



## **Program Evaluation in SCPS: An Overview**



The Office of Assessment, Accountability and Program Evaluation is responsible for ensuring that the mission, vision, and goals of Stafford County Public Schools are implemented with fidelity through oversight of a robust program evaluation process.

## Research versus Program Evaluation:

Research	Program Evaluation
Focused on broad theories and constructs across multiple contexts.	Focused on the application of theories and constructs in a specific context.
Focused on contributing to a generalizable knowledge base.	Focused on determining if a specific program is achieving its goals.
Key Question: Will this work wherever it is applied?	Key Question: Is this working in this context?

(Fiero and Orians, 2010)

## Reasons for Program Evaluation:

- **“To gain insight about a program and its operations** – to see where we are going and where we are coming from, and to find out what works and what doesn’t.
- **To improve practice** – to modify or adapt practice to enhance the success of activities.
- **To assess effects** – to see how well we are meeting objectives and goals, how the program benefits the community, and to provide evidence of effectiveness.
- **To build capacity** - increase funding, enhance skills, [and] strengthen accountability.”

(Center for Disease Control, 1999)

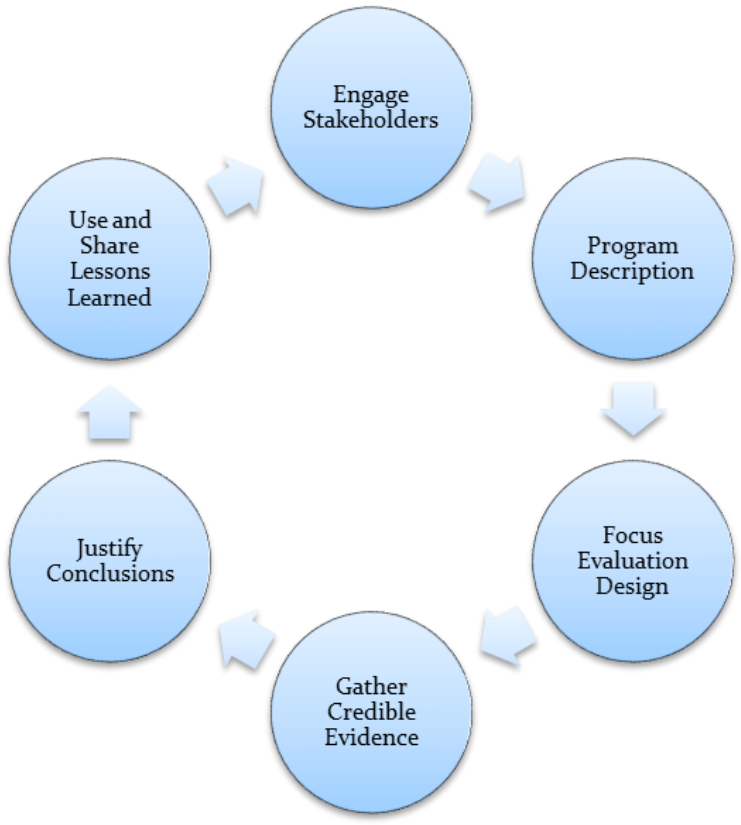


## Developing Our Approach

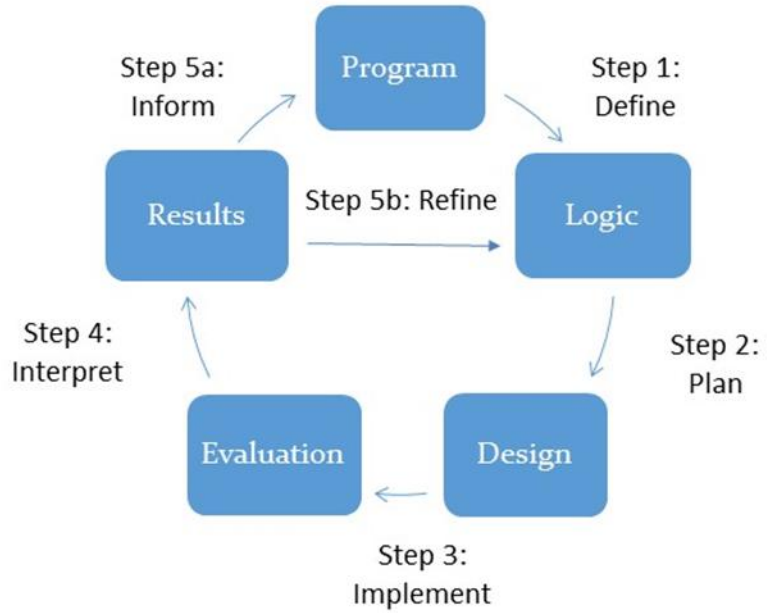
- Academic research on evaluation.
- Insight from other districts with program evaluation in place.
- Considering approaches from federal government organizations.
- Incorporation of guiding ethical principles

