

How to Construct Performance Measures 2.0

A Brief Guide for Education Reform Grant
Applicants to the Walton Family Foundation by
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This guide is designed to help program officers and grantees as they work together to establish good performance measures. Please be sure to review the following information prior to developing and/or revising performance measures. At the bottom of this guide is a list of sample performance measures, which may provide a helpful starting point. We have also produced a video guide that you may find useful:
<http://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/about/evaluation-unit>

I. What are **performance measures**?

Performance measures are statements that quantitatively describe the direct products and services delivered by a program (**outputs**), as well as the impact of those products and services (**outcomes**). Most importantly, performance measurement is a tool to help understand, manage, and improve what organizations and programs do – and they signify how we know if goals are met.¹

II. Why are **performance measures** useful?

Performance measures can offer a number of benefits for programs. They provide a structured approach to focusing on a program's strategic plan, goals, and accomplishments, and they encourage organizations to concentrate time, resources, and energy on certain specified programmatic aspects. Performance measures can also improve both internal communication at an organization and external communication between organizations and their stakeholders (including funders). The demonstration of good practice and sustainable impacts can help justify continuing or even expanding effective programs.

III. How are **performance measures** written?

For WFF grant applicants, performance measures need to have **five** elements:

1. **WHO** will achieve the change or accomplish the task?
2. **WHAT** is going to change or be accomplished through the program?
3. **BY WHEN** will the change or accomplishment occur?
4. **HOW MUCH** change will occur? What will the level of accomplishment be?

¹ Performance-Based Management Special Interest Group. 2001. The Performance-Based management handbook: A six-volume compilation of techniques and tools for implementing the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Volume 2: Establishing an Integrated Performance Measurement System.
<http://www.orau.gov/pbm/pbmhandbook/Volume%202.pdf>

5. HOW WE WILL KNOW the change occurred?

As noted above, there are two types of performance measures: **output measures** and **outcome measures**. Ideally programs should identify and measure both outputs (i.e., those related to program operation and implementation) and outcomes (i.e., those related to the impact of the program).

- **Output Measures** address what organizations or programs will do to effect change in targeted constituencies (e.g., teachers, parents, students, schools, policies). Output measures do not include *administrative activities* that are internal to the organization (e.g., hiring an executive director or developing internal procedures and policies), but rather refer to *implementation activities* that connect the program to the targeted external constituencies (e.g., workshops, technical assistance, dissemination grants).

This distinction is important because output measures that only describe *administrative activities* provide an incomplete picture of a program's potential to effect change. An organization may wish to report that it hired parent trainers (*an administrative activity*). However, that alone is not the aspect of program performance that leads to change. Instead, it is what those new parent trainers do that truly matters (*implementation activities*). The following example illustrates how planned administrative activities can be used as the basis for output measures around *implementation* activities of a program:

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITY: Hire parent trainers.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY: Parent trainers will conduct outreach sessions in collaboration with community groups.

OUTPUT MEASURE: Parent trainers (WHO) will conduct at least 15 (HOW MUCH) parent outreach sessions (WHAT) in collaboration with community groups during the second year of the program (BY WHEN), as recorded in program management files (HOW WE WILL KNOW).

In this example, the *administrative activity* is the precondition for the more important *Output Measure*, which states what will be accomplished. The *Output Measure* is more important because the "WHAT" (parent outreach sessions) defines what needs to be done to reach the program's targeted constituency for change (parents). The "HOW MUCH" (15), defines how many parent outreach sessions are needed to demonstrate successful engagement of this targeted constituency.

- **Outcome Measures** always involve some level of change related to *knowledge, attitudes, capacity, opinions, or behavior* that results, at least in part, from the outputs of the program.

For example, outcome measures describe changes in public opinion, student performance, or school quality. Outcomes can be difficult to measure, especially if programs are short-term in nature. Therefore, specification of shorter-term and intermediate outcomes that are related to longer-term impacts can be useful to include as performance measures.

EXAMPLE: “Ninety percent (HOW MUCH) of parents who participate in community outreach sessions (WHO) will report in a survey (HOW WE WILL KNOW) that they will choose a school for their child based on academic performance information (WHAT) immediately following their participation in each outreach session (BY WHEN).”

