

Measuring Impact In Literacy Zones (draft outcomes framework)

Twelve Outcome Areas for Discussion and Decisions

The intent is to identify compelling outcomes, without overwhelming data collection, to show and track the impact of literacy zones on individuals, families, and communities.

1. **Mandated primary NRS Measures** are already tracked in ASISTS and student data has been segregated for literacy zones (education gain, GED attainment, postsecondary transition, employment measures)
2. **Secondary NRS Measures** are now optional for states are funded programs. These will be tracked for all literacy zones through ASISTS. *Decision needs to be made on which secondary measures to track.*
3. **Health literacy and financial stability, benefits, and disabilities:** Measures have been drafted for health literacy and financial stability (attached). These measures will be tracked through ASISTS when finalized. *Decision needs to be made on which indicators will be tracked in these two arenas. What are the key benefits to track beyond health insurance and financial stability? How will other benefits be tracked, both in data and in structured family interviews? Are mechanisms like the mybenefitsny portal or other potential benefits data bases a possibility in tracking benefits? What are the disability indicators that should be tracked, both in data and in structured family interviews? The two DDPC pilots with literacy zones will be tracking disability data, what measures should all literacy zones track?*
4. **Referral to partner programs and providing a full range of direct services** are part of a major systems focus of every literacy zone. *NYC LAC has drafted up proposal to track referrals in ASISTS. Decision needs to be made on moving forward.*
5. **Community Literacy: Literacy Zones are about strengthening literacy/English language proficiency at all levels (i.e., 100% or total literacy):** preschool literacy, school age literacy, adult literacy, workforce literacy. Performance management for literacy coalitions offer a good guide on what could be tracked in literacy zones. Harry Hatry and Elaine Morley of the Urban Institute have prepared a Checklist of Candidate Outcome Indicators for Community Literacy for the National Institute for Literacy's performance management for literacy coalitions. *How can this work apply to literacy zones? Which outcome indicators should be tracked on a priority level? How? How can literacy zones develop a performance management system to increase outcomes?*
6. **Other cradle to careers indicators.**
 1. The Pew Institute "Chance for Success Index" captures educational life prospects. It consists of 12 indicators and a composite. *Should literacy zones use this index?*
 2. Even Start has family literacy indicators for children and parents. *How should these be adapted to literacy zones?*
7. **Structured Interviews to Capture Impact on Families.** Literacy zones are intended to help struggling families succeed in a very complex environment. Tracking intermediary outcomes can help document paths toward long term outcomes. *LAC, the NYSED RAEN for NYC, has a proposal for structured interviews of families to put a face on literacy zones and capture the rich impact for families. These interviews are also potential management tools for identifying barriers and rethinking strategies. Family interviews could be supplemented with student interviews and case manager tracking of outcomes. LAC will present their ideas and decisions will be made.*

- 8. Ten pathways out of poverty are part of the literacy zone design. *How should these be tracked?***
 - 1. Total literacy (see #5 above).**
 - 2. At risk youth complete high school and enter postsecondary education or advanced training**
 - 3. Postsecondary transition for out of school youth and adults (See #1)**
 - 4. PA or working poor obtain employment**
 - 5. Incarcerated transition**
 - 6. Pathways to citizenship and English language proficiency (Picked up in #1 and #2)**
 - 7. Workforce development programs (#1 and #2 track employment and retention)**
 - 8. Support for mature workers and senior citizens to stay out of poverty**
 - 9. Support for individuals with disabilities and their families (Cornell University has measures and data base)**
 - 10. Transition support for returning veterans**
- 9. Census data changes. *Should a census profile for each literacy zone be established and tracked?***
- 10. Community Impact. *How can this be measured?***
- 11. Impact and support for organizations participating in literacy zones. *The Urban Institute has draft surveys of organizations. Should these be adopted?***
- 12. Effectiveness and strategies for using data to manage literacy zone implementation. *What indicators and process could be adopted?***

The goal is to develop a streamlined accountability system that is neither overwhelming nor burdensome in its scope.

Key Questions Going Forward

1. What should be mandated for Literacy Zone re-funding decisions? Only mandated NRS primary measures.
2. What should be required for First Wave Literacy zones now? Starting July 1, 2009?
3. Should some indicators be piloted first?
4. What phase-in plans should be adopted for Second and Third Wave literacy zones?