

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2008

7:00 pm  
Room 222

Please note that this will be a relatively short meeting in order to allow members to attend the Public Facilities meeting to discuss the Mayor's proposal for construction of a new synthetic turf recreation complex at Newton South High School., which begins at 7:45 p.m.

1. Aldermanic communications:

Efforts to increase and improve communications by Board to the public; website

2. Financial/Strategic Planning initiatives:

Internal control evaluation of City operations; Somerstat

Attached to this agenda are some materials relating to the use of statistics to measure and evaluate performance of governmental operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Alderman Ted Hess-Mahan, Chair

## Budgeting for Results: a Webinar

Learn how government leaders are linking taxpayer dollars to performance measurement to **deliver better value to citizens**. Join Jonathan Walters for a special online seminar, **Budgeting for Results**, on Tuesday, June 19, at 1 p.m. ET/10 a.m. PT.

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Posted June 1, 2007

[MORE SPECIAL REPORTS ON CITIZENS AND PERFORMANCE](#)

## Citizens and Performance

### DOLLARS AND RESULTS

## Data-Driven Decisions

A movement is afoot to help legislators and city council members link budget dollars more closely to results.

By **JONATHAN WALTERS**

**I**n the late 1990s, as an alderman in Somerville, Massachusetts, Joseph Curtatone was perpetually frustrated by the budgets his local legislature was supposed to be helping shape and approve. "Budget time really used to get me," he recalls. "It was a straight line-item budget. There might be a small paragraph for each department briefly describing what they do, but there was nothing that told you how much we spent on what — no inputs, outputs or outcomes."

It was classic best-guess budgeting, coupled with a typical tactic: Any department that had any money left in its account at year's end was guaranteed to get a budget cut. "If you're the DPW director and you have \$15,000 left in your account, then that's how much we cut your budget for the next year," Curtatone recounts. "So the message to all our departments was, 'Spend down your budget.' "

While this was one of the most significant points of aggravation, Curtatone also was nettled by how the city managed its decisions in general. "Here we



Suggestions? Comments?  
E-mail [Heather Kleb](#)

## Community Models

### LOCAL RESOURCES

#### Somerville, Massachusetts

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Mayor Joseph Curtatone

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were, a multimillion-dollar operation with absolutely no real-time information on even the most basic services. We weren't measuring anything. How many potholes were we filling? How were we filling them?"

The simple fact that Curtatone harbored such frustration, though, made him an unusual breed of elected legislator. Nationally, those who follow budgeting and managing for results in the public sector note that his impatience with a lack of information about what the city was trying to accomplish, and whether it was getting important jobs done efficiently, set him apart from most legislators — at the local and state levels. Even in states with results-based budgeting and management legislation on the books, and even in cities where mayors are preaching performance, the last public officials who seem to tune in are state legislators and city council members.

Those in the trenches agree. When asked to comment on the average city council member's familiarity with the concepts surrounding performance measurement, Jackie Nytes, an eight-year veteran of the Indianapolis City Council, lets out a long sigh. "Theoretically, if I ask city council members if they're in favor of using data to make decisions, they'll say, 'Of course.' But a lot of that is just lip service. A lot of council people are part timers, and the fact is that making budget decisions based on information about results is just harder."

But if her counterparts around the country are going to deal effectively with delivering services in times of tight resources, she thinks the way to do that is elevate the conversation. "If we're really going to get a handle on budgeting, then the question shouldn't be, do we have enough money for this many jail beds? The question should be, do we have the programs in place so that we don't need so many jail beds? If legislatures are acting responsibly, then they should be focusing on those kinds of outcomes."

Nytes is preaching that ethic not only locally but nationally. She's part of an effort being sponsored by the National League of Cities, aimed at tuning in elected officials to a much more performance-based view of government programming and budgeting. As chair of the City Futures Finance Panel at NLC, Nytes is part of a team of local elected officials who are working with performance-measurement guru Harry Hatry of the Urban Institute to produce a manual and other materials by this fall. The aim is to help local elected officials to start focusing on the bigger, performance-informed picture.

### *SomerStat*

SomerStat is a program that helps Somerville deliver the best possible services with limited resources. The program regularly brings together city decision makers to study financial, personnel and operational data to help them understand what happens within various city departments. SomerStat aids these officials in identifying and tracking needed improvement.

[Click here](#)

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*Budget Office*

[Click here](#)

### **Indianapolis City-County Council**

[Click here](#)

*Jackie Nytes*

[Click here](#)

jackie@jackienytes.com

### **Maryland**

*Legislating for Results*

Managing for Results (MFR) is a future-oriented process that focuses on the needs of Maryland's customers and stakeholders and seeks to emphasize meaningful and measurable results.

[Click here](#)

*2004 Status Report on MFR*

The 2004 audit of MFR was conducted to determine whether the program had become a part of statewide decision-making.

[Click here](#)

*StateStat*

StateStat is a program currently being implemented statewide in Maryland as a replacement for Managing for Results. StateStat will help the governor target problem areas in state government.

