

# Archived Information

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Objective 4.5: The Department of Education's employees are highly skilled and high performing.

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**Our Role.** The Education Department continued to actively promote the hiring of a diverse and talented workforce and provided a broad range of training and development programs in a variety of formats. Employees were able to select from a wide range of courses offered through the Education Department's Training and Development Center, including on-site college and university courses. Employees may also increase their learning or career opportunities by taking courses online, applying for tuition assistance to attend a college of their choice, using available career counseling services, participating in a formal mentoring program, or applying for a "mobility assignment," which offers employees an opportunity to work in a different job for a temporary period of time. The Education Department also provided work/life programs, dispute resolution services, and workplace services to ensure that the work climate fosters positive working relationships and a physical environment conducive to productivity.

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## Our Performance

**How We Measure.** The three performance indicators for this objective focus on the extent to which employees have the necessary skills and the appropriate environment to carry out the work of the Education Department. For 2000, the performance report data is drawn from the 2000 Employee Survey, customer satisfaction surveys, and other data, such as that collected on dispute resolution. The 2000 Employee Survey was adopted and modified from the Office of Personnel Management's Organizational Assessment Survey and was administered over a period covering December 1999 through January 2000. The response rate for the Education Department 2000 Employee Survey was 41 percent. Where similar questions were asked, comparisons can be made with prior Education Department surveys, which were administered in 1996 and 1993. As a result, the Education Department can determine, based on changes in employee responses, whether changes made in training, workplace improvement, or new workplace services are having the desired result.

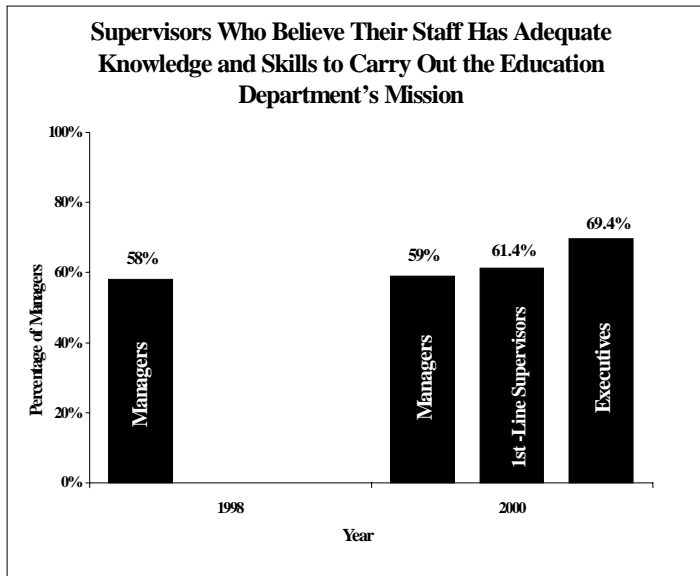
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**Indicator 4.5.a. Seventy percent of survey respondents will agree that manager and employee knowledge and skills are adequate to carry out the Department of Education's mission.**

**Assessment of Progress.** There was positive progress toward the goal, but the goal for 2000 was not met. The 2000 Employee Survey included the statement: "The workforce has the job-relevant skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals." Managers' agreement with this statement increased from 57 percent in 1998 to 59 percent in 2000.

The Education Department continues to research and apply innovative ways to attract and improve the performance and knowledge of its employees. Based on benchmarking for best practices, partnerships with university and nationally-recognized organizations specializing in executive development, and feedback from training recipients, the Education Department provides a broad range of new training and development programs in a variety of formats, including customized training for intact departmental teams and online training.

Figure 4.5.a.1



**Source:** Education Department 2000 Employee Survey and April 1998 Training and Development Center Survey of Managers. *Frequency:* No regular schedule established. *Next Update:* To be determined. **Validation procedures:** 2000 Employee Survey data compiled by OPM. 1998 data supplied by the Department of Education's Training and Development Group; no formal verification or attestation procedure applied. **Limitations of data:** Training and Development Center staff conducted the April 1998 survey of 566 managers and manually tabulated the results. The survey was sent via e-mail, and a 60 percent response rate was achieved. The 2000 survey received a 41 percent response rate of all employees (i.e. includes executives, managers and employees).

