EDUCATION

and training beyond high school

GEAR UP
WEST VIRGINIA

Effective Collaboration for Effective Evaluation

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GEAR UP WEST VIRGINIA

Goals of our Discussion

- To define "Collaborative Evaluation"
- To exemplify how collaborative evaluation works for West Virginia GEAR UP
- To discuss and explore how collaboration might work in other settings
- To provide resources to support high quality evaluation and collaboration

What is Collaborative Evaluation?

- Involves active participation of key stakeholders
  - Done *with* stakeholders, not *to* them
- Shares power and responsibility for evaluation design and decisions
- Program stakeholders and evaluators are equal partners in design and planning

The Collaborators

WV Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC)

- Coordinating body for higher education in WV
- Division of Student Success and P-20 Initiatives administers GEAR UP
- Plans, coordinates, and monitors all GEAR UP services for students in 10 counties

Edvantia, Inc.

- Non-profit educational research, evaluation, and development company
- Responsible for leading design, implementation of the GEAR UP evaluation in West Virginia

West Virginia GEAR UP

- Six-year state grant
- Will serve more than 13,000 students from 2008-2014
- 10 counties, more than 5,000 students per year
- 2014 cohort and 11th and 12th graders each year of the grant
- 32 Middle Schools
- 17 High Schools

West Virginia GEAR UP

Service Areas and Schools

Fall 2009 school year

GEARUP
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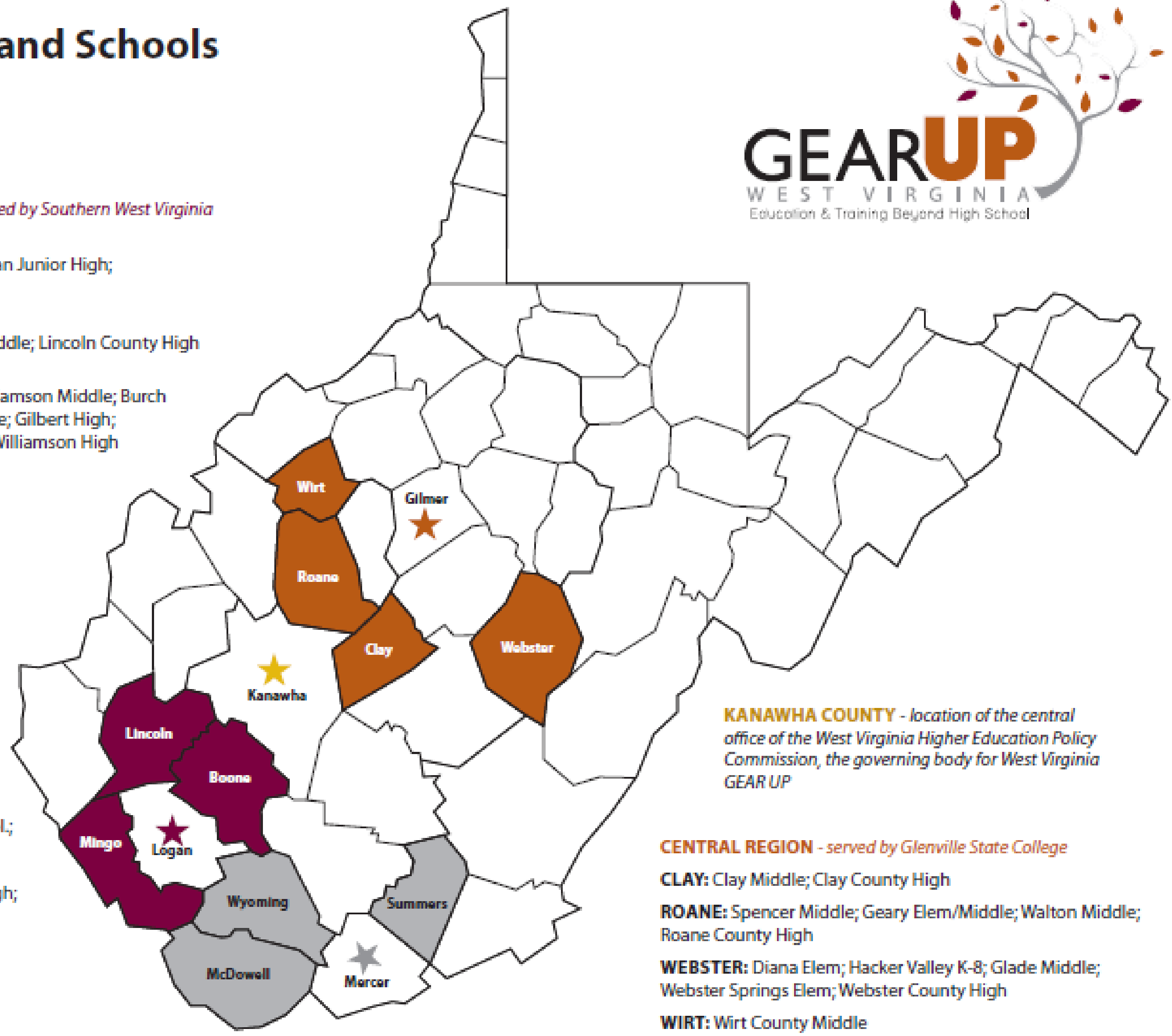
Education & Training Beyond High School



