
DEVELOPING THE INDICATORS OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION MODIFICATION EFFECTIVENESS: PROBLEM DEFINITION AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

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There is no information on how the state educational policy is implemented in the regions and municipalities of the RF, there are no indicators that could direct the municipalities and education administration authorities towards the realization of the state policy priorities in the sphere of education system administration modification. The requirements for data interpretation for the development of the system for the evaluation of the regional education authorities' activities' effectiveness and the main approaches to the indicators' development are formulated.

Absence of a proper mechanism of evaluating the results of the reforms is a serious obstacle to the improvement of education system administration quality in the RF. There are no criteria of how to evaluate the work of the regional legislative and executive authorities of the RF and of the municipal governments on ensuring the citizens' rights in the sphere of education. There is no information on how the state educational policy is implemented in the regions and municipalities of the RF, there are no indicators that could direct the municipalities and education administration authorities towards the realization of the state policy priorities in the sphere of education system administration modification.

Such situation causes absence of any responsibility for the results of the current educational policy. The priority task for the RF education system development of "Making "result administration" the basis of financing the system of education. Any budget-financed education development program must include a list of clear indicator of its effectiveness" becomes impracticable.

Some regions of the RF develop and implement mechanisms of effective regional systems' functioning, e.g. programs and strategies of system reforms, regional institutions system restructuring, regional regulations on new educational institutions models, normative-legislative basis is being clarified and developed, new institutions administration and budget-assigned funds distribution mechanisms are developed.

At the same time those regional indicators cannot be directly applied to the evaluation of

the accomplishment of the state policy on education system administration modification in the regions and the municipalities of the RF. And the indicators that could reflect the direct results of the education administration authorities' activities in the sphere of education system modification do not exist.

Most of the proposed sets of indicators are "exit result-oriented". This reflects the change of the approach to education: it is no longer "a thing in itself" or even for itself as it used to be but a sector that is meant to satisfy the people's, communities' and state needs, a source of social and economic development of the municipality, the region and the county as a whole.

These exit results-oriented sets of indicators are as a rule long-term results-oriented and thus they reflect just long-term guidelines while the question of what to do and how to do it to achieve those long-term goals remains unresolved for the education administration authorities. In other words, most of these indicators focus on the "mission", leaving the strategy behind.

It is clear that these indicators are inapplicable for real-time strategic administration.

Other sets of indicators (usually developed by education administration authorities or on their order) include certain imperatives and are tailored for administration. It is clear that such indicator as "percentage of crimes committed by schoolchildren" or "average USE score" reflect more or less obvious results of education system activity and the burden of responsibility for them lies on the educational institutions.

When those indicators are applied (e.g. for school rating, for the calculation of additional

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payments for school principals) the heads of the institutions are forced to make decisions unnatural for them. It is a well-known fact that sometimes in order to maintain the reputation of a “prestigious secondary education institution” some schoolchildren are forced not to take the USE so that “the average USE score” in that institution does not get lower.

But the main problem is that there are few indicators among the suggested ones that could motivate the education administration authorities to actually do something useful.

Another problem of creating the indicators to evaluate mid-term activities of the education administration authorities and focus them on particular tasks is the mere absence of experience and as a result bad indicators’ definitions or creating indicators based on the inaccurate information. For example: several years ago an education administration authority of one of the regions of the RF was trying to restructure village schools network and make up larger schools with schoolchildren being transported to them to ensure that high quality education is accessible for all and that the existing educational resources are well-used. Those schools were called “education centers” and there was a indicator of “the percentage of graduate school students in the education centers” created. As a result all the small schools immediately changed their names to “education centers”.

It is obvious that the issue of creating and developing the indicators to evaluate mid-term activities of the regional education administration authorities is of crucial importance. And now a few words on its theoretical value.

There are many approaches to defining administration efficiency. While in small systems it is possible to replace the administration efficiency by the overall results of the organization in complex multifunctional system it is impossible. Every year more and more experts show interest in the evaluation of complex system activities.

