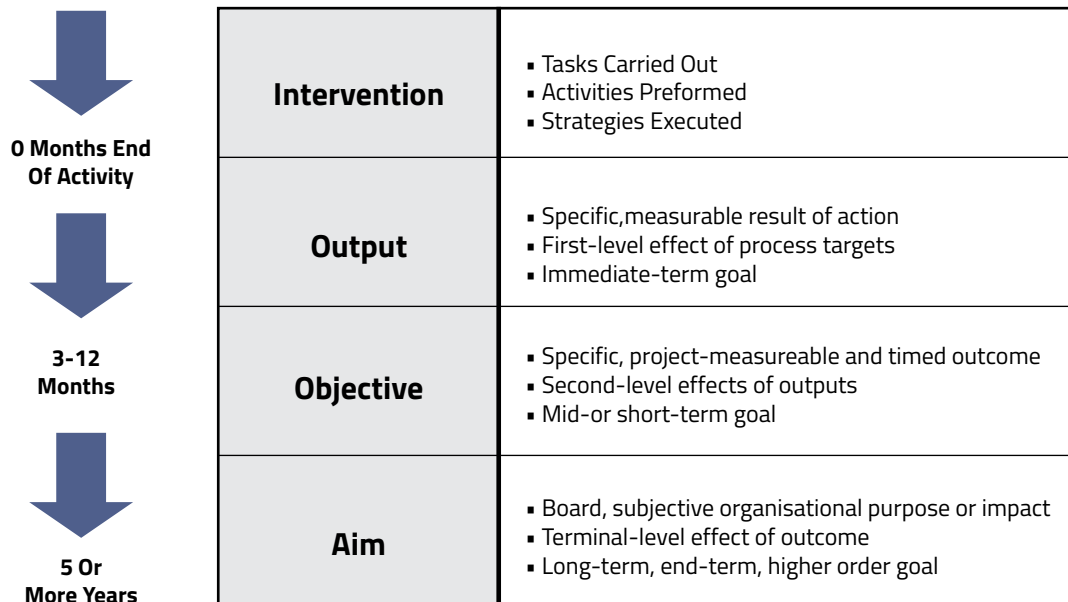# WDE
Goal Setting Overview

Goal setting is a common practice shared by most successful organizations and is found throughout most educational practices in one form or another. Goals can be used by all stakeholders to identify and work toward a specific outcome.

Research shows that setting goals is important, but making sure that the goal is written in well-structured statements to give specific, measurable, and achievable objectives is "linked with higher motivation, self-esteem, self-confidence, and autonomy, and research has established a strong connection between goal-setting and success." (Chowdhury, 2022)

Timeline	Stage	Details
0 Months End Of Activity	**Intervention**	• Tasks Carried Out • Activities Preformed • Strategies Executed
3-12 Months	**Output**	• Specific, measurable result of action • First-level effect of process targets • Immediate-term goal
5 Or More Years	**Objective**	• Specific, project-measureable and timed outcome • Second-level effects of outputs • Mid-or short-term goal
	Aim	• Board, subjective organisational purpose or impact • Terminal-level effect of outcome • Long-term, end-term, higher order goal

Research shows that goals are based on objectives that are short term outcomes that lead to the objectives and the long-term impact relating to the aim. Looking at figure 1, [1] it is easy to see that major goals can take substantial time to meet, but the interventions and objectives can be met much earlier.

The goal setting process can be used in conjunction with the Needs Assessment by schools identified as partially meeting expectations or not meeting expectations under the WYoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA), ESSA Comphrenehsive Support and Improvement (CSI), or ESSA targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) to complete the School Improvement Plan. School Leadership Teams, in partnership with their District Representative, should consult this guide as they complete the School Improvement Plan. The following pages detail the steps of the goal setting process. This guide is meant to serve as a reference when engaging in the goal setting process found in the School Improvement Plan.

[1] *Ogbeiwi, Osahon. (2017). Why written objectives need to be really SMART. British Journal of Healthcare Management. 23. 324-336. 10.12968/bjhc.2017.23.7.324.*

Step 1: Identify who you will be working with to set your goals.

Purpose

School leaders are most strategic when creating partners to work with them in leading the work of school improvement and goal setting. According to Paula Thompson (2022) team goals can benefit the leader, the team members and the organization as a whole.

