

MONITORING OF LOCAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITIES PERFORMANCE: INDICATORS DEVELOPMENT

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The concept of monitoring of regional and municipal education authorities performance as a mechanism of indicative administration of local education systems management modernization presupposes the use of specially designed indicators. Main approaches in monitoring planning can be stated under the perception of isomorphism of local education authorities performance and holding management companies, differentiation between the functions of the producers of educational services and education administration authorities, necessity of “excessive” interpretation of initial data when forming the indicators.

Essential disadvantage of education development processes administration in Russian Federation is the crudity of the mechanism evaluating the results of on-going transformations. The performance assessment measures for regional legislative and executive bodies and municipal entities in charge of enforcing state guarantees of citizens’ rights in the field of education are not elaborated. There is a lack of information about the efficiency of state policy in the field of education on the regional and municipal levels; there are no indicators developed to be used by regional and municipal education administration authorities to enforce state policy priorities in the field of education management modernization.

Such a situation leads to the deficiency of responsibility for the results of education policy. It seems problematic to reach the targets set in priority directions of the Russian Federation education system development: “In the basis of education system subsidization we should lay the principle of ‘results-based management’”. It is necessary that any education development program financed by budget means should include a precise list of performance indicators”.

A number of RF regions has developed and implemented mechanisms of effective local system functioning: strategies and programs of system modernization (reform), restructuring of the local institution network; local regulations about new types and models of educational institutions, new elements of local education system infrastructure; the body of law is being

specified and developed, new mechanisms of institution management and of budgetary funding embodiment are elaborated¹.

At the same time the indicators of effectiveness of local education programs performance developed and used in these regions cannot be directly adapted to assess the implementation of government policy towards education management modernization on regional and municipal levels. It is concerned with the fact that the above-mentioned indicators were developed for specific projects; in majority of cases they envisage the performance assessment of various education systems. However, the indicators reflecting the immediate results of education administration authorities performance are not developed.

Various indicators of education modernization presuppose primarily organizing the assessment and ranking according to some parameters, connected with education results, with follow-up factors, but not the focus of administration authorities activities on certain steps towards education management modernization in accordance with state policy priorities in the field of education, as defining the parameters of education administration authorities contribution into the achievement of various results or effects is not assumed.

Defining these indicators is necessary not for assessment, but mostly for guiding administration authorities towards modernization of their activities in the directions prescribed by state policy. Naturally indicators should be

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'transparent' to the extent possible, most of indicators should be very 'simple' in respect of data collection, which should not undergo interpretation after being collected.

Among various indicators suggested and used in practice there are very few ones, which would encourage education administration authorities to perform certain activity (except for 'require from subordinate institutions'). And this occurs in a situation, when implementation of the concept of education modernization presupposes the whole range of steps, which should be performed namely by local education administration authorities.

Another problem in indicators development, which would allow assessing performance effectiveness of education administration authorities in the medium term and encouraging them to undertake certain activities, is simply the lack of appropriate experience and as a consequence clumsy wording or defining the indicators on the basis of information, collection of which requires colossal expenses or quality of which is called into question.

Assessment of education administration authorities performance is complicated by the fact that this body is a part of the system of state and local administration, which is intricate itself: for good reason (it is created to reach 'commonweal') it cannot use mostly economical mechanisms of assessment so directly (as in the case of big commercial divisional structures).

Finally, assessment of the effectiveness of education administration authorities performance becomes even more complicated if apart from an academic viewpoint it is looked upon as an element, mechanism of a very popular in recent years indicative management. Despite considerable number of publications devoted to different aspects of indicative management, there is almost no research (at least in open press), reflecting the problems of indicators construction that would allow assessing the immediate results of administration and administrative relations.

Another factor that should be taken into consideration when assessing the effectiveness of local education system administration is that we do not deal with mono-organization. In fact, local administration together with subordinate institutions network represents an institutional item like holding.

By the word holding we traditionally mean a stock company using its assets to obtain control stock of other companies for the purpose of acquisition of power and control over them.

The economic essence of holding is in sinergetic effect: integrated companies, headed by a parent company, reach higher financial-economical parameters than companies acting apart. Synergetic effect is possible only in the case of companies interaction developed in a certain manner, when the investment of each is directed towards the achievement of common objective of the holding.