SOUTHWESTERN REGION - *served by Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College*

BOONE: Madison Middle; Sherman Junior High; Sherman High

LINCOLN: Duval P-8; Hamlin P-8; Harts Interm 4-8; Guyan Valley Middle; Lincoln County High

MINGO: Kermit Area K-8; Lenore K-8; Matewan Middle; Williamson Middle; Burch Middle; Burch High; Gilbert Middle; Gilbert High; Matewan High; Tug Valley High; Williamson High

SOUTHERN REGION - *served by Concord University*

MCDOWELL: Southside K-8; Sandy River Middle; Mount View Middle; Mount View High; Big Creek High; Iaeger High

SUMMERS: Summers Middle; Summers High

WYOMING: Baileysville Middle; Glen Fork Middle; Herndon Consol.; Huff Consol.; Mullens Middle; Pineville Middle; Oceana Middle; Road Branch Middle; Westside High; Wyoming County East High

KANAWHA COUNTY - *location of the central office of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, the governing body for West Virginia GEAR UP*

CENTRAL REGION - *served by Glenville State College*

CLAY: Clay Middle; Clay County High

ROANE: Spencer Middle; Geary Elem/Middle; Walton Middle; Roane County High

WEBSTER: Diana Elem; Hacker Valley K-8; Glade Middle; Webster Springs Elem; Webster County High

WIRT: Wirt County Middle

*www.***wvgearup***.org*

The Evaluation

- 16 Questions:
  - 5 formative, 9 outcomes, 2 sustainability
- Rigorous, longitudinal quasi-experiment
  - 2 levels of matching
    - Student
    - School
- Embedded design using mixed methods
  - Multiple data collection methods

How We Work

- Documented agreements
- Regular communication via different methods
- Share instruments, reports, other documents for review, comment, and revision
- Open to critiques and suggestions
- Work to understand each others' needs
- Stay flexible to enhance responsiveness

Why Collaborate?

- Shares power and responsibility
- Broadens perspective
- Enhances validity
- Builds capacity
- Increases utilization
- Can increase satisfaction with processes

Collaboration Pro/Con

Collaboration is good!

- Empowers stakeholders and can build evaluation capacity
- Helps ensure evaluators are well-informed about the program
- Increases validity of findings and interpretations
- Increases sense of ownership and likelihood of evaluation use

Collaboration can be tricky.

- Multiple or competing needs/perspectives can be difficult to navigate and resolve satisfactorily
- Requires ample initial time investment to establish relationships, expectations
- Needs regular, ongoing investment from all

Making it Work, Working it Out

Skill-Building Activities

Read the scenario and discuss what kind of collaboration (if any) you see between the stakeholders. What is going right? What is going wrong? How can they make things better?

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Skill-Building Activities

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Some Helpful Resources

- American Evaluation Association (AEA): www.eval.org
- Collaborative, Participatory & Empowerment Evaluation Topical Interest Group: http://comm.eval.org/EVAL/cpetig
- NEIRTEC Guide to Collaborative Evaluation: www.neirtec.org/evaluation
- Evaluation Checklist Project: www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists
- Evaluation Wiki: www.evaluationwiki.org

Effective Collaboration

Contact Information

Copies of this presentation are available at www.wvgearup.org in the Resources section under the Educator Resources tab.