[Click here](#)

*Department of Budget and Management*

[Click here](#)

The partnership is similar to one in which Hatry was involved a few years ago with the National Conference of State Legislatures. The result of that collaboration was "Legislating for Results," a basic primer that walks legislators through the fundamentals of data-driven decision making. According to Judy Zelio, who follows fiscal affairs for NCSL, there has been an uptick of interest in legislating for results in the wake of the book's publication. She also credits the buzz around work done in the field in states such as Louisiana, Oregon, Texas and Washington.

Mike Marsh, deputy director of the Oregon Department of Transportation, says it historically has been a mixed bag when it came to what legislators wanted to focus on when his department presented data on goals and outcomes. This year, however, in preliminary discussions with the chairs of the House and Senate budget committees in Salem, officials from his department were told to be ready to link dollars and outcomes. "They also said that if requests for additional money weren't related directly to key performance measures, don't even bother asking," Marsh adds.

Meanwhile, the committee chairs seem to be holding their own folks accountable for familiarizing themselves with ODOT's facts and figures on costs and accomplishments before they come to the budget hearings, Marsh notes.

## VERIFIABLE RESULTS

Getting legislators to really buy in to legislating for results has never been easy. Even as Texas was being touted as a model of performance-based budgeting back in the late 1990s, legendary lawmakers and budget wranglers such as Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock were referring to those efforts as "window dressing." In his view, the legislature knew from experience which agencies were doing a good job and which weren't.

Certainly some legislators have enough institutional memory and familiarity with their agencies to make informed judgments about performance. But especially in an era of term limits, and as departments become more technically adept at measuring what they do, advocates of data-driven government argue that something more than an agency's reputation for good or bad work ought to go into the spending equation.

There are some legitimate reasons why legislators might be uncomfortable using data to make big-

### Baltimore

#### *CitiStat*

CitiStat is Baltimore's accountability tool that allows the mayor run the city on a week-to-week basis. It provides information that helps develop and implement strategies, hold managers accountable and measure results.

[Click here](#)

### Oregon

#### *Department of Transportation*

[Click here](#)

### Kansas City

#### *Performance Audits*

Kansas City's audit Web site provides a searchable database of audits conducted since 1999.

[Click here](#)

## NATIONAL RESOURCES

### Urban Institute

The Urban Institute is an economic and social policy research organization that seeks to promote policy and public debate on national priorities. The Institute gathers and analyzes data, conducts policy research, evaluates programs and services, and educates the public on critical issues and trends.

[Click here](#)

#### *Legislating for Results*

A joint effort of the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Urban Institute which provides state legislators and their staffs with information aimed at increasing their understanding of the potential use of performance measurement information, particularly the use of "outcome" information in the legislative process.

[Click here](#)

### National League of Cities

The National League of Cities is the oldest and largest national organization representing

dollar decisions, however. The most prominent among them: They don't trust agencies to honestly and accurately report what's going on.

In 1997, Maryland embarked on its "Managing for Results" process. "MFR was introduced to agency leadership as a strategic-planning process to help officials set goals, objectives and performance measures for programs and to assess the results of those programs," says a 2004 legislative auditor's status report.

The auditor's report, which was undertaken at the request of the chairs of the Senate and House budget and appropriations committees, noted some key reasons why the program might not be as effective as it could be. For one thing, the number of measures reported to the Department of Budget and Management was closing in on an astounding 9,000 for 64 state agencies. At the same time, the audit report pointed out that the Governor's Office itself had been doing a routinely poor job of linking budget requests with agency goals and results. Most significant, the report found that almost two-thirds of agency-reported data simply was not verifiable.

Despite such problems, Maryland Senator P.J. Hogan, who serves on the budget and tax committee, contends that he and his fellow committee members do pay close attention to the link between money and key results when they make budget decisions. "I find that MFR works very well for me as a budget person. I can look at an agency's budget and look at their goals and see how they're doing and make a better judgment as far as whether we're getting the right amount of bang for the buck," says Hogan. "Take a measure like infant mortality rates. Under our MFR guidelines, we can look and see what it was in the four previous fiscal years and at least see trends — hopefully going in the right direction. And if not, then we can say, 'Hey, this program is not working, let's pull the funding.' "

Meanwhile, the executive side of Maryland government is promising to tighten up its MFR act under newly elected governor — and former Baltimore mayor — Martin O'Malley. Not surprisingly, O'Malley is taking the principles and tactics he practiced in creating and administering Baltimore's much-vaunted CitiStat and applying them to Maryland through "StateStat."

While legislation was pending to make StateStat official this session, O'Malley was already pushing it in three key agencies: corrections, juvenile justice and social services. Hogan doesn't see StateStat as

municipal governments across the United States. It seeks to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. In cooperation with state municipal leagues, the NLC lobbies for cities and towns, provides programs and services for local leaders, keeps leaders informed of critical issues, helps build and strengthen leadership skills, awards municipal achievements and provides networking opportunities for local governments.