Another positive side of holdings is the use of advantages of production diversification, which allows: solving problems of assets renewal more efficiently, securing this process with constant flow of monetary assets; solving problems of technological reorganization of production, 'pulling' lame-duck industries to the level of the leading ones; using scientific and technical potential and rationally redistribute highly qualified specialists.

We consider local education system to be an organization isomorphic to a holding (at least in managerial aspect) for the following reasons.

1) Network structure of local education system.

In the case of horizontal integration a holding represents a parent company and a network of sub-companies built and working similarly, like twins; the key difference between them is territorial clients coverage. In the case of vertical integration a holding represents a parent company and a chain of sub-companies, built on the principle of complete cycle - primary production, manufacturing, selling, - which are united into a single complex.

When considering the structure of educational institutions network, functioning on some territory, it is easy to note the indications of both horizontal (schools network, pre-school institutions network, vocational education institutions network) and vertical (elements of network are built on the principle of complete cycle of service rendering: pre-school educational institution - secondary education schools - УНПСО) integration.

2) Local education administration authority, as well as parent holding company, is institutionally separated from production departments.

3) Local education administration authority, as well as management holding company, does not possess its own production facilities and is not engaged into its own production activity.

The functions of local education administration authority include defining the problems for both education institutions network in general and its sub-systems (formed on the principle of vertical integration of sub-companies) and supplying subordinate institutions with resources necessary to cope with set tasks (to achieve certain results - rendering educational services, which can be understood as the main holding outputs). A particular case of resources provision is building such mechanisms, which, when functioning, enable educational institutions to provide themselves with some resources independently.

4) The contribution of each sub-company is directed towards achievement of the common holding objective.

Thus, when examining education administration it is useful to compare the situation with major holding and divisional structures. The comparison with a holding is worthwhile, because there exist a lot of educational services manufacturers (educational institutions), belonging (for example, in the case of general education) to local municipal holdings, which set missions and provide them with resources for mission achievement. Those, in their turn, belong to regional holdings. Finally, the latter have a federal management company. Despite this metaphor being conventional (federal, regional and municipal education administration authorities are subdivisions of corresponding state authorities and local administration, and that is why there is no direct taxonomy between them), it gives an idea of the fundamental interrelations within education administration.

Elaborating indicators one should proceed from a certain understanding of the content of managerial activity of local education system administration authority. This activity does not consist of administrating individual subordinate institutions or every subordinate institution, but it involves managing the *network of educational institutions*, i.e. providing them with all necessary resources to achieve certain education results. However, we do not speak

about management of the process of achieving these results from local level, which appears to be impossible: administration authority is institutionally remoted from the educational institution itself.

That is why indicators should demonstrate immediate results (effects) of administration system (authority), and not the results of manufacturing (educational) process within system administrated. Let us consider possible immediate effects of local education administration authority performance.

Firstly, local administration activity generates the effects, connected with fulfilling its managerial functions. These effects involve changes in resources (in broad sense of the term) of subordinate education system, responding to the priorities of educational policy (for instance, network structure change for the purpose of providing local availability of high quality services of general education while using the resources effectively). It is obvious that we can form the objectives tree of the local administration activity on the embodiment of every priority; elaborating the objectives of the highest level we can get statements in the form of measurable results. The indicators developed should allow defining *the fact and the quality of modernization objectives achievement*.

Secondly, taking into consideration that the main results of management are objective defining and providing local network with resources adequate to these objectives, indicators of this type are connected with management mechanisms used by local authority and can be used for effectiveness assessment of its performance.

Thirdly, the activity of local education system administration authority generates as an effect certain *educational system results* proving the realization of priorities. Despite the fact, that administration authority institutionally remoted from subordinate institutions, which function as a means of achieving these results, in the context of some educational results it is possible to note the contribution of local administration into their achievement. Obtaining such educational results is impossible without implementation of managerial decisions on subordinate education system changes responding to educational policy priorities.

Representing the characteristics of subordinate network, such indicators can reflect (include) its (network's) provision with different kinds of resources necessary for the achievement of educational results.

However, the results of educational system performance themselves can be used only for measurement of complicated indicators that characterize the educational system and its management.

