Linking Taxpayer Dollars to Performance Results: Accountability Through the Integration of Results With Investment

Our emphasis on sound financial practices, performance results and program accountability reflects a strong desire to use taxpayers' dollars as effectively as possible. The Department strives to tie the performance of our programs with budget requests and to strengthen the link between financial investments and program quality.

The Program Assessment Rating Tool. Since FY 2002, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has required federal agencies to assess the quality of government programs using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). OMB uses this assessment across federal agencies to gauge the effectiveness of funded programs, ensure that programs meet statutory requirements and demonstrate accountability for the taxpayers' investments in federal programs. A PART review helps identify a program's strengths and weaknesses to inform funding and management decisions.

The Department uses PART assessments to inform priorities for budget requests to Congress. Each program receives a score for program purpose and design, strategic planning, program management and program results. Once a program has undergone a PART review, the Department implements follow-up actions based on PART recommendations to improve program effectiveness. The PART helps the Department ensure that resources are targeted toward those programs and activities most likely to demonstrate the greatest public benefit.

The Department has proposed investing in programs receiving a PART rating of *Effective, Moderately Effective* or *Adequate*, while proposing major reform or elimination of programs rated *Ineffective*. For programs rated *Results Not Demonstrated*, the Department has proposed continued funding if the programs are likely to demonstrate results in the future and do not duplicate the activities or purposes of similar programs.

In FY 2008, the Department assessed a total of eight programs, seven of which were reassessments, bringing the total number of programs assessed under the PART since 2002 to 93, including some that no longer receive funding. Programs accounting for about 98 percent of the Department's budget authority have now been assessed using the PART.
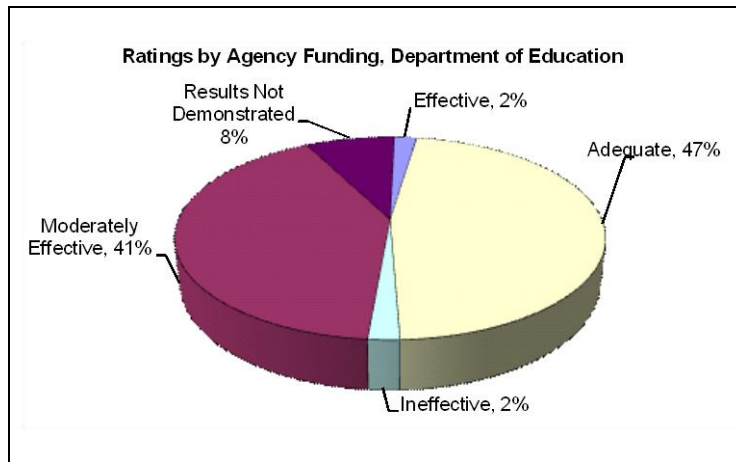
To access PART evaluations of Department programs to date, go to:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/agency/018.html

FY 2002–2008 PART	
Effective	6
Moderately Effective	8
Adequate	31
Ineffective	4
Results Not Demonstrated	44
Total PARTs Completed	93

Ratings by Agency Programs, Department of Education

Effective, 6%
Moderately Effective, 9%
Results Not Demonstrated 47%
Adequate, 32%
Ineffective, 4%
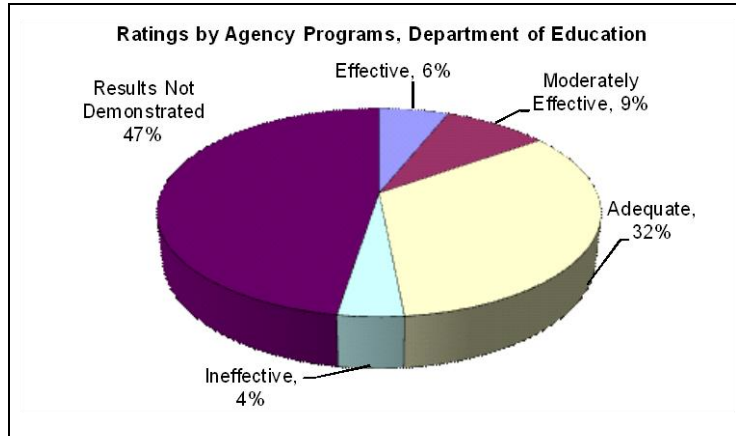
Notes: Percentages of ratings by agency programs may not total 100 percent due to rounding. Total includes PART ratings for programs not currently funded.

Ratings of Programs by FY 2008 Agency Spending (Dollars in Millions)	
Effective	$1,337
Moderately Effective	28,405
Adequate	32,506
Ineffective	1,596
Results Not Demonstrated	5,923
Total PARTs Completed	$69,767

Ratings by Agency Funding, Department of Education

Results Not Demonstrated 8%
Effective, 2%
Adequate, 47%
Moderately Effective, 41%
Ineffective, 2%

Linking Program Performance with Budget Submissions. To further the goal of aligning program performance with budget requests, the Department combines its annual performance plan and annual budget to create an annual performance budget. The Department has identified specific key measures that reflect the Department's four major strategic goals that were identified in its new strategic plan. Last year's strategic planning process, as required by the *Government Performance and Results Act of 1993*, offered an opportunity to re-examine our goals, program objectives and performance measures. The new strategic plan improves on previous efforts to ensure continued funding of the programs that have proven beneficial for the populations they serve. For more detail on the annual performance budget, see
http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2009plan/fy09perfplan.pdf

Challenges Linking the Program Performance to Funding Expenditures. Linking performance results, expenditures, and budget for Department programs is complicated because more than 98 percent of the Department's funding is disbursed through grants and loans in which only a portion of a given fiscal year's appropriation is available to state, school, organization, or student recipients during the fiscal year in which the funds are

Management's Discussion and Analysis

appropriated. The remainder is available at or near the end of the appropriation year or in a subsequent year.

Funds for competitive grant programs are generally available when appropriations are passed by Congress. However, the processes required for conducting grant competitions often result in the award of grants near the end of the fiscal year with funding available to grantees for future fiscal years.

The results presented in this report cannot be attributed solely to the actions taken related to FY 2008 funds but to a combination of funds from across several fiscal years. Furthermore, the results of some education programs may not be apparent for several years after the funds are expended.

Although program results cannot be directly linked to a particular fiscal year's funding, for the purpose of this report, performance results during specific fiscal years will serve as proxies.

Performance Evaluations Improve Accountability. To further demonstrate accountability for the taxpayers' investment in education spending, each year the Department publishes evaluations of selected programs. These evaluations serve to identify both best practices and programs that cannot demonstrate success and to inform senior management about programs in need of additional support. The Department uses evaluations to help identify programs that may be eliminated from the budget or recommended for reduced funding. Several offices in the Department have the responsibility for designing and implementing evaluations of program and management activities and operations. Those include the Institute of Education Sciences, and the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development. Additionally, the Department's Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office audits and reports provide guidance and feedback on improvements in management and program operations. Pages 122-124 contain a summary of selected evaluations released in FY 2008. Additionally, the Department provides guidance to grant recipients on developing evaluations based on scientifically rigorous evidence. More detail is available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/evidence_based/evidence_based.asp.