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Effective Collaboration for Effective Evaluation: Skill Building Activities

Read these scenarios and discuss what kind of collaboration (if any) you see among the stakeholders. What is going right? What is going wrong? How can they make things better?

Scenario 1: Ill Communication

It was the first year of a GEAR UP program serving students in the rural Midwest. Based on word-of-mouth recommendations, the program staff hired an evaluator from a university in the state. One initial planning meeting was held during the grant proposal process, and a general evaluation plan was developed. After the grant was funded, program staff and the evaluator discussed, in general terms, making some modifications to the plan, but time constraints and scheduling conflicts kept interfering with their ability to schedule a meeting to hammer out specific details and reach a shared understanding.

As the year progressed, program staff collected implementation data about project activities and services; meanwhile, the evaluator developed and administered surveys for students and parents served by the program. The sporadic, brief communiqués between program staff and the evaluator tended to be superficial—simple updates that all was going well on their respective ends. At the end of the year, when program staff delivered implementation and activity data to the evaluator, he was shocked to see that the data were not what he was expecting. Likewise, program staff were very surprised that survey data did not answer questions they felt to be of key importance.

Both the evaluator and the program staff were angry that the evaluation was "ruined." Each side blamed the other for not implementing the evaluation plan they discussed at the start of the year. After a cooling-off period, both sides worked together to complete the annual performance report, but mutually decided to part ways before the second year of the project.

What are the things that went right?

What are the things that went wrong?

What could each "side" do in the future to ensure that a similar situation does not occur?

Effective Collaboration for Effective Evaluation: Skill Building Activities

Read these scenarios and discuss what kind of collaboration (if any) you see among the stakeholders. What is going right? What is going wrong? How can they make things better?

Scenario 2: Little Know-it-All

GEAR UP staff in an urban setting hired a very well-regarded evaluator to help them assess the outputs and effectiveness of their program. The initial planning meetings were very productive, although program staff tended to listen more than talk, and the evaluator tended to dominate the discussion. A detailed evaluation plan was written that ensured Federal reporting requirements would be met via multiple data collection strategies. Regular reporting dates were established, and the evaluator and program staff held monthly teleconferences to keep each other informed about activities and progress.

After the first semester, program staff determined that they needed a slightly different kind of information to help improve program operations. During a regularly-scheduled conference call, program staff told the evaluator that she needed to change the evaluation plan. They listed the different kinds of information they wanted and asked for a revised plan within a month.

The evaluator responded by telling the program staff that they didn't really know what they needed and that she, as the evaluation expert, knew what was best for the evaluation. She also informed them that it wasn't prudent to change an evaluation plan mid-way through the year and that they would have to wait until the second year to make changes.

The program staff kept insisting that changes were needed, and the evaluator kept insisting that they really were not. The stand-off lasted a full week, with regular calls and e-mails about the subject. Eventually, the evaluator ended up making some modifications to the plan, but she was not happy about it. Program staff were not happy, either, because they did not feel that the changes were adequate or appropriate to fully meet their needs.

What are the things that went right?

What are the things that went wrong?

What could these stakeholders do in the future to ensure that a similar situation does not occur?

Effective Collaboration for Effective Evaluation: Skill Building Activities

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Scenario 3: Your Cheatin' Heart

During the second year of a GEAR UP evaluation, the program staff grew increasingly dissatisfied with the reports provided by the evaluator. Although the reports met the purposes, requirements, and timelines established in the evaluation plan, the program staff came to think that they lacked a little something in the substance. They wanted to see more and different kinds of analyses of the data—after all, they saw fantastic reports and amazing displays of data at the NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference during the summer between Year 1 and Year 2. The staff wanted similar kinds of analyses and report for their GEAR UP program.

Program staff looked at the contract and determined that the evaluator was fulfilling the terms, and they were not certain that the terms could be changed. Without telling the evaluator, program staff "found" some extra funds and hired another evaluation consultant to do the kinds of analyses they wanted. The consultant delivered the new (and flashier) reports, while the original evaluator continued to work under the terms of the original contract, delivering the standard reports and thinking—without verifying—that they met the client's needs.

