

Goal Writing Questions to Consider

Before committing to a goal that will guide your work over the course of an evaluation cycle, use the questions below to make sure your goal is SMART, aligned, and urgent.

To check the SMART-ness of goals, ask:

1. Is it **Specific**? According to our data...
 - a. what are our students doing well? What are they doing poorly?
 - b. which students need support?
 - c. what content, skills, and/or knowledge do students need?
 - d. by how much do our students need to improve?
2. Is it **Measurable**?
 - a. What before & after assessment(s) will show us students have learned?
 - b. What interim formative assessments will we use to monitor progress as we go?
 - c. How do our assessments measure learning and not effort?
3. Is it **Attainable**?
 - a. What support and resources do we have access to?
 - b. What obstacles must we overcome?
 - c. What strategies are needed to attain this goal? Are these strategies sustainable?
4. Is it **Results-oriented**?
 - a. What are our students going to be able to know and do as a result of our goal?
 - b. Is our goal focused on teaching or student learning?
5. Is it **Time-based**?
 - a. What time frame do we need to achieve our goal?
 - b. What do we need to stop doing in order to utilize our time to achieve our goal?

*From Elisa MacDonald, *The Skillful Team Leader* (Corwin Press) in press.*

To test alignment of goals, ask:

- “If you achieve that professional practice goal, is it *highly likely* that your students/team/school will achieve this student learning goal?”
 - The goals should “talk to each other” across and within every layer; there should be a clear, compelling cause-and-effect that links the goals.
- “How is your work** this year helping the school meet our turnaround goals?”
 - ** (work with your kids, work with your team, and work to improve your practice)
 - Everyone in the school should have a good answer to this, and should be able to take pride in linking their own professional learning to their students’ success, to team and school goals!

To test commitment to goals, ask:

- “The goal you’re choosing is going to serve as your yardstick later this year when you’re deciding ‘should we focus on this or focus on that?’ Does this feel like the right thing to drive your work with kids and colleagues throughout the year?”
- “If you/your students achieve this goal by June, are you going to hold your head up high and say ‘yes, this was a substantial and meaningful success!’?”
- “Does this feel like a goal you can live out? Live with? Live up to?”

From the Administrative Team at the Blackstone Elementary School