

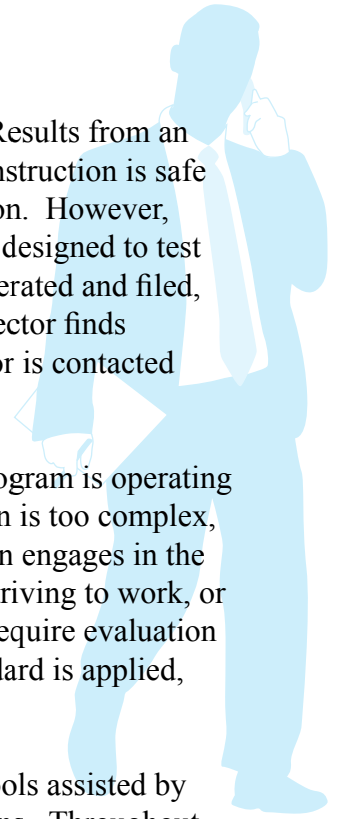
## PHASE V The Inspection

### *Evaluating the Impact and Success of the Program*

Before the building process is complete, it must pass the building inspection. Results from an inspection involve passing all building code requirements to ensure that the construction is safe and secure. Most inspections involve visual surveys of the area and construction. However, inspectors also use tools, such as tape measures, meters, and survey equipment designed to test the strength and quality of materials. Detailed records of their findings are generated and filed, and if a problem is identified, action is taken to correct the problem. If an inspector finds something that does not comply with building codes, the construction contractor is contacted and a time is specified for the builders to fix the problem.

Similar to a building inspection, program evaluation results determine if the program is operating “up to code.” Many people believe that the process of conducting an evaluation is too complex, time consuming, and can only be done by experts. In reality, the average person engages in the evaluation process on a daily basis. Decisions about what route to take while driving to work, or determining what activities need to be completed within a certain time period require evaluation skills. In making critical decisions, information is gathered, some type of standard is applied, and a conclusion is formed.

DJJDP – Center uses ten questions to help schools evaluate their climate. Schools assisted by DJJDP – Center often use different evaluation methods to answer these questions. Throughout this phase these different methods will be discussed.



### **A Lesson Learned from the DisMISS Project Ten Questions Every School Should Answer**

In understanding the school climate, gaining the perspective of students and staff is critical. Here are ten initial questions that can start the process of determining the nature of the school climate.

1. Do students / teachers feel safe at school?
2. Do students / teachers feel connected to the school?
3. Do students / teachers feel that they are treated with respect?
4. Do students feel that teachers care about their success?
5. Do students have opportunities to be meaningfully involved in the school community?
6. Do teachers expect the best from all students?
7. Do students feel engaged in the learning process?
8. Are parents given an opportunity to be involved in the school?
9. Are teachers given an opportunity to integrate innovative teaching strategies?
10. Is the community a viable part of school activities?

The following steps will assist in organizing an objectives-based evaluation. An in-depth description, samples, or guiding questions related to each step are available in the tools that follow.

## Step 1: Identify the purpose of the evaluation

To adequately address the purpose of the evaluation, decide what is to be evaluated, the reason for the evaluation, and who will be affected to determine what critical questions need to be asked.

Results from a program evaluation are as important as results from a building inspection. They highlight areas of strength and areas of weakness to determine if changes are needed. This process draws attention to what needs to be repaired or made stronger to guarantee success and prevent future problems.

## Step 2: Determine evaluation design

Consider what type of design will be used in order to conduct an evaluation. This particular process should only occur after the questions in Step 1 have been answered. The three commonly used designs are goal-based, process-based, or outcomes-based evaluation.

## Step 3: Choose an evaluation method

There are several data collection methods that can be used in the evaluation process. The following table is designed to show the reader approaches to gathering information and the pros and cons of each method.<sup>8</sup> The best evaluations use more than one method in order to ensure that all questions are addressed.

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires, Surveys, Checklists	- An assessment that easily obtains lots of information from people	- Anonymity - Easily administered - Can get lots of data	- Bias responses - May not get full story - Impersonal
Interviews	- Information obtained by talking with and listening to people face-to-face or by telephone	- Full depth of information - Relationship with client - Provides flexibility	- Time consuming - Difficult to analyze - Bias responses
Documentation review	- Descriptive review of program operation, application, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	- Provides comprehensive and historical data - Information already exists - Few biases about data	- Time consuming - Incomplete data - Data restricted to what already exists
Observation	- Observe accurate information on program processes and operation	- View activities as they occur - Easily adapt to events as they develop	- Difficult to interpret behavior or activity - Observer influence of program participants
Focus groups	- A discussion group designed to obtain information on a specific topic	- Efficient way to obtain lots of information in a short time - Provides flexibility - Can convey key information about program and activities	- Difficult to analyze responses - Requires good facilitation skills - Coordinating schedules that are convenient
Case studies	- A comprehensive analysis of a single case or program	- Illustrates program inputs, processes, and outcomes - Uses multiple information sources and methods - Data collection and analysis happen concurrently	- Time consuming - Can be subjective - Requires focus in order to capture relevant information

## Step 4: Analyze the data

The most basic form of statistical analysis uses descriptive statistics to describe raw data. Descriptive statistics can fall into three subcategories that include numerical frequencies and percentages, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability. Each of these will be explained in further detail in the tool section entitled “Statistical Data Analysis.”

## Step 5: Report the evaluation results

After the data has been collected, organized, and analyzed, the results need to be communicated. Since the report can take on several different forms, consider the audience for which the report is being written. The key behind any report is to tell a story.

The following tools are included to assist with the evaluation phase. DJJDP – Center staff researched the following tools and incorporated information from the following sources:

**Basic Guide to Program Evaluation**, Carter McNamara.<sup>9</sup>

**Evaluation Guidebook**, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, North Carolina State University, David Mustian.<sup>10</sup>

### Tool 1 - Guiding Questions to Determine the Purpose of Evaluation

- A list of guiding questions to help focus on the critical issues surrounding evaluation

### Tool 2 - Evaluation Design

- Three commonly used evaluation designs are listed with guiding questions

### Tool 3 - Sample Survey

- A sample survey for students

### Tool 4 - Interviewing Tips

- Suggestions for the interview method of data collection

### Tool 5 - Documentation Review

- Suggestions for the documentation review method of data collection

### Tool 6 - Observation

- Suggestions for the observation method of data collection

### Tool 7 - Focus Group

- Suggestions for the focus group method of data collection

### Tool 8 - Case Study

- Suggestions for the case study method of data collection

### Tool 9 - Statistical Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics fall into three subcategories that are defined and explained

### Tool 10 - The Written Report

- Examples of sections that should be included in a formal written report of an evaluation program

