

Appendix B2: Summary of FY 2011 Performance Evaluations

For a complete list of program evaluations and studies from the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, please visit

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html>. For a complete list of evaluation studies of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, please visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluation/index.asp>.

Selected Evaluation Reports

Policy and Program Studies Service (PPSS)

Supplemental Educational Services and Student Achievement in Five Waiver Districts

Presents final implementation and outcome findings from the five districts that received waivers to serve as Supplemental Educational Service (SES) providers, despite being identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring. Federal regulations prohibit school districts identified for improvement or corrective action from serving as SES providers. The SES waiver pilot program allowed five identified districts to serve as SES providers beginning in 2005–06 (Boston and Chicago), 2006–07 (Hillsborough County, Florida and Anchorage, Alaska), and 2008–09 (Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina). In 2009–10, the pilot was replaced with a more expansive waiver opportunity that allows states to request a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education to approve identified districts or schools as SES providers.

Findings include:

- In the three districts that did not serve as SES providers before the waiver (Anchorage, Charlotte Mecklenburg, and Hillsborough), SES participation rates increased in the first year of the waiver. (Boston and Chicago served as providers prior to receipt of the waiver.) There were few demographic or academic differences between students served by district providers and students served by non-district providers.
- Students in three of the five districts demonstrated statistically significantly larger mathematics achievement gains during periods of SES participation than during periods of nonparticipation. In addition, in two districts, SES participation was associated with statistically significant reading gains.
- Averaged across the five districts, the overall association between SES participation and achievement gains was statistically significant in both mathematics and reading, relative to nonparticipation.
- Across the five districts, the achievement gains associated with SES participation relative to nonparticipation did not differ for district and non-district providers for either mathematics or reading.
- All five districts reported using multiple communication strategies to reach eligible families, provided balanced information about SES providers, translated information into at least one language other than English, and provided extended enrollment periods.

<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/ses-waiver/ses-waiver-report.pdf>

Final Report on the Evaluation of the Growth Model Pilot Project

Documents the Growth Model Pilot Project (GMPP). GMPP was initiated to allow states to experiment with adjustments to the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) status accountability system, in order to improve the validity of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations by giving schools credit for students who are making significant growth. The pilot allowed states, districts, and schools to count students who were “on track” to being proficient but not yet there. Under NCLB, such students were not counted as proficient for the purpose of AYP determinations. The pilot was initiated in November 2005 with the goal of approving up to ten states to incorporate growth models in school AYP determinations. The project was written into regulation in late 2008; now any state may apply to use a growth model meeting certain core principles. Currently, 15 states are implementing growth models under this authority: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas.

Key findings include:

- Growth models enabled additional schools to make AYP compared to status and safe-harbor rules alone, but the percentages of schools that made AYP because of the growth models were generally not large.
- The impact of growth models varied widely across states.
- Most (but not all) schools that made AYP by status would also have met their reading and math AMOs under a hypothetical “growth-only” model (i.e., one using neither status nor safe harbor but only growth).
- Controlled simulations comparing the impacts of different types of growth models on student and school growth results show that the “projection model” functions in stark contrast with “transition” and “trajectory” models.
- Simulations comparing the results of different growth models using the same data show that projection models have the highest correct classification rates for future proficiency: over 80 percent. These rates are 5 to 20 percentage points higher than trajectory and transition models, depending on the grade level and proximity to the growth model time limit. While the projection model is more accurate, it is theoretically more difficult to implement and to explain to practitioners and parents than the other models.
- Although not an option under the Growth Model Pilot guidelines, growth models not tied directly to proficiency standards could identify a broader contingent of students as making adequate growth than current models. One alternative to the GMPP-permissible growth-to-proficiency models that could be used with vertical test score scales is the difference between proficiency cut scores in successive grade levels.

<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/growth-model-pilot/gmpp-final.pdf>

The U.S.-China E-Language Project: A Study of a Gaming Approach to English Language Learning for Middle School Students

In 2001, the Department and the Ministry of Education in China entered into a bilateral partnership to develop a technology-driven approach to foreign language learning that integrates gaming, immersion, voice recognition, problem-based learning tasks, and other features that made it a significant research and development pilot project for study. The

purpose of this report is to describe the evaluation of a key outcome of this bilateral partnership, The Forgotten World. This program was implemented as a supplementary activity in middle school classrooms in western China to teach the English language and American culture to eighth-grade students. The evaluation was conducted in five treatment schools and five comparison schools during the 2009–10 school year and included approximately 3,500 students. The evaluation showed statistically significant positive results of using The Forgotten World for the lower performing students along with the positive effects on student motivation. Almost all of the teachers in the treatment schools (95 percent) who participated in the project reported that their use of The Forgotten World changed the way they think about teaching.