To reinforce the distinction between output and outcome performance measures, note these two related output and outcome measures:

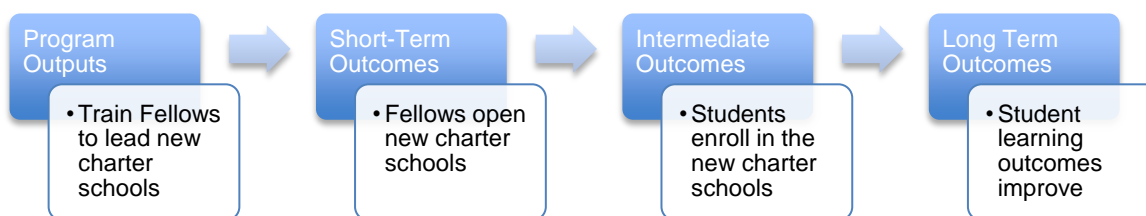
OUTPUT MEASURE: At least 90% (HOW MUCH) of state charter association member schools (WHO) will participate in performance management workshops (WHAT) by spring 2012 (BY WHEN), as recorded in workshop attendance records (HOW WE WILL KNOW).”

OUTCOME MEASURE: As a result of participation in performance management workshops, 70% (HOW MUCH) of member schools (WHO) will have increased data usage knowledge and skills (WHAT), as indicated by the implementation of new teacher evaluation systems that include the use of student test scores (HOW WE WILL KNOW), by spring 2013 (WHEN).”

IV. Putting it all together – 4 Steps for constructing good *performance measures*.

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY PROGRAM OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Before writing performance measures, grantees should define their organization’s important program outputs and outcomes, paying particular attention to the intended causal linkages between the short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. The following diagram displays program outputs and a series of related outcomes for a program intended to create new charter school leaders. The diagram establishes the series of causes and effects that are expected for a program (i.e. what will happen first, as a result this will happen next, and so forth).



STEP 2 – IDENTIFY MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES

Once the important outputs and outcomes are identified, grantees should identify how each can be measured. In some cases, measurement of outcomes may be difficult (e.g., organization staff may not have access to certain groups targeted for change). Although the outcome may still be relevant, performance measures cannot be easily developed. When this happens, grantees should attempt to find proxy measures or other indicators to confirm that intended outcomes of a program have occurred.

The following list identifies potential measurement strategies for each of the outputs and outcomes included in the diagram above.

- OUTPUT:** Train Fellows to lead new charter schools.
MEASUREMENT STRATEGY: Organization staff record the number of Fellows enrolled in the program.
- SHORT-TERM OUTCOME:** Fellows open new charter schools.
MEASUREMENT STRATEGY: Official records on new charter school authorizations.
- INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME:** Students enroll in the new charter schools.
MEASUREMENT STRATEGY: State department of education enrollment data.
- LONG-TERM OUTCOME:** Student learning outcomes improve.
MEASUREMENT STRATEGY: State department of education test score data.

STEP 3 – IDENTIFY QUANTITATIVE TARGETS FOR EACH OUTPUT/OUTCOME OF INTEREST

Once the important outputs and outcomes and their measurement strategies are identified, grantees need to determine HOW MUCH of a particular accomplishment (for output measures) or change (for outcome measures) will constitute success. *Targets should be ambitious, but achievable.* The merit of a program is not always judged by the program’s ability to meet each and every target, but the extent to which progress is made towards the proposed targets. The following table includes targets for each of the program outputs and outcomes identified above.

Output / Outcome	Target
Train Fellows to lead new charter schools.	At least eight Fellows will be trained to lead new charter schools.
Fellows open new charter schools.	75% of Fellows will open a new charter school.
Students enroll in the new charter schools.	At least 250 students will enroll in each new charter school.
Student learning outcomes improve.	Student achievement will be at least 10 percentage points higher than the local district on state reading and math exams.

STEP 4 – WRITE PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR EACH OUTPUT AND OUTCOME

Using the information developed during the first three steps, grantees are now ready to write performance measures for each output and outcome of interest. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that each performance measure statement includes: WHO, WHAT, HOW MUCH, WHEN, and HOW WE WILL KNOW. Sample performance measures are provided below for the program outputs and outcomes identified earlier.

OUTPUT:	Train Fellows to lead new charter schools.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE:	By October 2012, staff will train at least 8 Fellows to lead new charter schools, as recorded by the grantee.
SHORT-TERM OUTCOME:	Fellows open new charter schools.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE:	By July 2013, at least 75% of Fellows will open a new charter school, as measured by official records on new charter school authorizations.
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME:	Students enroll in the new charter schools.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE:	By August 2013, at least 250 students will enroll in each new charter school, as measured by state department of education enrollment data.
LONG-TERM OUTCOME:	Student learning outcomes improve.
PERFORMANCE MEASURE:	By August 2014, student achievement in every new school will be at least 10 percentage points higher than the local district on state reading and math exams, as measured by state department of education test score data.

