention using a three point scale of excellent, satisfactory or needs improvement.

Programs that fall below standards must develop a program improvement plan and are provided technical assistance from state staff to implement the plan. If the program subsequent improvement is not satisfactory, the program can lose its state funding. The state also uses the measures and standards to identify strengths and weaknesses in the state delivery system.

Development of the Measures and Standards

A committee of practitioners, staff from community organizations, state education staff and state literacy personnel developed Kentucky indicators measures and standards. The committee first established the indicators and distributed them to local programs. About a year later, the measures and standards were developed and implemented.

Impact on State Accountability System

The quality indicators have given direction and focus to the state and local programs in defining the goals and purposes of the adult education program. The measures and standards have helped the state identify and focus technical assistance activities to programs to improve the statewide system. The local programs can use the indicators as a tool to evaluate themselves and move toward excellence.

Making the Process Work

The key to the success of the indicator development process was the involvement and input from local programs. The grass roots nature of the project promoted buy in and acceptance of the measures and standards.

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SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota developed a self-assessment instrument to measure quality indicator measures and standards. All local ABE programs complete the self-assessment annually. The state also conducts an onsite review of a random sample of 20 percent of local programs annually. The self-assessment addresses the indicators for educational gains, program planning, curriculum and instruction, staff development, recruitment and retention. For each performance standard, programs indicate whether they achieved the standard, the plans they have to improve quality, the timeline for making improvements, the person responsible for making the improvements and the technical assistance they will need to achieve their goal.

Programs are not required to address all of the standards, but select the areas where they want to develop their program further. Local programs can then request technical assistance from the state, which may be provided through inservice training, staff development training or visits from the state office. Although currently the state uses the measures and standards as a program improvement and technical assistance tool, funding decisions may be based on program and student progress measures in the future.

Development of the Measures and Standards

A state work group composed of the state adult education director; local practitioners; representatives from labor, vocational education and higher education; and the directors of the state literacy council and lifelong learning council developed the measures and standards, as well as the self assessment instrument. The development process took about a year.

Impact on State Accountability System

The major benefit of the measures and standards is that it allows program staff to select the areas where they want their program to improve. The self assessment instrument then gives them the tool for understanding how to make the improvements. The process also makes programs aware that technical assistance is available and encourages them to view the state office as a resource. Another benefit is that the educational gains measures emphasize to programs the importance of student learning gains in demonstrating program effectiveness.

Making the Process Work

The measures and standards development process was facilitated by the overall climate among state agencies to demonstrate program effectiveness. The involvement of a cross-section of stakeholders and practitioners also aided in the development and adoption of the indicator framework.

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