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**Indicator 4.5.b. Most employees will indicate satisfaction with their work environment (e.g., physical surroundings, noise level, and air quality), security, and accessibility.**

**Assessment of Progress.** There was positive progress toward the goal, but the goal for 2000 was not met. Since 1993, the Education Department has tracked employee satisfaction with the physical work environment, security arrangements, and accommodations for persons with disabilities. Progress toward the 2000 goals is due to significant efforts made to renovate the Education Department's headquarters building and to either relocate or improve the buildings occupied by employees in other facilities. Overall, satisfaction that "physical conditions (for example, noise, temperature, lighting, cleanliness) allow employees to perform their jobs well" was indicated by 57 percent of the Education Department's employees, a six percentage-point improvement over the 1996 survey satisfaction rate. This result is also close to a government-wide satisfaction rate of 60 percent (taken from OPM's 1996 Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS) results). For buildings (FOB-6, K Street, Dallas, and Philadelphia), where significant improvements were made, satisfaction rates were even higher: 62 percent, 75 percent, 76 percent, and 70 percent, respectively. As shown in Figure 4.5.b.1, between 1993 and 2000, employee satisfaction with the work environment improved from 31 percent to 57 percent, an increase of 26 percentage points.

This performance indicator also focuses on satisfaction with security arrangements and accommodations for persons with disabilities. The Education Department's employee survey data presented in Figure 4.5.b.2 indicate that between 1993 and 1996 employee satisfaction with security arrangements increased from 39 percent to 50 percent for satisfaction with security arrangements. Figure 4.5.b.3 shows that between 1993 and 2000, employee satisfaction with accommodations for persons with disabilities increased 14 percentage points from 48 percent to 62 percent.

Figure 4.5.b.1

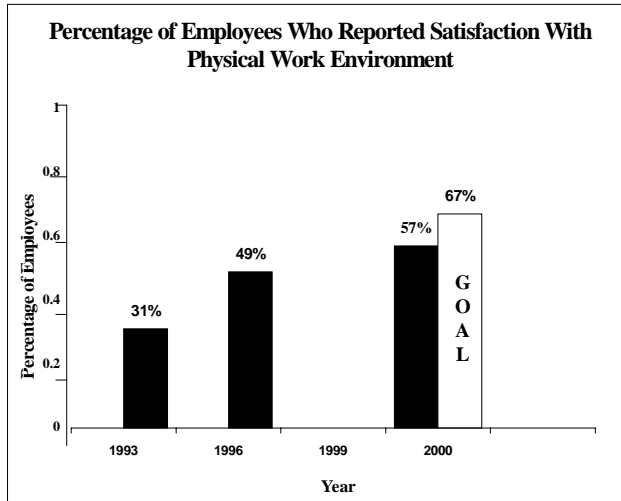


Figure 4.5.b.2

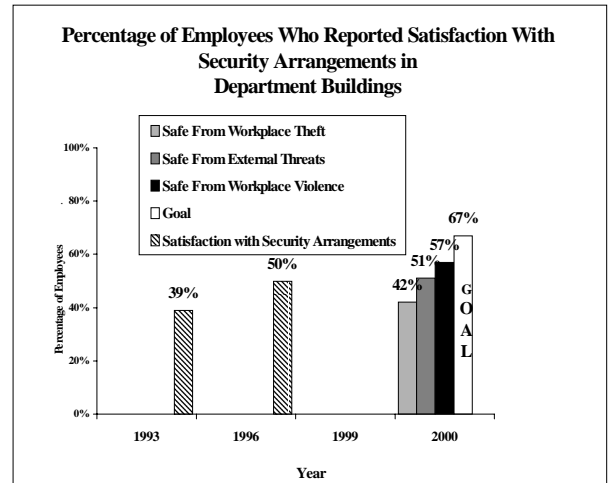
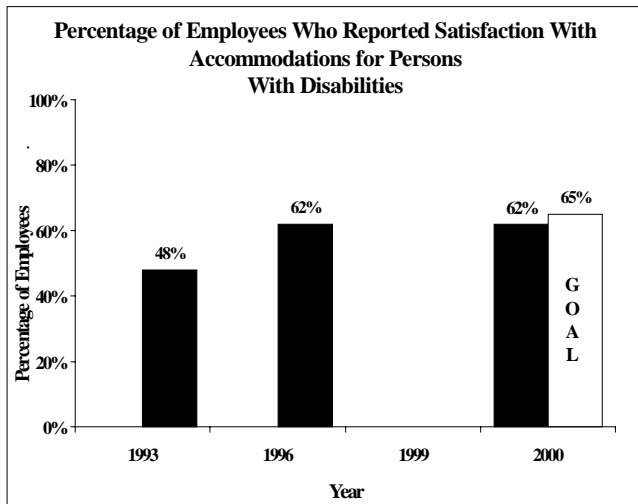


Figure 4.5.b.3



**Source:** 1993, 1996, and 2000 Employee Survey. *Frequency:* No regular schedule established. *Next Update:* To be determined. **Validation procedure:** Data supplied by independent contractor. No formal verification or attestation procedure applied. **Limitations of data:** The Education Department continues to work on developing indicators to augment employee survey results (e.g., measures of air and water quality and using customer help desk requests to track work environment quality improvements).