- Team goals help team members understand how their individual work fits within the group.
- Team goals provide a clear direction and plan-of-action for your team.
- Team goals facilitate better accountability and encourage ownership
- Team goals create opportunities to build trust and collaboration.
- Team goals contribute to the professional growth and development of new skills among team members.
- Creating team goals may help you identify overlooked or unassigned priorities.

Application

The process of goal setting will allow the team to determine where the organization currently stands, allow for reflection on data, and provide opportunities for teams to use their mission and vision to develop where the organization can go. The goal setting process as identified below, should create areas to clarify, highlight, and reflect on the current organizational standing and where the organization should be in the future.

Step 2: Write a SMARTER goal based on your available data

Purpose

Writing SMARTER goals and CLEAR goals give a framework for the members to use to create goals. Research shows that there isa relationship between how difficult and specific a goal is and the ability for a person or organization to reach that goal. Key strategies for setting goals are that they need to be specific, challenging, include short term deadlines, are made public, include feedback, are collaborative in nature, and have progress monitoring. (Bonnie, 2021)

Application

Use the SMARTER framework (or something similar) to write goals that meet the above criteria. The SMART model has five essential criteria that make the statement meaningful, and effective. These come from the acronym SMART, which stands for **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ttainable, **r**ealistic and **t**imely. The SMARTER model was created later and adds an additional E and R that are **e**valuate and **r**eadjust respectively. This concept is called a goal setting framework and can be incorporated into a variety of structures that can be used to reach the specific goals set by the organization (others include: RAID, G-AP, OOMM, POWER, CLEAR, WOOP). (Osahon, 2017)

Goal setting should use SMARTER statements and objectives because SMARTER gives a clear direction for action planning and monitoring implementation of your strategies and progress toward achieving your program goals. (CDC, 2018)

Tips For Writing SMART Objectives,[2,3]	
Specific	▪ Define what you expect, determine who will do it, and detail accountability ▪ Use action verbs that can be measured as much as possible ▪ Provide enough detail - this depends on the objective but should be enough to be clear
Measureable	▪ Identify how you will know objective was accomplished – usually this means quantity but can also be quality
Attainable	▪ Make sure you have the time, manpower, resources, and authority to accomplish the objective ▪ Consider if there may be factors beyond your control
Relevant	▪ The objective helps you meet the purpose of the goal ▪ The objective is aligned with the specific stakeholders
Timely/Time Bound	▪ Specify when the objective should be completed and include time-lined benchmarks for long-range goals and objectives
Evaluate	▪ Goals will be evaluated regularly to make sure that progress is being made to reach the goal
Readjust	▪ Adjust as needed based on changes to priorities, personnel, or any unforeseen challenges.
Takeaways	▪ **Always make goals specific** - ensures objectivity/ gives a deadline ▪ **Have a plan** - far more likely to succeed when a plan is built ▪ **Set ambitious yet realistic goals** - challenging goals get better results, revise goals if needed ▪ **Put stakeholders in a position to succeed and see the fruits of their labor** - give stakeholders the resources and support they need to be successful as well as the recognition they deserve when they accomplish the goal

Step 3: Identify criteria for prioritizing goal

Purpose

The ability to identify which goals are important for your organizational success is paramount. There are *too* many things for an organization to do, it is important to ignore the trivial and concentrate on the vital goals that will create returns on your organizational time, effort, and resources. "An organization with no overarching goal or purpose would achieve nothing. For an organization to succeed, each member needs to engage in goal-directed action that directly or indirectly furthers the organization's core purpose or vision." (Locke, 2021)

Application

A few basic questions can support prioritizing your goals according to Wison and Dobson (2008) like which tasks and goals are the most important to the vision and mission of the organization? Which has the greatest impact? To identify which of these has the highest impact, use a high-medium-low scale to assess your objectives, using your identified criteria. Make those objectives with the highest rankings your high-priority items (Wilson and Dobson, 2008).