At the close of the second year, program staff decided to permanently change evaluators. Without giving the original evaluator an opportunity to negotiate new or changed working agreements, deliverables, or expectations, the program staff terminated the original contract (taking advantage of an early-termination clause) and hired the evaluation consultant as the new evaluator for the GEAR UP program.

What are the things that went right?

What are the things that went wrong?

What could these stakeholders do in the future to ensure that a similar situation does not occur?

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Scenario 4: Change

The working relationship between the Great Minds GEAR UP Program and Excellent Evaluation and Research Services, Inc. (EERS) seemed ideal. They had worked together to develop a fully integrated proposal—in which evaluation was embedded into informed program activities. After the grant award, they had worked together to craft a detailed, responsive contract for services. Monthly meetings were held to ensure that both program and evaluation activities were on track. Instruments were review collaboratively to ensure that they were valid, reliable, and responsive. Regular formative evaluation reports were submitted and review by key staff from Great Minds and EERS. The relationship seemed like a case study in how to plan and implement an effective collaborative evaluation. Staff at Great Minds and EERS had a great deal of trust in each other and were mutually satisfied with the progress of the program and the evaluation.

At the start of the third year, however, a new program director was hired to replace the original director (who had received a coveted promotion). The new program director was generally satisfied with the evaluation efforts but did not necessarily like some of the findings—progress was slow in some areas of key importance to state policy makers. The new director also thought some of the recommendations were not feasible and should not be reported or considered. During winter months of Year 3, EERS staff were surprised to find that the director had made a presentation to state policy makers using formative evaluation findings—but overstating the progress in some area and understating problems in others. A few weeks later, evaluators became concerned when the director seemed so dismissive of certain recommendations evaluators developed to address enduring challenges.

Not wanting to rock the boat, the lead evaluator did not address these concerns with the program director initially. After several months, however, she had reached the limits of her patience and initiated a rather heated discussion with the program director about what she perceived to be the deteriorating relationship. The conversation took the director completely off guard.

What are the things that went right?

What are the things that went wrong?

What could these stakeholders do in the future to ensure that a similar situation does not occur?

West Virginia GEARUP Evaluation Questions

Implementation (Formative) Questions:

F1. Are project activities being implemented with fidelity to the design?

F2. Are services to students, parents, and schools/teachers achieving the desired reach?

F3. How do stakeholders perceive the quality of project activities, interventions, products, and outputs?

F4. What problems have emerged in implementing project activities and interventions, and how are they being resolved by those responsible for delivery?

F5. How effectively, efficiently, and appropriately are (a) resources being used, and (b) partners collaborating toward GEAR UP goals?

Outcome Questions:

O1. To what extent does GEAR UP increase student interest and involvement in school?

O2. To what extent is student academic achievement increasing?

O3. To what extent does GEAR UP promote student academic progression?

O4. To what extent does GEAR UP promote student career awareness and interests?

O5. To what extent does GEAR UP promote students' "college knowledge"?

O6. Does student participation in postsecondary opportunities increase?

O7. To what extent do GEAR UP activities promote academic development and capacity of GEAR UP schools and educators?

O8. To what extent does GEAR UP increase parent knowledge of college admissions and financial aid?

O9. How do activities and interventions, and other variables, relate to the above goals?

Sustainability Questions:

S1. How, to whom, and how successfully is project information being disseminated?

S2. Which, if any, project elements appear to be sustainable beyond the life of the project?

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Partners in education. Focused on results.

West Virginia GEARUP Evaluation Overview

Design

- Rigorous, longitudinal quasi-experiment
  - Two levels of matching
    - Students: match treatment student cohort (Class of 2014) with comparison student cohorts (Classes of 2013 and 2015) within GEAR UP schools
    - Schools: match GEAR UP schools with similar non-participating schools
- Embedded design using mixed methods

Data Collection Methods

- Review of project records, documentation, and participation data
- Event observations (site coordinator meetings, college fairs, career days, kick-off events, etc.)
- Extant school and student data
- Extant assessment data
- Interviews
  - Site coordinators
  - Other project stakeholders
- Surveys
  - School personnel
  - Treatment student cohort (Class of 2014)
  - Parents of treatment student cohort
  - Comparison student cohorts (Classes of 2013 and 2015)
  - Parents of comparison student cohorts
  - Priority student cohorts (11th and 12th grade students each year)

