

# Solution Tree | Press

## **Essentials for Principals: Effective Program Evaluation (Second Edition)**

*By Mardale Dunsworth & Dawn Billings*

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### **Study Guide**

This study guide is a companion to the *Essentials for Principals* book *Effective Program Evaluation* (Second Edition) by Mardale Dunsworth and Dawn Billings. *Effective Program Evaluation* provides a clear and easily implemented blueprint for evaluating academic programs, practices, and strategies.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or to focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or by an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to implement effective program evaluation.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to evaluate academic programs successfully within your school and community.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Defining Program Evaluation**

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1. Why is program evaluation important? What are its goals? What can it help to determine?
2. What is *fidelity of implementation*? Why do you think it is important that we measure consistency?
3. Make a list of programs within your own school. Which programs are receiving differing opinions? What do you hope to learn about these programs through program evaluation?
4. What are the responsibilities of the principal in program evaluation? Why should these specific responsibilities belong to the principal, rather than be delegated?
5. What are the five steps of program evaluation?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Creating and Completing a Program Evaluation Blueprint**

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1. What does the program evaluation blueprint identify? Why do you think we should identify each of these elements before beginning program evaluation?
2. What is *scope creep*? How can the blueprint address this potential danger?
3. How should you go about drafting a purpose definition?
4. Who makes up the program evaluation team? What are some important attributes to consider when selecting team members?
5. What are the four categories of data? Why is it a good idea to consult more than one type of data? How can each of the different categories inform us on the success of a program?
6. How does the match-gap format work in comparing the curriculum to Common Core standards?
7. What are the three key concepts you should consider when deciding how to collect data? What can each of these concepts tell us about our data collection?
8. What is the best way to begin developing a timeline or schedule? What strategies can you use in the blueprint phase to avoid missing deadlines?

## **Chapter 3**

### **Gathering Data**

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1. When is evidence deemed sufficient for decision making?
2. After reading the “Tips for Parent Surveys,” how do you plan to reach parents for surveying? What sort of distribution and return method will you employ? Why do these methods seem most promising?
3. Draft a list of sample interview or focus group questions geared toward parents, teachers, or students. Now, review the list of tips on pages 39–40. Which of your sample questions need to be revised? Why? How do you think this revision will improve your collection of data?
4. What should you do before performing an observation? What are the most common ways to collect data during an observation? Which way do you think will be more useful and efficient for you in your program evaluation? Why?
5. What should be covered in training for data collectors? What do you think are the benefits of discussing each of these topics prior to observations and interviews?
6. Why is it important to ensure confidentiality? How does this affect data accuracy?

## **Chapter 4**

### **Analyzing the Data**

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1. What should the evaluation team consider when beginning to analyze the data? How might these considerations ultimately affect its decision making?
2. Why should conflicting data be reported?
3. What questions should the subgroups answer when beginning to analyze data? Then, what questions should the team focus on after consulting each of the subgroups?
4. How should you decide which data to display?
5. What can direct quotes contribute to the report of findings?
6. What are the two common sets of statewide assessment data? How can each of these sets inform on the performance of programs under evaluation?
7. What is a unique assignment?
8. What is cognitive demand? Consider Bloom's Revised Taxonomy featured in table A.1 on page 70. What might using this taxonomy reveal about student work?
9. To what standards might you compare the written curriculum? Which of these analyze horizontal alignment? Which measure vertically?

## **Chapter 5**

### **Using the Results of the Program Evaluation**

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1. What are the four groups that a program, practice, or strategy might be placed into after evaluation? What action is prescribed for each group?
2. What are some examples of modifications that could be made if a program is deemed marginally effective?
3. What might be the best response to a program that is failing to meet the needs of specific groups of students? Why do you think this is an efficient strategy?
4. Why is it important to consider the fidelity of ineffective programs?
5. Why should the principal, leadership council, or administrative team take the evaluation team's recommendations for action into account?

## **Chapter 6**

### **Communicating Results**

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1. What elements should be included in a program evaluation?
2. Why should the evaluation team strive to eliminate jargon from the report?
3. What are some good strategies for engaging and informing a broad audience?
4. How can the presenters invite feedback, questions, and discussion following the presentation?
5. Why is it important to be sensitive to your audience while delivering recommendations for change?

## **Chapter 7**

### **Looking Back and Planning Forward**

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1. Look at the bulleted list on pages 63–64. How does program evaluation affect strategic planning?
2. What kinds of actions are prevalent in an environment of reflective inquiry? What does this environment imply for a school?
3. Look at the list of actions to create an environment of reflective inquiry. At which stages of the program evaluation process would you perform each of these actions? How do you think each of these actions contributes to a positive school environment?
4. What are some questions to ask at the end of a program evaluation? What do these questions accomplish in the program evaluation process?
5. In what ways can program evaluation be a schoolwide learning opportunity?