A table like the one below can be used to support your prioritization of objectives. The first column should identify your concerns (or this could be used to identify possible goals, projects, activities, etc.) that your team is working on, the second and third columns are importance and urgency respectively. Assign a number to indicate the level of importance (3 = high, 2=medium, 1=low) and rate urgency in the same manner. Once that is complete, you can total the numbers in the next column, and then give an overall ranking based on the total score. The higher the number, the more important and urgent the concern is, which means it should be your primary focus at this time. Use the 80/20 rule (roughly 80% of outcomes come from 20% of actions) to support your team in working smarter and completing the highest impact material before moving on to the lesser impact materials. (Laoyan, 2021)

Figure 2 Table For Evaluating Concerns By Rating The Criteria,[4]				
Concerns	**Criteria**		**Total**	**Ranking**
	Importance	**Urgency**		
1.	L=1	H=3	4	2
2.	H=3	M=2	5	1
3.	M=2	M=2	4	4
4.	H=2	L=2	4	3

Notice that the above table doesn't have to be only for goal setting, but can include other concerns and the table can be just as effective as a time management tool instead of a goal prioritization matrix.

[4] *Based on Susan B. Wilson and Michael Singer Dobson, Goal Setting: How to Create an Action Plan and Achieve Your Goals, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: American Management Association, 2008) 61.*

Step 4: Make an action plan

Purpose

The purpose of an action plan is to address the goals that were created above and construct a timeline to convert actionable information into positive change. (Gallagher)

Application

Using your data from the previous section, make sure to pick 2-3 items at most that you wish to address and create actionable items from your goals. Your goals, when written in the appropriate format, will already be actionable.

For example:

- S in SMART will define the steps to reach the goal
- M in SMART will determine what you will measure and the tool you will use to determine if you have been successful, these metrics need to be specific
- A in SMART will be relevant to your specific organizational needs and whether or not you have control over the action steps, granting ownership to you and your team
- R in SMART will guide your organization and make sure that the action steps are relevant to your organization
- T in SMART will give you the timeline that you will have to complete your organizational goal
- E in SMARTER will give you an additional target date to reflection and monitor your progress to make sure that you are still on track to complete the goal
- R in SMARTER will allow your team to readjust your goal based on new/developing events that were not part of your initial plan, it will allow you to adjust timelines, or to chunk into more manageable pieces

Step 5: Track your progress

Purpose

The purpose of tracking your progress is to reflect on the goal setting process. This will allow your team to make adjustments or corrections to new or developing scenarios and to adjust your objectives to meet the goal.

Application

Tracking progress will allow the team to see which initiatives are going faster than planned, which are going slower, and which are on track which allows you to adjust and re-allocate resources to meet your goals. Tracking progress can also help teams stay motivated when they see progress, and when they are getting close to completion.

Tools for progress monitoring are vast and wide. Technology is your friend. Find a tool that can help you stay on track with your team's work. This doesn't have to be modern, you can have face-to-face weekly accountability meetings, or you can use virtual platforms depending on where your team might be. Use resources that work for you, that are available to you, and do not have a large learning curve to make sure that you are focusing on the goals instead of on the tools to meet the goal.

Resources:

Bonnie, E. (2021, July 26). *Science-backed goal setting techniques you need to know (and 4 to avoid like the plague).* Science-Backed Goal Setting Techniques You Need to Know (and 4 to Avoid Like the Plague). Retrieved July 14, 2022, from https://www.wrike.com/blog/science-backed-goal-setting-techniques-need-know-4-avoid-like-plague/

CDC, "Evaluation Briefs No 3B - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention," Evaluation Briefs. Writing SMART Objectives. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services , August 2018), https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief3b.pdf.

Cuiccio , C., & Husby-Slater, M. (2018, May). *Needs Assessment Guidebook - Supporting the Development of District and School Needs Assessments.* Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Retrieved July 13, 2022, from https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/10/needsassessmentguidebook-508_003.pdf

Edwin A Locke, "Guidelines for Effective Goal Setting in Organizations," AMA (American Management Association , October 11, 2021), https://www.amanet.org/articles/guidelines-for-effective-goal-setting-in-organizations/.

Gallagher, A. J. (n.d.). *Action planning guide - university of Colorado Boulder.* Action Planning Guide. Retrieved July 14, 2022, from https://www.colorado.edu/faculty-staff-engagement/sites/default/files/attached-files/action_planning_guide.pdf

Laoyan, S. (2021, August 6). *Understanding the pareto principle (the 80/20 rule) .* Asana. Retrieved July 12, 2022, from https://asana.com/resources/pareto-principle-80-20-rule

Susan B. Wilson and Michael Singer Dobson, Goal Setting: *How to Create an Action Plan and Achieve Your Goals,* 2nd ed. (New York, NY: American Management Association, 2008).