When building the concept of indicators it is wise to appeal to specificity of inverse connections in social systems management. In contemporary researches on management problems inverse connections are understood as constituents of information interaction within administration entities, they are involved in the process of managerial decision making and are used exceptionally after the decision comes into force.

Together with this, the specificity of inverse connections in social systems (in contrast to technical ones) includes the ability to independently and actively process information manifested by all the entities (and not only by high-level managers). Therefore the procedure of inverse connections should be also considered as a method of influence on the activity of various education systems with minimal interference into this process (moreover, current legislation does not allow direct interference, for instance, of the regional education authority into the work of municipal ones, and opportunities of indirect interference are also limited). It is necessary to consider the subordinate regional education system administration authorities (in particular - municipal authorities) not only as the sources of information flowing through inverse channels, but also as her active users, as well implementing "inverse connection delegation", that is, their temporary or permanent redirection by high-level education authority, implementing performance assessment of inferior authorities, to the managers of these authorities, the performance results of which are evaluated.

Required conditions of "delegation" are uniqueness of parameters, as well as accessibility of assessment technologies and methods, that also allow accomplishing self-diagnostics of managerial activity results, examination of

the projects of managerial decisions concerning corresponding objectives, transmitted from the high-level management. However "adjustment" of the managerial decisions of municipal authority to outer objectives given offline takes place without upper interference required. Coordination of volume and quality given to the resources assessment object with the results of evaluation intensifies the effectiveness of such "adjustment".

For embodiment of this mechanism a "redundant" interpretation of the initial data in the process of indicators designing is required, that would allow minimizing the interpretation of the measurement results. In other words, the selection of indicators, methods of measurement should be produced in such a way as to get the assessment out of the measurement results (high or low, showing increase or decrease of various evaluation aspects), and the object of the results interpretation would be only the reasons of these values.

On the basis of the above mentioned, we define the main principles of indicators elaboration of the municipal education administration performance:

- ◆ Indicators should be intended for both the effectiveness *assessment* of regional or municipal education system administration and *indicative planning and management*;

- ◆ Indicators should demonstrate the *immediate results of the administration system (authority)*, but not the results of educational process in the managed system and still less the social effects, that is why the indicators can be connected to the immediate management mechanisms and local education system characteristics (i.e. the resources of the system given); the results of the education system performance can be used *only for measurement of complicated indicators*, characterizing the education system and its management;

- ◆ Indicators should not claim to reflect all the local education administration system characteristics; the *strategic priorities of education administration system modernization* lie in the basis of indicators development (according to federal documents these are: optimization of the structure of the local system educational network, change of organizational-financial mechanisms of local system, change of the

mechanisms of work with the staff of local education system, change of interaction between the local system and the environmental entities, change of functioning control and education effectiveness monitoring in the local system);

◆ Indicators should be *specific, orienting the activity of administration authorities in medium term*, they should allow to implement indicative management in medium term, in other words, to set a local administration authorities activities on modernization of subordinate systems for the nearest future;

◆ When calculating the numerical values of indicators one should use state statistical reporting data, information about the results of implementation of official assessment procedures, received as a result of subordinate system entities response to high level education administration authority; at the same time the data collection should not presuppose the conduction of special information collecting (only additional statistical research based on the information given are possible);

◆ The information received as a result of indicators calculation should not allow any other interpretation rather than the one, which is in line with the objectives of influence onto ongoing processes in the local education system.

Therefore, when elaborating the indicators of local administration authorities performance effectiveness, following the above mentioned principles allows using the monitoring of local education authorities performance as a mechanism of indicative management of regional and municipal education systems modernization.

¹ *Fishman, Lev*. Inverse connections in pedagogical systems management: experience of classification and construction. Monograph, Saint-Petersburg. - Samara, 1993; *Fishman, Lev*. The model of educational management in Russia: values and stereotypes. Monograph, Kazan - Samara, 1997; *Kogan, E...*; *Fishman, Lev*; *Postalyuk N...*; *Prudnikova V...*; *Tyurina N...*; *Negrey E...* / Under general editorship of professor E... Kogan. The experience of modernization of local education system administration on regional basis: performance assessment. Monograph, Samara, 2006.