Education administration authorities are a part of the state and municipal administration systems which makes the evaluation of their activities more complicated. Purely economic indicators are inapplicable here.

Finally, it is still more difficult to evaluate the activities of the education administration authorities if we regard them as an element of

indicative administration. Despite large number of articles on indicative administration there is no article mentioning the issue of direct administration results and administration relations’ evaluation indicators’ creation and development. Apparently, this is caused by the fact that no one except for the specialist in the sphere of administration consulting, who are interested in securing the results of their work, is carrying out any research of “indicative administration”.

From the point of view of theory it is necessary to regard an education administration authority as a administration body of a holding company. This approach allows to separate the results of the education administration authorities’ activities from the results of the activities of educational institutions. It is also essential to formulate the principle of excessive data interpretation to rationalize the indicators’ development applicable for indicative administration.

To develop the indicators to evaluate the activities of the regional education administration authorities it is advisable to compare the case with holding or divisional structures: there are many education services providers that are a part of municipal holding companies which set their tasks and supply them with the necessary resources. However conventional this metaphor is, it gives general outlook on key interrelations in education administration. The given comparison underlines the fact that the aforementioned authorities do not provide any education services but perform other functions that must be evaluated.

Data interpretation is a matter of utmost importance for the development of the system of evaluating the activities of the regional education administration authorities. There are several compliance requirements:

1) the collected data must comply with the administration goal (the goal of affecting the changes in the education system);

2) the information sources and the instruments of measurement must comply with the administration goal (the goal of affecting the changes in the education system);

3) the impact of the measurement must comply with the administration goal.

The latter requirement must be met via the “excessive” data interpretation that will allow to minimize the measurement results interpretation. Thus the indicators and the methods must be

selected in such a way that the results of measurement could logically mean the evaluation (either high or low) and only the reasons of the values would be the subject of interpretation.

The most important task in the process of developing the indicators is the maximum technological effectiveness of the results' measurement and analysis: it must be possible to switch the information flow to the user-target wherever and whenever necessary. This means that the very process of evaluation of the regional education administration authorities' activities' effectiveness will give the units of education system an incentive to improve their activity and this improvement must be the result of the measurement (evaluation), not of the further administrative impact.

The key factor in creating such mechanism is the compliance of the instruments of measurement with the regional systems' administration goal. The more goals there are and the bigger the discrepancy between the direct and the indirect goals is, the more difficult it is to create such an instrument. Another key factor is the full understanding of the direct goals by the unit whose activities are being evaluated and that depends largely on the way of measurement.

Thus the key approaches to the development of the regional education administration authorities' activities' effectiveness indicators are:

- ◆ the indicators must be applicable not only for the *evaluation* of the regional education administration authorities' activities' effectiveness but also for *indicative planning and administration*;

- ◆ the indicators must show the *direct results of the administration system (authority)* and not the results of the process of education in the managed system and, of course, not the social effects; the indicators must be connected with the mechanisms of regional education system administration; the results of the education system activities can be used only for *the calculation of complex indicators that characterize the education system and its administration*;

- ◆ indicators can not reflect all the characteristics of regional education system administration; the main characteristic for the indicators must be *strategic priorities of education system administration modification*;

- ◆ the indicators must be *specific, directing the mid-term activities of the regional education administration authorities*, must perform mid-term indicative administration i.e. direct the activities of the regional education administration authorities for the nearest years;

- ◆ the calculation of numeral values of the indicators *must* be based on state statistics data, the reports of the lower organizations to the higher ones on the results of the official evaluation procedure. But *no* data collection must be organized for this specific purpose.

Besides, the set of indicators must:

- ◆ be oriented on the education system administration authorities of the RF and on the Federal authority of education system administration their as users;

- ◆ allow to make administrative decisions on the regional and federal levels of education system administration;

- ◆ become the basis for regional and federal documentation development;

- ◆ be sufficient to focus the regional education system administration authorities of the RF on the accomplishment of the state policy on education system administration modification.

The results of the federal and regional projects on monitoring the system of education within the project "Education System Reform" must be taken into account during the work process.

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