V. Additional Considerations

HOW MANY PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE ENOUGH?

The number of performance measures should be commensurate with the level of funding, the length of the grant period, and the type and complexity of work being conducted. Grantees should consider the following guidelines (the figures represent a suggested number of output measures and outcome measures, respectively):

Grant Amount Per Year	Time		
	1 year	2 years	3 years
Less than \$100K	3 & 1	4 & 2	5 & 3
Between \$100K and \$500K	4 & 2	5 & 3	6 & 4
More than \$500K	5 & 3	6 & 4	7 & 5

Note: these are guidelines; it is likely that some grants will require more or fewer performance measures, depending on the nature of a particular project.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE CONTENT OF THE ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

Grantees should include performance measures which address: 1) key services or products delivered to constituents (outputs); 2) key impacts of those services that will occur during the timeframe of the grant (programmatic outcomes); and 3) important targets regarding fundraising or financial sustainability (operational outcomes).

Please Note: Program officers may request that a grantee develop additional metrics to track and report on beyond the key performance measures developed for evaluation purposes.

VI. Conclusion

Although the process of developing performance measures has been presented here in a formulaic manner, it is not always as straightforward. Sometimes earlier steps need to be revisited, based on the information generated in subsequent steps. However, it is important to work through each step of the process, beginning by developing statements of expected outputs and outcomes (short, intermediate, and long-term) and then methodically move toward specific performance measures for each of those statements. Some outputs and outcomes are more readily amenable to measurement than others, and a good measure in some contexts could be inappropriate in others. By having a solid understanding of what grantees hope to accomplish and how they hope to accomplish it, performance measures can be designed to best fit the context and goals of each program.

Performance Measure Examples – By Category

These examples are provided to assist grantees and program officers as they work together to establish key output and outcome performance measures. Please review all examples as you may find examples from other categories (e.g. Fundraising) to be useful. Finally, please note that these examples are not the comprehensive list of possible or relevant performance measures for your grant. They should be used as a starting point.

- I. [Creating or Expanding Schools](#)
 - II. [School Leader Development](#)
 - III. [Advocacy](#)
 - IV. [Organizing](#)
 - V. [Research](#)
 - VI. [Fundraising](#)
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I. Creating or Expanding Schools

Sample Outputs:

- Charter Approval: By June 2013, Grantee will receive approval of its charter application, as demonstrated by approval letter from authorizer.
- Secure Facilities: By August 2012, the leadership team will secure a building for the school which requires no more than 50% of expected revenues for rent, as recorded in organization management files.
- Recruit Students: By August 2014, the school principal will hold at least 10 community meetings to recruit students to the new school, as recorded in organization management files.
- Recruit Low-Income Students: By August 2014, school staff will hold at least 50 one-on-one meetings with low-income parents in the community as part of the recruiting strategy, as recorded in organization management files.

Sample Outcomes:

- New Schools: Grantee will open 12 new schools in city boundary by March 2014, as recorded in organization management files.
- Expanded Student Enrollment: Grantee will expand its current enrollment of 250 students by 175 students (to 425 students) by August 2013, as measured by official October enrollment counts for the school.
- Expanded Student Enrollment: At full enrollment in August 2015, Grantee school will have 500 students, as measured by official October enrollment counts for the school. Current enrollment is 250 students.

- Expanded Low-Income Student Enrollment: At full enrollment in August 2015, the demographics of the student population will be at least 50% low-income, as measured by official state demographic enrollment data. Currently, 40% of the student population is low-income.
- Proficiency Rates: Each academic year of the three-year grant (from 2011-12 through 2013-14), the school will have average proficiency rates on state English Language Arts and Mathematics exams which are at least 5 percentage points higher than its surrounding district. (For an existing school, list the current comparison.)
- Academic Value-Added: Each academic year of the three-year grant (from 2011-12 through 2013-14), at least 70% of students will make at least one year's academic progress on a national norm-referenced assessment, separately in both Reading and Math. (For an existing school, list the current percentage).

II. School Leader Development

Sample Outputs:

- Conduct Training: By July 2013, staff will train 8 Fellows to design, found, and lead high performing schools, as recorded in program management files.
- Provide Support Services: By July 2014, Grantee will provide continuing technical assistance and support services (fundraising, teacher evaluation, data management, etc.) to at least 10 previously trained fellows, as recorded in program management files.
- Provide Support Services: By July 2014, Grantee will provide at least 10 hours of continuing technical assistance and support services to previously trained fellows, as recorded in program management files.