[Click here](#)

#### *City Futures Finance Panel*

As part of the CityFutures Program at NLC, the Public Finance Panel's mission is to identify the challenges and possible solutions for a viable future public finance system for cities. The program seeks to create a public discourse regarding the need for the reform of current financial systems and provides guidance to city officials dealing with financial challenges.

[Click here](#)

## RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

### **Legislating for Results**

*National Conference of State Legislatures and the Urban Institute, 2004*

Exactly what am I getting for the money I'm paying? That's a question that is perpetually on the minds of taxpayers. Legislating for Results tells how to use performance information to determine the solid achievements of government programs for the money spent on them. This publication gives policy makers the tools to ask the right questions; encourage good management; gather vital information; identify areas for budget reductions or increases; link appropriations to actual services; improve oversight; enhance planning; and clearly show what works and what

either bolstering or overriding MFR. "I see it as complementing it," he says.

Meanwhile, Hogan concedes that most other legislators in Maryland have only passing familiarity with the whole MFR regimen, because they are less focused on the budgeting side of legislating and are more into "establishing new programs."

## NEW DIRECTIONS

Despite the continuing state of general ignorance or indifference when it comes to using data to make important decisions, the ranks of governments that are turning to more results-based programming and budgeting seems to be slowly adding up, frequently because one or two people, such as Curtatone or Nytes or O'Malley, become frustrated enough to try moving government in a new direction.

For Curtatone's part, he took the most direct route possible to that position of influence: running for Somerville mayor. Upon taking office in January 2004, Curtatone promptly organized a series of field trips to Baltimore with top staff. The result was "SomerStat," which he says is now standard practice in his city. "For the first year, our aldermen were saying, 'Oh yeah, SomerStat. Explain that to me again.' " His early budgets had both line items and performance-related costing to ease them into the program. Now, using data to discuss budgeting has become standard operating procedure within his local legislature.

What hasn't happened in Somerville yet, Curtatone says, is taking the information being collected on government performance and results and pushing it out to citizens so that they can be more tuned in to what's being accomplished with their tax dollars. That's the city's next big step.

Some elected legislators think that is the best reason of all for making a clear connection between dollars and results. "Revenues are getting tighter and tighter, and we're not going to micromanage our way through this," Nytes says. "We have to reframe the discussion with the taxpayer. This isn't about looking for fluff in budgets, for waste. We're already efficient. The question is, are we efficient at the right things? So this is about what we want to budget for: What are our priorities and what do those cost, and then explaining to citizens the tough choices. If you want all these services, then you may need to increase taxes to pay for them."

Meanwhile, there is evidence that pushing performance — and transparency in government — can actually have significant political payoffs. Kansas City auditor Mark Funkhouser parlayed his reputation as a tough protector of taxpayers' interests into a successful mayoral run, winning a close election against a popular incumbent city councilman in March. Funkhouser's high-profile and tough performance audits were frequently so nettling to the

does not.

[Click here](#)

### Interview with Mark Funkhouser

*Katherine Barrett and Richard Green (Governing Management Letter, January 2007)*

An exclusive interview with former auditor and current mayor of Kansas City, Mark Funkhouser, on auditing and working with the government.

[Click here](#)

### Managing Performance

Since 1997, Governing has convened an annual conference on the subject of Managing Performance. The reports from those events over the years provide examples of the way in which state and local government leaders have developed performance measurement and performance management initiatives over the last decade.

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*(Note: Descriptions of some of these resources are adapted from the organizations' and publishers' Web sites and other materials supplied by them.)*



mayors he worked for that he was directly threatened with being fired if he didn't back off. He ran on a campaign of government transparency and accountability.

And in Somerville, Curtatone says he ran for mayor on a straight platform of "performance-based budgeting and costing out and measuring activities and results." He adds with a laugh that a certain mayor just across the Charles River in Boston "doesn't believe in all this Activity-Based Costing stuff — yet." But in Somerville, citizens were certainly ready to support a mayor who knows his ABCs.

These articles are part of a continuing series on public performance measurement focusing on citizen involvement. Support has been provided by [the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation](#). Although the Sloan Foundation may assist some of the programs described in these articles, it had no control or influence over the editorial content, and no one at Sloan read the material prior to publication. All of the reporting and editing was done independently by *Governing* staff.

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- Davis Square
- East Broadway
- Magoun Square
- Perry & Lincoln Parks
- Prospect Hill
- Quincy Street
- Ten Hills
- Winter Hill East
- Somerville Parents
- Young Somerville
- Español
- Kreyòl
- Portuguese

## SomerStat

As one of his chief goals for the City, Mayor Curtatone promised to implement management initiatives that would enable the City to deliver the best services possible with very limited resources. Like most other municipalities in the state, Somerville faces severe budget constraints. Because Somerville relies so heavily on state aid, recent cuts in state aid have hit the city hard. State aid represented 42.5 percent of the City's revenue base in FY 2000, but only 34.1 percent by FY 2006. At the same time, while revenue growth has fallen, fixed costs and employee benefits have continued to rise. While many Massachusetts municipalities have struggled, Somerville is among the leanest, with the lowest total receipts per capita in FY06 of all MA municipalities with populations of 40,000 or higher.

