

Star Schools Program
Results of GPRA Panel Review and Product Analysis
July 10-11, 2007

Overview:

Under the terms of the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA), the Department conducted a panel review on July 10-11, 2007 of products developed under Star Schools funding. This review was intended to establish a baseline for evaluating program performance in meeting the Star Schools Program performance measures.

For Star Schools, the lone performance measure was:

The percentage of technology-based products in reading or math deemed to be of high quality by an independent panel of experts.

Two panels, each made up of three external experts, were convened in Madison, WI on July 10-11, 2007. One panel reviewed two mathematics-learning products, while the other panel reviewed two products with interdisciplinary content (which will eventually be evaluated for their math and reading gains). This paper summarizes the results of these panel reviews.

The four basic criteria for determining the quality of the products under review were: (1) Quality of the Subject Matter Content, (2) Meeting the Needs of the Targeted Students, (3) Quality of the Technology, and (4) Quality of the Instructional Design. The experts were asked to answer several questions about each of the four basic criteria in reference to the products. For each of the four main criteria, the experts were also asked to provide a yes or no criterion rating. The experts used their summary comments and criterion ratings as a guide to determine whether the product was of high quality. In order for the product to gain an overall GPRA score of "high quality," at least two of the three panelists had to score the product as "high quality."

Three of the four, or 75%, of the products were deemed to be of high quality.

The Products:

The original plan was to select randomly from those products that have been produced by the six currently funded Star Schools grants. However, most of the Star Schools grants extend for five years of funding, and they are only midway through their second year. Consequently, the products are not yet complete. At the time of the GPRA review, only four products were available for demonstration and interactive play, so all of these were selected for review, even though none was complete.

In some cases, the experts reviewed a single game level or scenario that will eventually be part of a larger whole. In other cases, certain product elements were in their initial

stages of design. In their reviews, the experts were asked to take this into consideration and to rate each product in its current state, recognizing that it may be incomplete and trying not to base their judgments on future potential.

The products were rated at this early stage of their development in order to develop baseline data for the Star Schools program's GPRA performance measures. The GPRA review also afforded the grantees the opportunity to receive informative feedback early in the development of their products.

Review Process:

Each of the panel reviews included three main elements: a presentation by the product developers to inform the expert reviewers about the product and its intended uses; time for the expert reviewers independently to explore and interact with the product; and a panel discussion. Then each expert independently completed a written review. There was no attempt to forge a consensus among the panelists.

The experts thought that this process was informative and productive and they valued learning from each other's comments. Both panels thoroughly enjoyed having a face-to-face discussion; however, one panelist commented that he would have liked to have had more time allotted for the panel discussion. Although the process generally ran smoothly, all of the panels needed more than the allotted time to complete the write-ups of their reviews. Also, some of the experts expressed concerns about having to review products that were still under development, noting that some of these products might be very different when completed.

A summary of the results is depicted in the following table:

Star School Products Summary of Results:

Project/Product	Panel Member	Subject Matter	Target Population	Technology	Instructional Design	Overall Rating-High Quality?	FINAL RATING
Product 1	Panel Member 1	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES-HIGH QUALITY
	Panel Member 2	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
	Panel Member 3	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	
Product 2	Panel Member 4	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES-HIGH QUALITY
	Panel Member 5	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
	Panel Member 6	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Product 3	Panel Member 1	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Panel Member 2	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	
	Panel Member 3	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	
Product 4	Panel Member 4	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES-HIGH QUALITY
	Panel Member 5	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	
	Panel Member 6	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
TOTALS		9/12	7/12	9/12	8/12	9/12	3 / 4 = 75%

Note: Because the Star Schools program was not appropriated in FY 2008 and FY 2009, there have been no subsequent GPRA Panel Reviews.