



## THE JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

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Communications Office

### **Kennedy School Report Urges Administration to Embrace Performance Management**

A bipartisan group of current and former government executives, business leaders, public management scholars, and journalists is calling on the Bush Administration to embrace performance management to improve government results. Concerned that new appointees will treat performance goals and measurement simply as a mandated legal requirement, the group is urging agency leaders to use goals and measures instead as a powerful lever to drive performance gains – by communicating, motivating, enlisting, and aligning their organizations with leadership priorities.

The group has issued an open memorandum to new government executives, “**Get Results Through Performance Management.**” Conclusions call for top administrators to see performance measures primarily as a way to improve government performance, establish a limited number of strategic outcome-focused goals, communicate those goals clearly, and monitor progress on a regular basis. The memo identifies and illustrates traits of the best public sector performance management systems – traits such as the frequent, broad, and interactive use of performance information to encourage exploration and learning about performance variation, rather than the use of performance measures in a rigid accountability structure.

Success stories cited in the memo include improvements in the rate of same-city next-day delivery of letters achieved by the U.S. Postal Service, water quality improvements in the Lower Charles River in Massachusetts led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and reductions in the fatality rate of towboat workers guided by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The memorandum culminates a two-year Executive Session on Public Sector Performance Management at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, under the aegis of the school’s research program, Visions of Governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Session members include **Jane F. Garvey**, Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), United States Congressman **James P. Moran** (D-VA), **David Walker**, Comptroller General of the United States; former U.S. Postmaster General **Marvin Runyon**; and Washington D.C. Mayor **Anthony A. Williams**.

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Kennedy School of Government faculty members who participated in the Executive Session include:

- John D. Donahue, the Raymond Vernon Lecturer in Public Policy, and Director of Visions of Governance in the 21st Century Project,
- Elaine C. Kamarck, lecturer in Public Policy,
- Steven J. Kelman, Albert J. Weatherhead III and Richard W. Weatherhead Professor of Public Management,
- Herman B. “Dutch” Leonard, George F. Baker Jr. Professor of Public Management,
- Shelley H. Metzenbaum, Director of the Performance Management Project,
- Mark H. Moore, Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Professor of Criminal Justice Policy and Management and Director of the Hauser Center for Non-profit Institutions,
- Joseph S. Nye Jr., Dean of the Kennedy School of Government,
- John P. White, lecturer in Public Policy,
- Peter B. Zimmerman, Senior Associate Dean for Program Development and Executive Education.

Harvard Business School Professor, Robert S. Kaplan, author of *The Balanced Scorecard*, also participated in the Executive Session.

The report is available on the Internet at  
[http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/visions/performance\\_management](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/visions/performance_management).

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