### Strategy:

To survive in this fiscal environment, the Mayor believed, Somerville needed the best possible management. This, he thought, required having data to make decisions and the ability, through forums and analysis of the data, to use it to make decisions. Each of the management initiatives advances this goal in different ways. They have, in fact, enabled the City to not just survive, but to implement a large number of innovations. See the attached [SomerStat Overview](#) for more information on each.

**The SomerStat program** facilitates very regular forums in which key City decision-makers meet to study financial, personnel, and operational data to understand what's happening within departments. In these forums, we identify opportunities for improvement and over time, track implementation of plans. The meetings have become an ongoing conversation among City leaders on where the City should be headed, with each meeting allowing City managers to better understand how the City can work better.

**The ResiStat Program** brings SomerStat into the community, to extend the SomerStat problem-solving discussion to Somerville residents. The ResiStat program is funded by grants from [The Boston Foundation](#) and the [National Center for Civic Innovation](#). The goal of ResiStat is to hold 20 bi-monthly meetings, most in neighborhood groups and a few for specific populations. At these meetings, residents give their feedback to SomerStat staff and elected officials about their experience of living in Somerville and receiving City services. Suggestions and comments are recorded and brought back to City staff, and status updates are given at subsequent meetings. Also, residents can request SomerStat data relevant to their neighborhood, which are brought to subsequent meetings.

**The Program-Based budget** complements the SomerStat program by integrating financial information with data on operations and performance in an annual review of operations. While the SomerStat program is an ongoing conversation, the Program Budget is an opportunity to set goals that will be tracked throughout the year and to make changes to the budget to have the City's budget reflect ideas for change that have been uncovered in SomerStat meetings throughout the year. See the [FY07 Program Based budget page](#) for more information and a copy of the budget.

**311 Call Center:** Finally, the 311 Call Center rounds out the management reform effort by establishing a direct line to residents allowing them to provide real-time feedback on how well the city delivers its services. Data from the 311 center are regularly studied in SomerStat meetings and serve as a backbone for the program-based budget, which requires data on departmental output (e.g. number of trees trimmed). Visit [311](#) to learn how it can serve you.

As these components grow, they will continue to complement one another and provide a more and more robust picture of how the City works. While other cities have spearheaded these initiatives, we believe Somerville is unique in its aggressive implementation of all these related efforts. Also, we are able to provide a model of implementation in a medium-sized city and in the Northeast.

### SomerStat Overview

Download this document for an overview of SomerStat, 311, and the Program-Based Budget.





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- Davis Square
- East Broadway
- Magoun Square
- Perry & Lincoln Parks
- Prospect Hill
- Quincy Street
- Ten Hills
- Winter Hill East
- Somerville Parents
- Young Somerville
- Español
- Kreyòl
- Portuguese

## SomerStat

We welcome visitors to SomerStat meetings, with prior arrangements. Please contact Stephanie Hirsch, [shirsch@somervillema.gov](mailto:shirsch@somervillema.gov) if you would like to sit in on an upcoming meeting. Meetings are monthly or bi-weekly as follows:

Office of Strategic Planning and Economic Development (OSPCD)	Weekly	Mondays, 2:00 p.m.
Personnel	Monthly	First Tuesday, 1:00 p.m.
OSPCD: Inspectional Service Division	Monthly	First Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.
Capital Projects	Monthly	First Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.
Traffic and Parking	Monthly	Second Tuesday, 2:30 p.m.
Fire	Monthly	Second Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.
Department of Public Works	Twice-Monthly	Second & Fourth Wednesday, 3:30 p.m.
Police	Monthly	Second Thursday, 3:00 p.m.
Recreation and Youth	Monthly	Third Monday, 10:00 a.m.
Health	Monthly	Third Monday, 1:00 p.m.
Information Technology	Monthly	Third Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Office of Sustainability and the Environment	Monthly	Fourth Monday, 10:00 a.m.
Constituent Services	Monthly	Fourth Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Library	Monthly	Second Wednesday, 2:30 p.m.
Finance (new)	Monthly	Fourth Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

## The Seven Big Errors of PerformanceStat

By Robert D. Behn, John F. Kennedy School of Government

Maybe you've read about "CompStat." Perhaps a friend told you about "CitiStat." But who is this "PerformanceStat" — and, if he is making so many errors, why hasn't the manager taken him out of the lineup?

### A Short History of PerformanceStat

It all began in 1994, when Commissioner William Bratton and his leadership team at the New York Police Department created CompStat, their leadership and management strategy designed to reduce the city's crime rate. Quickly other police departments adopted this innovation. Only five years later, a survey by the Police Foundation found that approximately a third of the 515 departments in the U.S. with 100 or more sworn police officers reported implementing a version of CompStat<sup>1</sup>. Today, police departments around the world employ this strategy, often giving it their own name; in Australia, numerous police organizations conduct what are often called "Operational Performance Reviews."<sup>2</sup>

Then other New York City agencies adapted the approach. For example, the Parks Department created ParkStat, the Human Resources Administration created JobStat, the Correction Department created

T.E.A.M.S. (for Total Efficiency Accountability Management System), and the Probation Department created S.T.A.R.S (for Statistical Tracking, Analysis & Reporting).