<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/us-china-e-language-project/report.pdf>

Teachers' Ability to Use Data to Inform Instruction: Challenges and Supports

This report describes an exploratory study on teachers' thinking about data and the implications of the study's findings for teacher preparation and support. Understanding the nature of teachers' proficiencies and difficulties in data use is important for providing appropriate training and support to teachers because they are expected to use student data as a basis for improving the effectiveness of their practice.

Key findings include:

- **Data Location.** Teachers in case study schools generally were adept at finding information shown explicitly in a table or graph.
- **Data Comprehension.** A majority of case study teachers demonstrated reasonable skill in comparing data in a table or graph to corresponding prose characterizations. Common, however, were difficulties in evaluating written statements about data that required basic math calculations, distinguishing a histogram from a bar graph, and considering the difference between cross-sectional and longitudinal data sets. This finding suggests that teachers may come away from presentations of school or district data with misconceptions about their students' performance.
- **Data Interpretation.** Case study teachers were more likely to examine score distributions and to think about the potential effect of extremely high or low scores on a group average when shown individual students' scores on a class roster than when looking at tables or graphs showing averages for a grade, school, or district. An implication of this finding is that teachers will need more support when they are expected to make sense of summaries of larger data sets as part of a grade-level, school, or district improvement team.
- **Data Use for Instructional Decision Making.** Many case study teachers expressed a desire to see assessment results at the level of subscales (groups of test items) related to specific standards and at the level of individual items in order to tailor their instruction. After years of increased emphasis on accountability, these teachers appeared quite sensitive to the fact that students will do better on a test if they have received instruction on the covered content and had their learning assessed in the same way (e.g., same item format) in the past.
- **Question Posing.** In order to use an electronic data system to identify areas for improvement, educators need to be able to frame questions that can be addressed by the data in the system. Most case study teachers struggled when trying to pose

questions relevant to improving achievement that could be investigated using the data in a typical electronic system. They were more likely to frame questions around student demographic variables (e.g., “Did girls have higher reading achievement scores than boys?”) than around school variables (e.g., “Do student achievement scores vary for different teachers?”).

<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/data-to-inform-instruction/report.pdf>

The Reading First Implementation Study 2008–09 Final Report

Examined states’ planned responses to the Reading First (RF) budget reduction which took place in FY 2008. (Funding for the program was reduced from approximately \$1 billion to \$400 million and has since been eliminated.) The study found that RF funds were used to support strategies to improve instruction in both RF-funded districts and schools as well as in non-funded districts and schools. State respondents discussed a variety of specific strategies to support continuation of RF teaching practices such as use of reading coaches, use of RF materials and curricula, use of data driven instruction, use of reading assessments, and scientifically based reading instruction.

<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/reading-first-implementation-study/report.pdf>

Academic Competitiveness and National SMART Grant Programs: 2006–07 through 2008–09

This is the third report from a five-year study that examined program participation in the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (National SMART) Grant programs. Among the major purposes of the study were to determine whether or not the financial incentives provided by the ACG program induced more economically disadvantaged high school students to complete a rigorous high school program and enroll and succeed in postsecondary education and whether the National SMART Grants motivate more students to major and receive degrees in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) fields or languages critical to national interest. This third report summarizes participation data from the first three years of the ACG and National SMART Grant programs (2006–07 through 2008–09), and major findings include:

- The number of ACG and National SMART Grant recipients has increased, although the percentage of Pell Grant recipients with these grants has remained low.
- Many recipients could not meet the strict conditions required to renew their grants the following year.
- First-year ACG recipients and third-year National SMART Grant recipients persisted at higher rates than their counterparts with only a Pell Grant.

<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/smart-grant/acg-smart-grant-report-year-third-final.pdf>

National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE)

Baseline Analyses of SIG Applications and SIG-Eligible and SIG-Awarded Schools

The Study of School Turnaround (SST) is an examination of the implementation of School Improvement Grants (SIG) authorized under Title I section 1003(g) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965* and supplemented by the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*.

The report uses publicly-available data from State Educational Agency (SEA) Web sites, SEA SIG applications, and the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core of Data to examine the following: (1) the SIG related policies and practices that states intend to implement, and (2) the characteristics of SIG-eligible and SIG-awarded schools. This first report provides context on SIG.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20114019/>

Final Report on the Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers Program

This congressionally mandated report examines the work of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers in three of the five program years (2006–07, 2007–08, 2008–09), starting with the second year of program funding.

The Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers program is authorized under the *Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002* to provide technical assistance to states to implement provisions of NCLB through 16 Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) and 5 Content Centers (CCs).

The evaluation focuses on the Centers' work drawing upon information gathered from Center management plans, an inventory of each Center's projects, interviews with staff from each Center, surveys of state managers and project participants, and an assessment of the projects by an expert panel.

<http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=NCEE20114031>

Other Evaluation Reports

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/>

Publications by Regional Education Laboratory or Search for a Specific Publication

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/index.asp>