

Archived Information

Changes in Indicators and Targets

Indicators must change over time as part of the process of continual data improvement. As the Department of Education has become more knowledgeable about the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA), we have been improving our performance indicators and integrating more sophisticated performance measures into our Performance Plan. The focus and target have changed in some indicators, new indicators have been added and others have been deleted. We are tracking these changes to present a statement of our progress in improving our performance indicators as well as a full report of the changes.

Most of the indicators that have changed did so between fiscal year 1999 and fiscal year 2000. This was expected, because we were just beginning to learn about GPRA reporting. During the past year, our indicators, data collection, and reporting process have been stabilizing. Some measure of change will always be a part of performance indicators as policy needs change, targets are met and exceeded, and improvements arise in data collection methods.

Increasing Focus: Decreasing the Number of Indicators

Some indicators in the fiscal year 2000 plan were useful in determining program progress, but they did not allow us to directly demonstrate progress in the areas of data collection process, educational outcomes, or national goals. These have been omitted from this year's Annual Plan and may be retained for internal management and tracking purposes only. One example of this type of indicator is fiscal year 2000 Indicator 21 *"By 1999, all states will conduct periodic statewide surveys or collect statewide data on alcohol and drug use of students and incidents of crime and violence in schools."* This indicator was deleted from this year's Annual Plan because its focus was more on process than on outcomes. Approximately one-third of the indicators from last year's Annual Plan were removed from this year's Annual Plan under this guideline.

The second category of deleted indicators are those for which data were not of high quality and could not be improved; therefore, we could not report on program progress. These indicators have been omitted from this year's Annual Plan, and they have not been retained for internal management purposes. Where appropriate, new indicators, for which resources and data will be available, have been created to better measure the strategic goals and objectives of the Department.

The final category of deleted indicators are those that overlapped with other indicators. For example, fiscal year 2000 Indicator 42 *"At least 60 percent of teachers, school administrators, and school librarians will have been trained on use of computers and the Internet to help students learn by 2001"* was dropped from this year's Annual Plan because it overlapped with this year's Indicator 1.7.f *"By 2001, at least 50 percent of teachers will indicate that they feel very well prepared to integrate educational technology into instruction"*.

Increasing Utility: Modifying the Focus of Indicators

Programs have been working hard to improve their indicators as the Department of Education incorporates performance planning into the GPRA framework and becomes more sophisticated at writing indicators. Indicators were modified where clear improvements could be made. For example, modifications may include adding a numerical target to the text of the indicator and choosing indicators that better match program outcome goals. For example, Indicator 1.7.c: *"The*

percentage of public school instructional rooms connected to the Internet (Information Superhighway) will increase from 14 percent in 1996 to higher percentages thereafter" was modified to reflect the 2000 target of 100 percent, and now reads "The percentage of public school instructional rooms connected to the Internet (Information Superhighway) will increase to 100 percent by 2000."

Increasing Scope: Responding to Additional Data Needs

Indicators have been added as part of the continuous improvement process in our DQ and indicator systems. The additional indicators address all aspects of the ED's strategic goals and objectives. Indicator 1.4.g is an example of this process of continuous improvement: *"There will be an increase in the percentage of new teachers who feel very well prepared to: (a) address the needs of students with limited English proficiency; (b) address the needs of students with disabilities; and (c) integrate educational technology into the grade or subject they teach."*

For a comprehensive list of indicator changes, please see the appendix "Changes from Fiscal Year 2000 Plan to Fiscal Year 2001 Plan."

New Numbering System: Clarifying Strategic Goals

We have instituted a new numbering system of indicators in the fiscal year 2001 edition of the Annual Plan. The indicators have been numbered and visibly linked to both their strategic goal and to their objectives. This allows for immediate recognition of the relationship between the indicator and the plan. This modification from last year's numbering system was instituted to allow individuals outside the Department to better track our indicators.

We have used a three-part numbering system: The first part is the goal number; the second part is the objective of that goal; the third is a letter that will differentiate the indicators. For example, fiscal year 2001 Indicator 1.4.c is the third indicator of the fourth objective of Goal 1. For a full correlation table, please see the appendix "Numbering System Changes from Fiscal Year 2000 to Fiscal Year 2001."