Next came Baltimore's CitiStat, the adaptation of this innovation to improve performance in an entire jurisdiction, created in 2000 by Mayor Martin O'Malley. This prompted similar approaches in other cities — from the large, such as Atlanta (ATLStat) and San Francisco (SFStat), to the small, such as Palm Bay, Florida (PalmStat), and Somerville, Massachusetts (SomerStat). And then, as Ellen Perlman noted in *Governing*<sup>3</sup>, "'Stat' Fever" really got hot.

After all, this management approach is not uniquely applicable to municipal government. In 2002, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services created its "Performance Center." In 2005 in Washington, Governor Christine Gregoire developed GMAP (for Government Management Accountability, and Performance), and, in 2007, when Martin O'Malley became governor of Maryland, he created StateStat.

Moreover, at least one unit of the federal government, the San Diego district of the U.S. Border Patrol, has created its own version of this

*Rappaport Institute/Taubman Center Policy Briefs are short overviews of new and notable research on key issues by scholars affiliated with the Institute and the Center.*

#### Robert D. Behn

*Robert D. Behn, a lecturer in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, is the faculty chair of the Kennedy School's executive-education program on "Driving Government Performance: Leadership Strategies That Produce Results." He writes the online monthly, Bob Behn's Public Management Report, and is the author of numerous articles, books, and reports on performance leadership.*

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approach, which it labeled BorderStat. And overseas, several cities in Scotland, including Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Sterling, have experimented with CitiStat.<sup>4</sup>

**As I have studied different examples of PerformanceStat, examined formal descriptions, questioned key executives about their approach, and observed many in action, I've been struck by how many don't quite appreciate (or at least employ) some of the core principles that can make the strategy effective.**

All of these adaptations of the original CompStat innovation — regardless of whether their names include the \*\*\*Stat suffix — are based on the same premise: Government needs to improve its performance, and, to do so, it needs a demanding and strategic approach. To capture these various but similar performance strategies, I have chosen the name “PerformanceStat.”<sup>5</sup>

### What Is PerformanceStat?

Every one of these PerformanceStat strategies is different. They have to be. Neither the nature of the performance each seeks to improve, nor their political and organizational context, is the same. The leadership team of each jurisdiction and each agency has to adapt the basic principles of PerformanceStat to its own objectives and circumstances.

Nevertheless, effective adaptations of PerformanceStat strategy all use data — and do so in two important ways. First, they collect and analyze data to determine the type and level of results that the organization is producing, to detect its important “performance deficits,”<sup>6</sup> and to suggest policies and practices that might produce improvements. Second,

they also employ these data to compare how well different sub-units are doing, to set targets for future results, and thus to motivate the individuals in those units to achieve their targets.

And yet, as I have studied different examples of PerformanceStat, examined formal descriptions, questioned key executives about their approach, and observed many in action,<sup>7</sup> I've been struck by how many don't quite appreciate (or at least employ) some of the core principles that can make the strategy effective. Yes, they do the formal, visible things that you would associate with a PerformanceStat approach. Yet, something subtle but important is missing. Specifically, I have identified seven big mistakes.

First, however, I should provide my definition of “PerformanceStat”:

A jurisdiction or agency is employing a PerformanceStat performance strategy if it holds an ongoing series of *regular, frequent, periodic, integrated meetings* during which the chief executive and/or the principal members of the chief executive's leadership team plus the individual director (and the top managers) of different sub-units *use data* to analyze the unit's past *performance*, to *follow-up* on previous decisions and commitments to improve *performance*, to establish its next *performance* objectives, and to examine the effectiveness of its overall *performance* strategies.

This is not very restrictive. Lots of managerial activities fit within this definition.

Thus, I'm not complaining about public executives who fail to implement the idiosyncratic technicalities of my own, narrow, eccentric doctrine. Rather, I'm concerned about jurisdictions or agencies that miss something very basic, something that should be central to any effort to improve performance (whether

or not it is a PerformanceStat approach), something that can divert a real opportunity to produce improved results into little more than an utterly simplistic, noticeably ineffective, and thus purely symbolic sham.

### **Error #1: No Clear Purpose**

In the public sector, any undertaking has to begin with a definition of the purpose to be achieved. In New York, Commissioner Bratton began with a brash — and very explicit — purpose: to reduce the city’s crime. In Baltimore, Mayor O’Malley had his own clear objective: to improve the delivery of traditional city services.

Yet, as Nietzsche once noted, “forgetting our objectives is the most frequent act of stupidity.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, too often PerformanceStat is nothing more than the latest government fad. Upon hearing about the approach, the manager exclaims, “Ooh, cool hammer,” and goes looking for some convenient nails to pound.

As always, however, public managers need to start with a clear purpose: “What results are we trying to produce?” “What would better performance look like?” “How might we know if we have made some improvements?” Only after the members of the leadership team have agreed to some common answers to these questions can they adapt the PerformanceStat strategy to help them achieve these — now very explicit — purposes.