## Program Evaluation in Various School Systems

School System	Evaluation Team	Approach	Data Analysis	Survey Tools
<i>Chesapeake City Public Schools</i>	Two person dedicated team, with a committee of various stakeholders as active participants. Independent unit as School Improvement and Program Evaluation.	‘Business’ style approach to evaluation led by a team of various stakeholders who are involved in entire process. Reports given to superintendent.	Excel	Survey Monkey for digital; in-house for print surveys.
<i>Fairfax County Public Schools</i>	Six person team, including a Director, Manager, three research specialists and an administrative assistant. Independent unit.	Evaluate programs at the direction of the superintendent; address some specific programs, but also focus on larger scale questions that arise from the strategic plan or stakeholders. Reports typically published on-line and formal presentation made to school board and published on YouTube.	SPSS Excel	Survey Monkey for digital; Design Expert for print surveys.
<i>Loudoun County Public Schools</i>	Four person team focused on research and evaluation, with a research supervisor, program analyst, data analyst and research assistant under the broader Department of Instruction.	No formal process for selection of evaluation and research topics; research and evaluation approach involves a mix of comprehensive evaluations and “fast-response” evaluations produced within a few months. Reports are not automatically published, but are disseminated based on who is requesting the information.	SPSS, Access, Sequel Server	Survey Monkey; Google Forms
<i>Prince William County Public Schools</i>	Five person team including a Director of Program Evaluation, Program Evaluation Coordinator, Data Analyst and two secretaries. Subunit of Accountability Department.	Evaluate programs as directed by the school board or as the result of a ‘grass roots’ request. Process influenced by site-based management.	SPSS Excel R	Question Pro for digital and print surveys.
<i>Virginia Beach City Public Schools</i>	Six person team (not including administrative assistants) including a director, research specialist, data specialist and two evaluation specialists. Subunit of the Department of Planning, Innovation and Accountability.	Variety of research foci, includes status assessment, process and comprehensive evaluations on selected existing programs as well as a mandatory evaluation process for new programs. Reports are typically published on-line.	SPSS Excel	Survey Monkey for digital



**Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
Approach to Evaluation**



**U.S. Department of Education  
Approach to Evaluation**

**Program Evaluation Standards Statements**  
(Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2011)

<i>Utility Standards</i>	The utility standards are intended to increase the extent to which program stakeholders find evaluation processes and products valuable in meeting their needs.
<i>Feasibility Standards</i>	The feasibility standards are intended to increase evaluation effectiveness and efficiency.
<i>Propriety Standards</i>	The propriety standards support what is proper, fair, legal, right and just in evaluations.
<i>Accuracy Standards</i>	The accuracy standards are intended to increase the dependability and truthfulness of evaluation representations, propositions, and findings, especially those that support interpretations and judgments about quality.
<i>Evaluation Accountability Standards</i>	The evaluation accountability standards encourage adequate documentation of evaluations and a metaevaluative perspective focused on improvement and accountability for evaluation processes and products.

# Evaluation Process



## Stafford County Public Schools Approach to Evaluation



## Stages of Evaluation:




### Stakeholder Engagement

**Stakeholder engagement** refers to the process by which input is sought from a range of stakeholders to inform the evaluation questions and process. The OAAP will engage stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, first by incorporating the input of the Superintendent, the school board, and a selected committee in selecting an evaluation schedule. Throughout the evaluation process, the OAAP will seek to include various stakeholder perspectives as it designs the evaluation, gathers and analyzes evidence and provides recommendations.