Sample Outcomes:

- Launch Schools: 75% of newly trained Fellows will open a school within two years of fellowship completion, as recorded in program management files.
- Enroll Students: By August 2014, each new Fellow school will serve at least 250 students, as measured by official enrollment counts for the school.
- Demand for Enrollment: By August each academic year, at least 75% of Fellow schools will maintain a waiting list equal to 10% or more of the total student capacity of the school, as measured by school capacity and wait list size.
- Proficiency Rates: Each academic year, at least 75% of Fellow schools will have average proficiency rates on state English Language Arts and Mathematics exams which are at least 5 percentage points higher than their surrounding districts, as measured by official state data.

- Academic Value-Added: Each academic year, at least 70% of students in Fellow schools will make at least one year's academic progress on a national norm-referenced assessment, in both Reading and Math.

III. Advocacy

Sample Outputs:

- Hold Legislative Meetings: Grantee will hold 35 meetings by December 2014 with legislators to provide non-partisan analysis and information on policies related to the state's school voucher program (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal), as recorded in program management files.
- Hold Executive Agency Meetings: By October 2014, Grantee will hold 10 meetings with the state department of education to advise exclusively on policy and department regulation obstacles identified by schools participating in the voucher program, as demonstrated by the submission of written comments on proposed rules.
- Hold Community Meetings: Grantee will organize and execute at least 10 educational meetings on charter school policy improvements (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal) for community leaders and advocacy allies by June 2012, as recorded in program management files.
- Conduct Rally: Grantee will participate in organizing and hosting (or co-hosting) a rally to support charter schools (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal) at the Statehouse by April 30, 2012. The event will be attended by at least 100 people, as recorded in program management files.
- Recruit New Contacts: By December 2013, the E-advocacy mailing list will be increased from 4,200 to 6,000, as recorded in program management files.
- Reports: By July 2014 the Grantee will produce a minimum of 6 reports in the form of non-partisan analysis of the parental choice program, increasing or removing income limits, increasing or removing the cap, and reducing regulation (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal), as recorded in program management files. Reports will be distributed to 100% of legislators and posted online.
- Legal Advocacy: By August 2013, Grantee will file an amicus brief in defense of the state's voucher program, as recorded in program management files.
- Legislative Report: By July 2014 the Grantee will produce and submit a report to WFF on the voting records of all legislators that the organization met with during the grant period to provide non-partisan information about the benefits of [insert policy objective].
- Policy Environment: By July 2014 the Grantee will produce and submit a report to WFF on the status of all changes related to state charter school policy (including legislation or legislative activity) that occurred during the grant period.

NOTE: This output should be included in all advocacy applications

Sample Outcomes:

- **Increased Awareness:** By June 2014, at least 25% of key policymakers and opinion leaders will report being aware of [policy of interest], as measured by a grantee conducted/third-party survey of a select group of key policymakers and opinion leaders. Currently, 10% of key policymakers and opinion leaders are aware of [policy of interest].
- **Increased Knowledge:** By April 2013, 80% of legislators that Grantee has met with will indicate on a survey that they have a better understanding of the policy issue presented.
- **Increased Support:** By April 2014, a poll conducted by a third party firm will indicate that 65% of citizens in the state support charter schools. Currently, 52% of citizens in the state support charter schools according to a 2012 poll.
- **Policymaker Invitation:** By October 2014, Grantee will receive at least 3 written invitations on behalf of legislative committees to testify about the results of their non-partisan analysis, as measured by state records.
- **Charter Sector Growth:** By August 2013, there will be a 20% increase in charter school enrollments across the state, as measured by official state October enrollment counts.
- **Regulatory Policy Change:** By January 2014, at least 2 of the final department regulations regarding the school choice program will reflect grantee written comments, as measured by official state policy records.
- **Judicial Ruling:** By July 2014, the state supreme court will rule that the voucher program is constitutional, as measured by the court's majority opinion.

IV. Organizing

Sample Outputs:

- **Expand Staff:** By December 2013, six community organizers will be hired to educate and organize parents and community members, as recorded in program management files.
- **Hold Education Sessions:** At least 10 community engagement meetings/actions will be held, attended by at least 100 community members, by March 2012, as recorded in program management files.
- **Recruit New Members:** By August 2013, staff will distribute information packets to 200 residents, as recorded in organization management files.
- **Recruit New Members:** By August 2013, staff will hold at least 50 one-on-one meetings with parents in the community as part of the recruiting strategy, as recorded in organization management files.