### **Error #2: No One Has Specific Responsibilities**

Who will do all this? Who is responsible for what? To produce results in any organization, someone must do this producing. But who? And what?

Indeed, no one can answer the Who? question until they have first answered the What? question. This requires converting the clear purposes into specific responsibilities. These responsibilities can take on various forms.

These responsibilities could be to reach specific *output* targets: The director of the public works department (and the head of each public works district) could be given the responsibility of filling every pothole that citizens report within 48 hours. Such output responsibilities are relatively easy to achieve. Organizations actually produce outputs. So if the organization has (or can obtain) the necessary capabilities<sup>9</sup> — people, equipment, knowledge — it can directly produce the outputs for which it is responsible.

**As Nietzsche once noted,  
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PerformanceStat is nothing more  
than the latest government fad.**

These responsibilities could be to reach specific *outcome* targets: The superintendent of schools and the principal of every elementary school could be given the responsibility of ensuring that all sixth-grade students can add, subtract, multiply, and divide (as measured on some yardstick test). The police commissioner and the commander of every police precinct could be given the responsibility of reducing the number of GPS devices stolen from cars by 10 percent this year. Such outcome responsibilities are harder to achieve. Organizations produce the outputs that contribute to these outcomes — but they don’t directly produce the outcomes themselves. Lots of other people — parents in particular — make a significant contribution to how much students learn. And lots of factors affect the number of GPS systems stolen, including whether GPS owners leave their devices in their cars or whether automobile owners simply purchase more of them.

Or, these responsibilities could be to develop new strategies. If a school system or a specific



school is not achieving its educational outcome targets, or if a police department or precinct is not achieving its crime reduction targets, it could be charged with developing a new strategy. This might appear more squishy — less of a target and more of a wish. Yet, if the organization charged with developing the strategy must also implement it in a way that eventually achieves an output or outcome target, the responsibility is no less real. Eventually the people who created the strategy have to demonstrate their own brilliance and their organization's competence by using the strategy to produce the real results.

**The chief executive needs to delegate — officially and unequivocally — a key deputy to conduct every meeting. Otherwise, from one meeting to the next, there will be no consistency of purpose — no ability to focus on the completion of specific responsibilities.**

At almost all PerformanceStat meetings, the discussion is about results. But that does not guarantee that this discussion ever touches on *who* is responsible for *what* results. Indeed, an organization can hold meeting after meeting without ever clarifying *who* specifically is supposed to accomplish *what* exactly.

### **Error #3: The Meetings are Held Irregularly, Infrequently, or Randomly**

An important component of the PerformanceStat strategy is the ongoing series of regular, frequent, periodic, integrated meetings. They provide feedback on both achievements and failures. They seek to identify lessons for improving performance in the future. They keep the organization's leaders up-to-date on what is happening in

each sub-unit. And, they keep the management leadership team of each sub-unit focused on achieving its targets.

To accomplish all this, the participants in these meetings examine performance of each sub-unit since the last meeting: Has the sub-unit done what it promised at the last meeting? Has it hit its targets? How? Why not? What are the successes? What are the problems, inadequacies, weaknesses, and shortfalls? Should the targets be changed for the next period? Do specific problems need to be fixed? If so, by whom and by when? Should the sub-unit be charged with developing a new strategy? If so, by whom should it be crafted and by when should it be implemented?

When Baltimore launched CitiStat, Jay Sakai was one of the first members of its analytic staff. A few years later, he moved to head the city's Bureau of Water and Wastewater. Thus, Sakai's relationship to CitiStat changed significantly. Originally, he had been analyzing the data of the city's operating agencies. Now he was managing one.

Moreover, Sakai's thinking about the CitiStat's routine of bi-weekly meetings for every agency changed. As a CitiStat analyst, he thought the meetings were too frequent. But when he began as a line manager, he realized that the bi-weekly schedule made sense. Why? Because if the meetings were less frequent, he could leave the meeting relieved, thinking: Thank goodness that meeting is over; I won't have to worry about that for a while. But, if the next meeting is only 14 days away, it isn't really over: I have to start to work right now on the problems that have been identified and the commitments that have been made; otherwise, in two weeks, I and my bureau will be embarrassed.

There is nothing magic about Baltimore's two-week interval. These meetings could be biweekly or monthly (or perhaps even quarterly). After all, the frequency of the meetings depends upon how frequently new

data become available. If performance data are available only monthly, it makes little sense to hold bi-weekly meetings.

Nevertheless, if an agency or jurisdiction is serious about using this strategy to improve performance, it ought to hold its PerformanceStat meetings on a regular and frequent basis. If individual managers and their units are to improve performance, they need to know three things: (a) when the next data cycle ends, (b) what specifically they need to do to demonstrate improvement by the end of that cycle, and (c) when they will report back in front of their organizational superiors, peers, and subordinates on how much they have accomplished on making these improvements.

