



Evaluation Technical Assistance

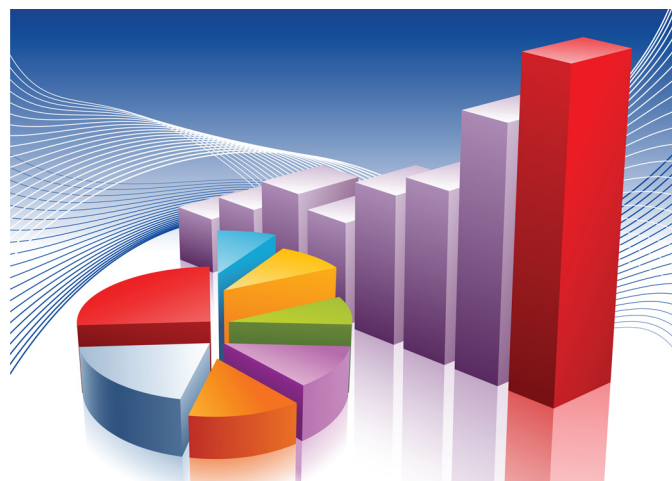
# EVALUATION

# Compass

WINTER 2008

## Finding Your Way to Data Sources

Gathering data is an essential process in program evaluation, and identifying data sources related to your school health program is an important step in this process.



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### Data and Program Evaluation

CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) expects that you will describe, understand, and plan your programs; document what has happened in your programs; improve your programs; and after mastering these three evaluation expectations, consider conducting more in-depth evaluation. The implementation and usefulness of these evaluation activities depend on the availability of program data.

### Need Data?

In program evaluation, the word "data" refers to information in either numerical or narrative form that you gather during an evaluation. When thinking about evaluation one of the first questions that you may ask is, "Where are we going to get these data?" The purpose of this Evaluation Compass is to describe examples of data sources that you can use for planning, documenting, and improving your school health program.

### Compass Point #1: Data Sources for Planning Your School Health Program

DASH programs funded under cooperative agreement 801 are required to develop and implement a strategic plan. Identifying and analyzing data are central to the strategic planning process.

*The Strategic Planning Kit for School Health Programs* describes data sources related to the current status of your DASH funded program, how it operates, the population that your program serves, and the environment in which your program operates. An example of a data source to use in planning your school health program is the *DASH Program Inventory*.

The *Program Inventory* is an important data source you can use to help plan program activities that align with your program's strengths. Examining data from your state's *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* can demonstrate the need for your program and provide potential opportunities to target your program to maximize impact. Using existing data sources will help you plan your school health program.



## Compass Point #2: Data Sources for Documenting What Happened in Your School Health Program

DASH requires you to submit an annual workplan that describes program objectives and data sources for assessing whether an objective and the related activities have been achieved. Knowing who, what, when, where, and how much of program activities allows you to assess what has happened in your program. Collection of this type of data is called **process evaluation**.

Often, programs collect process data when the information is necessary for program implementation. For example, in order to conduct a professional development event, you need the list of registrants and an agenda for the event. These are data sources. Other data sources for documenting program activities are less obvious and need more planning, but can nonetheless be easy and inexpensive to develop. Examples include phone logs that track technical assistance calls, meeting notes, and observations of professional development events.

If you are funded for coordinated school health, HIV prevention, or asthma management, you are required to submit *Indicators for School Health Programs (Indicators)*. The data you need to complete the *Indicators* questionnaires are process evaluation data that describe what happened in your program, such as distribution of materials, provision of professional development, and technical assistance.

## Compass Point #3: Data Sources for Improving Your School Health Program

Some of the data sources that document what has happened in your program can be used to plan program improvements. For

example, *Indicators* data can suggest the need to conduct more or different program activities, increase the number of people attending programs, increase your ability to reach specific groups of people, or change program content. Another data source that you can use to identify program improvements is your Project Officer's report on the technical review of your program.

The "Data Collection Framework," a worksheet in *The Strategic Planning Kit for School Health Programs*, can help you each year to review the information you need for program improvement, and the measures, sources, and methods for collecting this information. The following table lists examples of data sources that may be available to your school health program.

Data Source	What the Source Describes
DASH Program Inventory	Current program operations and activities
Documents (e.g., meeting minutes)	Program efforts
<i>Indicators for School Health Programs</i>	Program activities, development, and implementation
National Association of State Boards of Education State School Health Policy Database	State-level written school health policies
Professional development event database reports	Professional development events
Professional development event evaluation reports	Participant feedback on professional development events
Brochures or pamphlets describing program	Program descriptions
School Health Profiles	Health policies and activities in secondary schools
State and local level health surveys (e.g., Youth Tobacco Survey, Communities that Care survey)	State and local-level health-related knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors of students, other groups of youth, parents, and community groups
State departments of education	State, county, district, and school statistics
Technical assistance logs	Technical assistance provided to program clients
Technical review report from DASH Project Officer	Current status of program
Website hits counter	Website use and document downloads
<i>Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)</i>	Health risk behaviors of high school students

Source: Strategic Planning Kit for School Health Programs  
[http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/sp\\_toolkit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/sp_toolkit.htm)

## Resource Zone

- **DASH Program Inventory**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/resources.htm>
- **Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/yrbs>
- **School Health Profiles 3rd edition**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/profiles/index.htm>
- **Indicators for School Health Programs**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/indicators-facts.htm>