### Program Description and Logic

**Program Description and Logic** involves providing an overview of the program as it currently exists. The OAAP will review (1) program goals and logic models; (2) program funding: funding source(s), operational costs, human capital costs, and indirect costs; (3) an overview of the program status and operations; and (4) any routinely collected data. During the Program Description and Logic phase, the OAAP will gather information on what an existing program is, how it operates, its goals, costs and other descriptive information. From that information, the OAAP can generate the specific design of a particular program evaluation, gather and analyze evidence, assemble conclusions and make recommendations to the stakeholders.




### Evaluation Design

**Evaluation Design** involves constructing, specifying and outlining the evaluation type, questions and process to be followed in a particular evaluation as a result of the stakeholder engagement, information from the program description and logic, and guiding evaluation construct theories using a mixed-methods approach of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Ethical considerations will be incorporated in the design process, and the OAAP will remain conscious of fiscal feasibility in evaluation design.




### Evidence Collection and Analysis

**Evidence Collection and Analysis** involves carrying out the evaluation as designed, collecting the relevant qualitative and quantitative data. Data will then be analyzed through appropriate coding and statistical analysis. Evidence collected will likely include gathering information from stakeholders through quantitative and qualitative methods, program financial information, outcomes and results from the program, and other pieces of evidence as warranted.



### Conclusions and Recommendations

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** Based on data collection and analysis, conclusions and recommendations will be drawn and made to the superintendent and school board. Recommendations will include: (1) Continue the Program; (2) Continue the Program with Modifications; (3) Discontinue the Program/Phase Out. Specific recommendations corresponding to these broad recommendations will be included based on the information gathered during the evaluation.



### Communication and Use of Lessons Learned

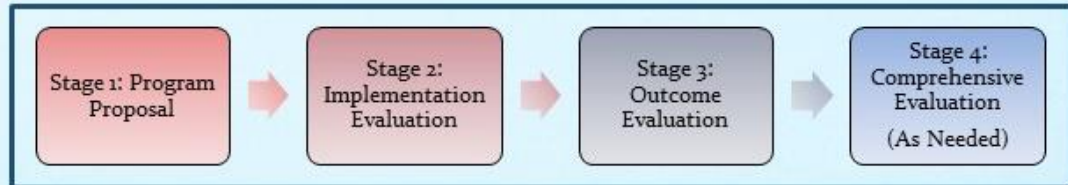
**Communication and Use of Lessons Learned:** The final stage of the evaluation process seeks to ensure that the information and knowledge gained from the evaluation are communicated to various stakeholders. Additionally, the information should be used to inform, improve and revise the program evaluated. Working with the Department of Learning and Organizational Development and Office of Strategic Communications will ensure evaluation results are effectively communicated, organizational learning occurs, and effective strategies are implemented.

# Evaluation Types

- Evaluation of Existing Programs



- Evaluation of New Programs



- Ad Hoc Requests
- Program Profiles
- University Partnerships

## Evaluation Types and Process in Stafford Public Schools

### Existing Programs

<b><i>Status and Process Assessment</i></b>	A largely descriptive evaluation used to ascertain what a program is currently doing, whether any goals and logic models have been established, and any existing data correlating with the program or initiative.
<b><i>Evaluation Readiness Process (As needed)</i></b>	This refers to a process for assisting a program with preparing for a comprehensive evaluation. The process will involve the OAAP working with a specific program or initiative to identify measurable program goals, create a program theory and logic model, and establish baseline data on the program's status.
<b><i>Comprehensive Evaluation</i></b>	An in-depth evaluation focused on operations, process, implementation fidelity, outcomes and other factors as warranted. The evaluation might take anywhere from one year to three years to complete, based on the extent of the evaluation and size of the program.