These meetings are both substantive and symbolic. Because these meetings examine specific performance deficits, explore possible solutions, and produce specific commitments for specific actions to be completed by specific dates, they create real opportunities to produce better results. And because these meetings require the active engagement of most of the agency's or jurisdiction's key executives, they dramatize that the issues being analyzed, discussed, and debated are important.

#### **Error #4: No One Person Authorized to Run the Meetings**

For these meetings to work, however, someone has to conduct each meeting. Moreover, that someone ought to be the same someone. The PerformanceStat strategy depends upon the regular, periodic discussions of performance, but these discussions will have little impact if they are conducted by a rotating collective of random officials.

The person who conducted last month's meeting must conduct this month's meeting. Otherwise, the continuity in the analysis of performance is lost. Moreover, to do this, the person who runs the meeting needs clear authority.

Ideally, this would be the chief executive: the police commissioner, the mayor, or the agency head. In many circumstances, however, this individual has too many other responsibilities. A mayor, for example, has so many demands on his or her time — demands that cannot be conveniently scheduled around the PerformanceStat calendar.

Consequently, the chief executive needs to delegate — officially and unequivocally — a key deputy to conduct every meeting. Otherwise, from one meeting to the next, there will be no consistency of purpose — no ability to focus on the completion of specific responsibilities.

#### **Error #5: No Dedicated Analytic Staff**

PerformanceStat requires data — data that illustrates the current level of performance. Who, however, looks at the data? Who analyzes the data in an attempt to figure out whether performance is improving or not? Who examines the data and tries to figure out what new approaches should be considered?

The managers of the various sub-units need to do this. But the leadership team of the jurisdiction or agency needs a few people to do this too.

And these people can't also have ten other, higher-priority tasks. For the PerformanceStat strategy to produce meaningful results, it needs a few analytical people working on it full-time to understand — through the use of data — what kind of results are really being produced.

#### **Error #6: No Follow-Up**

What is the relationship between the issues discussed at the previous meeting and those examined at the meeting today? Did today's meeting build on the problems identified, solutions analyzed, and commitments made at the previous meeting? Or are we, yet again, starting all over? If the PerformanceStat approach is to produce real improvements in



results, it has to focus on the key results that need improvement. And it has to focus on them at meeting, after meeting, after meeting.

Of course, if there is no clear purpose or no clear responsibilities, there will be little on which to follow-up. And if there is no analytical staff, there will be no one charged with providing the briefing materials to suggest on what to follow-up. Finally, if there is no one individual authorized to run the meetings, there will be no one who can follow-up.

And, with no follow-up, the PerformanceStat will be little more than PerformanceSham.

### **Error #7: No Balance Between the Brutal and the Bland**

Both NYPD's CompStat and Baltimore's CitiStat are known for being tough and uncompromising with poor performers. A report by the Police Foundation found that CompStat had "a reputation among line officers as brutal and punitive rather than collaborative and creative."<sup>10</sup> The CitiStat meetings in Baltimore and the ATLStat meetings in Atlanta have been described as "brutal, unsentimental affairs."<sup>11</sup> Indeed, both NYPD and Baltimore have accumulated an image of being aggressively demanding, sometimes even sarcastically demeaning.

Yet in an overreaction to NYPD's and Baltimore's reputation, some jurisdictions and agencies have consciously tried to make their meetings as harmonious as possible. As a result, their meetings have become mostly show-and-tell. The director of each subordinate unit (be that a precinct commander or an agency head) essentially runs the meeting, showing a series of PowerPoint slides and presenting yet another glowing picture of the unit's latest accomplishments.

Unfortunately, if the leadership team has failed to specify what it is trying to accomplish, if it has failed to designate someone to run every meeting, if it has failed to create its own

analytic staff, and if it has failed to conduct any follow-up since the previous meeting, it is unable to do much more than applaud this delightful show.

Still, the leadership team can't let sub-units off the hook when they offer bland assertions of wonderful progress without offering any data as evidence. Conversely, they can't also rely purely on brutal censure without offering an opportunity to improve and earn compliments. To truly improve any sub-unit's performance, the leadership team needs to both pressure its managers and help them to succeed.

### **Adapting the Principles of PerformanceStat**

PerformanceStat isn't a model. It can't simply be copied. It isn't a system. It can't be airlifted from one organization into another. Obtaining the benefits of this approach to performance — using this strategy to produce real improvements in results — requires more than the mindless mimicry of the most visible and most superficial elements of the approach.

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Yet this is what Eli Silverman of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice suggests many police departments have done. He reports that many of the efforts at "replication are frequently based on a superficial understanding" of the strategy.<sup>12</sup> PerformanceStat is more than some fancy technology and a series of meetings; yet,

when you visit any particular example, that is primarily what you will see.