- Conduct Training: At least 30 members will participate in a three-month training session on charter school policy by January 2013, as recorded in program management files.
- Conduct Training; At least 10 members will be trained on the school board policymaking process by January 2013, as recorded in program management files.
- Legislative Report: By July 2014 the Grantee will produce and submit a report to WFF on the voting records of all legislators that the organization met with during the grant period to provide non-partisan information about the benefits of [insert policy objective].
- Policy Environment: By July 2014 the Grantee will produce and submit a report to WFF on the status of all changes related to state charter school policy (including legislation or legislative activity) that occurred during the grant period.

NOTE: This output should be included in all advocacy applications

Sample Outcomes:

- Increased Membership: Grantee will increase membership by 10% from 200 to 220 parents and local residents, by June 2014, as recorded in program management files.
- Increased Use of Resources: Monthly website resource hits by members will increase by 10%, from 2,000 to 2,200 hits, by June 2014, as recorded in program management files.
- Increased Leadership Capacity: By May 2013, three newly trained members will take leadership positions in the organization, as recorded in program management files.
- Increased Advocacy Capacity: By October 2014, 20 parents trained by Grantee will receive a written invitation on behalf of a legislative committee to testify about their experiences as charter school parents, as measured by state records.
- Increased Engagement: By October 2014, 100 parents trained by Grantee will be actively engaged in advocating for improved charter school policy (but not referring to specific legislation or legislative proposal), as measured by grantee records. An active parent advocate includes, but is not limited to, parents who are invited to provide testimony, are invited to speak to policymakers and opinion leaders, speak at public events, take a leadership role in the organization, recruit others to the organization, or attend public meetings.

V. Research

Sample Outputs:

- Conduct Research: Grantee will conduct key stakeholder interviews with 25 experts in the field by June 2012, as recorded in program management files.
- Conduct Research: Grantee will survey 90% of all eligible respondents (on topic of interest) by June 2012, as recorded in program management files.

- **Validate Research:** Grantee will review research findings with an advisory panel of 10 research and policy experts in the field by October 2012, as recorded in program management files.
- **Produce Report:** Grantee will produce and publicly release a non-partisan research report by April 2013, as recorded in program management files.
- **Distribute/Publicize Report:** Grantee will distribute and publicize the report through the following activities:
 - **Email Distribution:** Grantee will email a press release announcing the release of the report to a contact list of over 1,000 policymakers, opinion leaders, stakeholders, and others.
 - **Hold Event:** At least 100 people will attend a public event hosted by Grantee for the release of the report, as recorded by a sign-in sheet at the event. The event will take place by June 2014.

Sample Outcomes:

- **Published Op-Eds:** At least 3 articles or op-ed pieces will be published in popular outlets and education publications by summer 2012, as recorded in program management files.
- **Media Hits:** There will be at least 5 earned media hits either about the report, or mentioning the report, by May 2014, as measured by a search of LexisNexis.
- **Report Views:** There will be at least 2,500 unique viewers of the report on the Grantee website by December 2014, as recorded in program management files.
- **Report Citations:** There will be at least 10 citations of the report in related policy briefs, research papers, or peer-reviewed journals by May 2015, as measured by Grantee tracking.
- **Use of Information:** At least 50% of 10 key stakeholders in the field will provide evidence that they have incorporated the information contained in the research report into their practice by October 2014, as reported by a survey conducted by the Grantee.

VI. Fundraising

Sample Outputs:

- **Conduct Solicitation Campaign:** Program staff will send donation information packets to at least 100 new corporations by June 2014, as measured by a report of outreach methods by Grantee.
- **Solicit New Donors:** The executive director and/or fund development officer will make direct contact with at least 50 new corporations by June 2014 in order to solicit new donors, as measured by a report of outreach methods by Grantee.

- Solicit New Donors: At least 50 potential new donors will attend the annual [event] held on July 2013 to learn more about opportunities for donating and/or partnering, as measured by a report of outreach methods by Grantee.

Sample Outcomes:

- Increased Fund Generation: Compared to FY11, Grantee will increase total non-WFF donations by 15% in FY12, as recorded in financial management files. Donation total in FY11 was \$315,000.
- Increased Number of Donors: Compared to FY11, Grantee will increase the total number of donors in FY12 by 10%, as recorded in financial management files. Number of donors in FY11 was 60.
- Increased Sustainability: Compared to FY11, Grantee will increase total non-WFF multi-year donations by 7% in FY12, as recorded in financial management files. Total multi-year non-WFF donations in FY11 were \$215,000.