Student and Parent Survey Schedule

Class of		School Year					
		2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
2009	*Students*	12th Grade					
2010	*Students*	11th Grade	12th Grade				
2011	*Students*		11th Grade	12th Grade			
2012	*Students*			11th Grade	12th Grade		
2013	*Students & Parents*	8th Grade		10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	
2014	*Students & Parents*	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
2015	*Students & Parents*	6th Grade		8th Grade		10th Grade	11th Grade

Evaluators will collect some data through the Performance Online Evaluation Tracking System (POETS).

AMERICAN
EVALUATION
ASSOCIATION

PRINCIPLES

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) strives to promote ethical practice in the evaluation of programs, products, personnel, and policy. AEA has developed these Principles to guide evaluators in their professional practice.

These Guiding Principles are an abbreviated version of the full principles that were developed and endorsed by the American Evaluation Association in 1994 and reviewed and revised in 2004. A full text of the Guiding Principles is available online at www.eval.org.

AMERICAN
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AMERICAN
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Guiding Principles for Evaluators

W W W . E V A L . O R G

AEA Guiding Principles for Evaluators

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

A. Systematic Inquiry: Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries, and thus should:

1. Adhere to the highest technical standards appropriate to the methods they use.
2. Explore with the client the shortcomings and strengths of evaluation questions and approaches.
3. Communicate the approaches, methods, and limitations of the evaluation accurately and in sufficient detail to allow others to understand, interpret, and critique their work.

B. Competence: Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders, and thus should:

1. Ensure that the evaluation team collectively possesses the education, abilities, skills, and experience appropriate to the evaluation.
2. Ensure that the evaluation team collectively demonstrates cultural competence and uses appropriate evaluation strategies and skills to work with culturally different groups.
3. Practice within the limits of their competence, decline to conduct evaluations that fall substantially outside those limits, and make clear any limitations on the evaluation that might result if declining is not feasible.
4. Seek to maintain and improve their competencies in order to provide the highest level of performance in their evaluations.

C. Integrity/Honesty: Evaluators display honesty and integrity in their own behavior, and attempt to ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process, and thus should:

1. Negotiate honestly with clients and relevant stakeholders concerning the costs, tasks, limitations of methodology, scope of results, and uses of data.
2. Disclose any roles or relationships that might pose a real or apparent conflict of interest prior to accepting an assignment.
3. Record and report all changes to the original negotiated project plans, and the reasons for them, including any possible impacts that could result.
4. Be explicit about their own, their clients', and other stakeholders' interests and values related to the evaluation.
5. Represent accurately their procedures, data, and findings, and attempt to prevent or correct misuse of their work by others.
6. Work to resolve any concerns related to procedures or activities likely to produce misleading evaluative information, decline to conduct the evaluation if concerns cannot be resolved, and consult colleagues or relevant stakeholders about other ways to proceed if declining is not feasible.
7. Disclose all sources of financial support for an evaluation, and the source of the request for the evaluation.

D. Respect for People: Evaluators respect the security, dignity, and self-worth of respondents, program participants, clients, and other evaluation stakeholders, and thus should:

1. Seek a comprehensive understanding of the contextual elements of the evaluation.
2. Abide by current professional ethics, standards, and regulations regarding confidentiality, informed consent, and potential risks or harms to participants.
3. Seek to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms that might occur from an evaluation and carefully judge when the benefits from the evaluation or procedure should be foregone because of potential risks.
4. Conduct the evaluation and communicate its results in a way that respects stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
5. Foster social equity in evaluation, when feasible, so that those who give to the evaluation may benefit in return.
6. Understand, respect, and take into account differences among stakeholders such as culture, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation and ethnicity.

E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare: Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of general and public interests and values, and thus should:

1. Include relevant perspectives and interests of the full range of stakeholders.
2. Consider not only immediate operations and outcomes of the evaluation, but also the broad assumptions, implications and potential side effects.
3. Allow stakeholders' access to, and actively disseminate, evaluative information, and present evaluation results in understandable forms that respect people and honor promises of confidentiality.
4. Maintain a balance between client and other stakeholder needs and interests.
5. Take into account the public interest and good, going beyond analysis of particular stakeholder interests to consider the welfare of society as a whole.