PerformanceStat is a leadership and management strategy that public executives can employ to produce real results in a variety of government jurisdictions and public agencies. But to do so, they need not only to ascertain the key components of the strategy but also to develop their own complex appreciation of the cause-and-effect relationships among these components and the results to be produced. To make an intelligent adaptation of any leadership or management strategy, public executives must understand how this approach can work — what the cause-and-effect connection is between their actions and their results. Then, they need to adapt these cause-and-effect concepts to reflect their own unique circumstances as well as the purposes they are attempting to achieve.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> David Weisburd, Stephen D. Mastrofski, Rosann Greenspan, and James J. Willis, *The Growth of Compstat in American Policing*, Police Foundation Reports (Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, April 2004), pp. 4, 6. See also: David Weisburd, Stephen Mastrofski, Ann Marie McNally and Rosann Greenspan, *Compstat and Organizational Change: Findings from a National Survey*, Report submitted to the National Institute of Justice by the Police Foundation, (Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Lorraine Mazerolle, Sacha Rombouts, and James McBroom, "The Impact of COMPSTAT on Reported Crime in Queensland," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2007), p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen Perlman, "'Stat' Fever," *Governing*, January 2007, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Cathy Sharp, Jocelyn Jones, and Alison M. Smith, *What Do We Measure and Why? An Evaluation of the Citistat Model of Performance Management and its Applicability to the Scottish Public Sector*

(Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Thus, PerformanceStat is not the latest, multi-variable statistic invented by the Sabermetricians to finally determine who really is the best baseball player. It has absolutely nothing to do with baseball, let alone Bill James, or Billy Beane, or Theo Epstein.

<sup>6</sup> Robert D. Behn, "On Why Public Managers Need to Focus on Their Performance Deficit," *Bob Behn's Public Management Report*, vol. 4, no. 1 (September 2006).

<sup>7</sup> I have observed: CompStat in Lowell and Boston, Massachusetts, and in Los Angeles; TrafficStat, JobStat, T.E.A.M.S., and S.T.A.R.S in New York City; DPSSTAT at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services; CitiStat in Baltimore, SomerStat in Somerville, Massachusetts, ProvStat in Providence Rhode Island, SyraStat in Syracuse, New York, ATLStat in Atlanta, PalmStat in Palm Bay Florida, ColumbusStat in Columbus, Ohio, SFStat in San Francisco; GMAP in Olympia, Washington and the Performance Center in Columbus Ohio.

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, (online at <http://www.davemckay.co.uk/philosophy/nietzsche/nietzsche.php?name=nietzsche.1878.humanalltoohuman.zimmern.12>), p. 206.

<sup>9</sup> Another error of PerformanceStat is the failure to ensure that the organization charged with a specific responsibility has the necessary operational capacity. But this is a common failure in government, and so I have not included it on this list. See Robert D. Behn, *Performance Leadership: 11 Better Practices That Can Ratchet Up Performance* (Washington, D.C.: IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2004), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> James J. Willis, Stephen D. Mastrofski, and David Weisburd, *Compstat in Practice: An In-Depth Analysis of Three Cities* (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 2003), p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Shirley Franklin, "After New Orleans," *Esquire*, December 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Eli B. Silverman, "Compstat's Innovation," in David Weisburd and Anthony A. Braga (eds.), *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p. 267.

## Further Reading

### **"What All Mayors Would Like to Know About Baltimore's CitiStat Performance Strategy,"**

Robert D. Behn, Washington, D.C.: IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2007. Online at <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/BehnReportCiti.pdf>.

**"Designing PerformanceStat: Or What are the Key Strategic Choices that a Jurisdiction or Agency Must Make When Adapting the CompStat/CitiStat Class of Performance Strategies?"** Robert D. Behn, Presented at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Research Conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington, D.C., November 9, 2007

### **"The Theory Behind Baltimore's CitiStat,"**

Robert D. Behn, Presented at the Twenty-Eighth Annual Research Conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Madison, Wisconsin, November 4, 2006

**"The Varieties of CitiStat,"** Robert D. Behn, *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (May-June 2006), pp. 332-340

**"The Core Drivers of CitiStat: It's Not Just About the Meetings and the Maps,"** Robert D. Behn, *International Public Management Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2005), pp. 1-25

### **"Can CitiStat Work in Greater Boston?"**

Phineas Baxandall and Charles Euchner, Cambridge, MA: Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston, 2003. Online at [http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/rappaport/downloads/citistat/final\\_citistat\\_report.pdf](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/rappaport/downloads/citistat/final_citistat_report.pdf).

### **"The Baltimore CitiStat Program:**

**Performance and Accountability,"** Lenneal J. Henderson, Washington, D. C.: IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2003. Online at: <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/HendersonReport.pdf>.

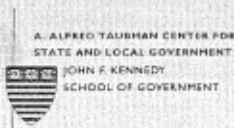
### **"The Philadelphia SchoolStat Model,"**

Christopher Patusky, Leigh Botwinik, and Mary Shelley, Washington, D.C.: IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2007. Online at <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/PatuskyReport.pdf>.

### **"What Do We Measure and Why? An**

**Evaluation of the Citistat Model of Performance Management and its Applicability to the Scottish Public Sector,"** Cathy Sharp, Jocelyn Jones, and Alison M. Smith, Edinburgh, Scotland: Scottish Executive Social Research, 2006. Online at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/21102410/0>.

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