**Indicator 4.5.c. Most employees and managers will express high satisfaction with assistance on resolving disputes, balancing work and life responsibilities, and addressing organizational and employee problems.**

**Assessment of Progress.** The goal for 2000 was exceeded. The data in Figure 4.5.c.1 show that the Education Department has made significant progress towards resolving disputes permanently, on an informal basis, since redesigning its complaint resolution process and making its new Informal Dispute Resolution Center (IDR Center) fully operational in 1997. The current process requires employees to use the IDR Center as a first stop for all types of concerns, including equal employment opportunity (EEO) matters, administrative grievances, and negotiated grievances. IDR Center staff provides information, mediation, and

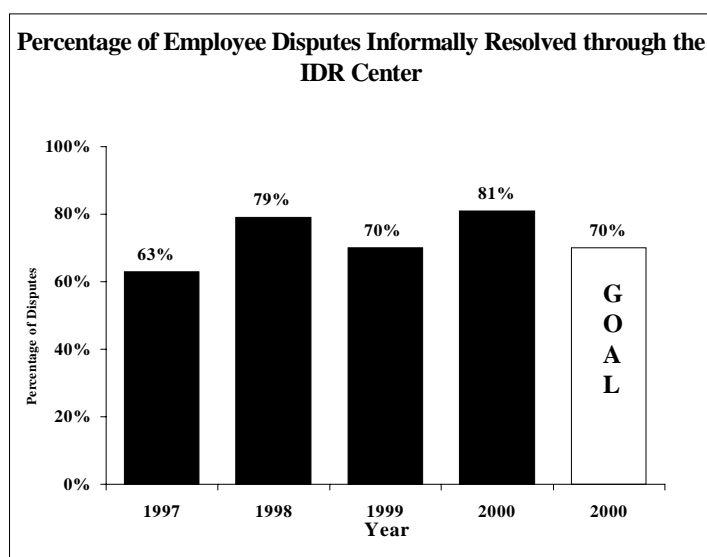
other services as needed to address matters in an informal process. Higher success rates of resolution are difficult to achieve because certain types of complaints remain difficult to resolve at the informal level. For example, for many complaints about non-selection during hiring or complaints about non-promotions, compromise remedies are difficult to identify. As a result, because they are entitled to do so, many employees continue to pursue these matters through the formal process, although it is unclear whether they obtain satisfaction in this venue.

Figure 4.5.c.1 shows that the percentage of complaints and grievances resolved informally increased from 63 percent in 1997 to 81 percent in 2000, an increase of 18 percentage points. The total number of informal complaints counseled decreased from 147 in 1999 to 128 in 2000. Just-in-time surveys are used to assess customer satisfaction with assistance in resolving disputes informally. Customers were asked whether the process was satisfactory and whether they felt the process was fair. Respectively, responses were 64 percent and 79 percent positive. These are baseline data.

The Education Department found that satisfaction with training and development courses on work/life and career enhancement topics such as managing in a flexi-place environment, team building, and career planning had a satisfaction rate of about 6.5 on a 7-point scale (with 7 being a high rating). For 2000, the Education Department provided such courses to over 1500 participants in both headquarters and regional offices. Satisfaction with training and development courses on organizational/employee issue topics, such as improving employee performance, promoting diversity and EEO, and using the performance appraisal system effectively had a satisfaction rate of about 6.1 on a 7-point scale. For 2000, the Education Department provided such courses to almost 1700 participants in both headquarters and regional offices. In addition to formal courses, the Education Department offers work/life seminars, often in the form of “bring your lunch,” including parenting and eldercare topics under an interagency arrangement with HHS. Attendance has averaged 75 and 50 people, respectively, for seminars on these topics.

The Education Department also provides a mentoring program, which has had 92 participants to date. The career counseling one-on-one sessions were provided to almost 1200 employees during 2000. The Education Department’s flexi-place program now has 957 (21.7 percent of Education Department employees) participants, and 29 employees are using 13 telecenters as a flexible workplace arrangement. For employee participation rates, the Education Department has moved from being in last place among Cabinet-level agencies to its current position of fifth place – even though it is the smallest Cabinet-level agency participating in the Telecenters Pilot Program.

Figure 4.5.c.1



**Source:** IDR Center reports. *Frequency:* Annual. *Next Update:* 2001. **Validation procedure:** Data supplied by the IDR Center. No formal verification or attestation procedure applied. **Limitations of data.** These data focus on the Department of Education’s ability to resolve EEO, administrative grievance, and negotiated grievance cases informally. The data has been collected on a fiscal year basis since 1997.