THE PROGRAM EVALUATION STANDARDS

Sound evaluations of educational programs, projects, and materials in a variety of settings should have four basic attributes:

- Utility
- Feasibility
- Propriety
- Accuracy

The Program Evaluation Standards, established by sixteen professional education associations, identify evaluation principles that when addressed should result in improved program evaluations containing the above four attributes.

Dr. James R. Sanders, Chair
The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation
The Evaluation Center
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008-5178
616-387-5895

Sage Publications, Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320
805-499-0721

ANSI

JCSEE PR-1994
Approved by the American National Standards Institute as an American National Standard. Approval date: March 15, 1994.

Utility

The utility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users.

U1 **Stakeholder Identification** Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

U2 **Evaluator Credibility** The persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation, so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

U3 **Information Scope and Selection** Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders.

U4 **Values Identification** The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described, so that the bases for value judgments are clear.

U5 **Report Clarity** Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation, so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

U6 **Report Timeliness and Dissemination** Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users, so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

U7 **Evaluation Impact** Evaluations should be planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders, so that the likelihood that the evaluation will be used is increased.

Feasibility

The feasibility standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

F1 **Practical Procedures** The evaluation procedures should be practical, to keep disruption to a minimum while needed information is obtained.

F2 **Political Viability** The evaluation should be planned and conducted with anticipation of the different positions of various interest groups, so that their cooperation may be obtained, and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted.

F3 **Cost Effectiveness** The evaluation should be efficient and produce information of sufficient value, so that the resources expended can be justified.

Propriety

The propriety standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.

P1 **Service Orientation** Evaluations should be designed to assist organizations to address and effectively serve the needs of the full range of targeted participants.

P2 **Formal Agreements** Obligations of the formal parties to an evaluation (what is to be done, how, by whom, when) should be agreed to in writing, so that these parties are obligated to adhere to all conditions of the agreement or formally to renegotiate it.

P3 **Rights of Human Subjects** Evaluations should be designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects.

P4 **Human Interactions** Evaluators should respect human dignity and worth in their interactions with other persons associated with an evaluation, so that participants are not threatened or harmed.

P5 **Complete and Fair Assessment** The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the program being evaluated, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

P6 **Disclosure of Findings** The formal parties to an evaluation should ensure that the full set of evaluation findings along with pertinent limitations are made accessible to the persons affected by the evaluation, and any others with expressed legal rights to receive the results.

P7 **Conflict of Interest** Conflict of interest should be dealt with openly and honestly, so that it does not compromise the evaluation processes and results.

P8 **Fiscal Responsibility** The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures and otherwise be prudent and ethically responsible, so that expenditures are accounted for and appropriate.

Accuracy

The accuracy standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth of merit of the program being evaluated.

A1 **Program Documentation** The program being evaluated should be described and documented clearly and accurately, so that the program is clearly identified.

A2 **Context Analysis** The context in which the program exists should be examined in enough detail, so that its likely influences on the program can be identified.

A3 **Described Purposes and Procedures** The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail, so that they can be identified and assessed.

A4 **Defensible Information Sources** The sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail, so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.

A5 **Valid Information** The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the intended use.

A6 **Reliable Information** The information gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented so that they will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use.

A7 **Systematic Information** The information collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be systematically reviewed and any errors found should be corrected.

A8 **Analysis of Quantitative Information** Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A9 **Analysis of Qualitative Information** Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed so that evaluation questions are effectively answered.

A10 **Justified Conclusions** The conclusions reached in an evaluation should be explicitly justified, so that stakeholders can assess them.

A11 **Impartial Reporting** Reporting procedures should guard against distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation, so that evaluation reports fairly reflect the evaluation findings.

A12 **Metaevaluation** The evaluation itself should be formatively and summatively evaluated against these and other pertinent standards, so that its conduct is appropriately guided and, on completion, stakeholders can closely examine its strengths and weaknesses.

Guidelines and illustrative cases to assist evaluation participants in meeting each of these standards are provided in *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Sage, 1994). The illustrative cases are based in a variety of educational settings that include schools, universities, medical and health care fields, the military, business and industry, the government, and law.