### New Programs

<b><i>Program Proposal</i></b>	A proposal following the criteria established by the OAAP should be completed for every potential new program.
<b><i>Implementation Evaluation</i></b>	A largely descriptive evaluation with the purpose of examine the fidelity of implementation of any new program in the division.
<b><i>Outcome Evaluation</i></b>	An evaluation for new programs focused primarily on measuring the outcomes from a new program following implementation. This may lead to recommendations for a comprehensive evaluation.
<b><i>Comprehensive Evaluation (As Needed)</i></b>	An in-depth evaluation focused on operations, process, implementation fidelity, outcomes and other factors as warranted. The evaluation might take anywhere from one year to three years to complete, based on the extent of the evaluation and size of the program.

# Program Evaluation Selection Committee

- Supervisor of the Office of Assessment, Accountability and Program Evaluation
- Accountability Specialist for Program Evaluation
- Representative from the Department of Instructional Services
- Leadership from the following departments:

Office of Strategic Communications and Community Engagement

Administrative and Legal Services

Financial Services

Human Resources

Instructional Technology and Information Services

Learning and Organizational Development

Student Services

Operations

## Glossary of Terms

**Ad hoc:** A Latin term, ad hoc is often used in English to denote a context specific purpose. In regards to evaluation in Stafford County Public Schools, the term is used in reference to small-scale evaluations conducted for specific, formative or summative feedback.

**Comprehensive evaluation:** An in-depth evaluation focused on operations, process, implementation fidelity, outcomes and other factors as warranted. The evaluation might take anywhere from one year to three years to complete, based on the extent of the evaluation and size of the program.

**Costs:** References to costs refer to the various expenditures involved in carrying out a program. These include, but are not limited to building and utilities resources, staff, materials, training and professional development. Discussion of program costs might include an analysis of having the program versus not having the program.

**Descriptive information:** Information providing an overview of everyday program proceedings, leadership, finances, and day-to-day operations.

**Evaluation readiness process:** This refers to a process for assisting a program with preparing for a comprehensive evaluation. The process will involve the OAAP working with a specific program or initiative to identify measurable program goals, create a program theory and logic model, and establish baseline data on the program's status.

**Implementation evaluation:** A largely descriptive evaluation with the purpose of examine the fidelity of implementation of any new program in the division.

**Implementation fidelity:** The faithfulness to the program logic model with which a program or initiative is enacted. Implementation fidelity examines whether a program or initiative is being adopted as intended.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB):** A group that reviews research proposals to ensure integrity of methodology and ethical treatment of human subjects. IRBs are found at many universities and institutions.

**Literature review:** A critical piece of research and evaluation reports, a literature review examines existing research on a topic to inform the current research or evaluation.

**Logic model:** A diagram providing an overview of how a programs goals are connected with its specific strategies and anticipated outcomes. This is often used in connection with the *program theory* and provides a useful tool for understanding how a

**Methodology:** The way in which something is undertaken. In evaluation, the specific approach and strategies used in an evaluation.

**Mixed-methods:** A research or evaluation approach coupling quantitative and qualitative research methodology.

**Outcome Evaluation:** An evaluation for new programs focused primarily on measuring the outcomes from a new program following implementation. This may lead to recommendations for a comprehensive evaluation.

**Program:** “A structured intervention to improve” (Weiss, 1998, p. 335) the educational process. Weiss (1998) notes that “programs vary in size, scope, duration, and clarity and specificity of goals” (p. 335). A program might be referred to as an initiative or other term, but still be classified as a program.

**Program Proposal:** A proposal following the criteria established by the OAAP should be completed for every potential new program.

**Stakeholders:** Persons with a vested interest in a program or initiative. With educational programs, this might include students, teachers, parents, administrators, community members, and school board members, among others.

**Status and process assessment:** A largely descriptive evaluation used to ascertain what a program is currently doing, whether any goals and logic models have been established, and any existing data correlating with the program or initiative.

**Strategic plan:** The overarching goals and strategies of a school division, often coupled with monitoring metrics to measure outcomes. Stafford County recently adopted a new strategic plan, as seen in *Appendix A*.

“Until we develop the capacity to systematically test our ideas for reform, we are doomed to continue reinventing the wheel”

(Kane, 2015).

