

WRITING AND EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE GOALS

A Handbook for Schools



**North Central Association
Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement**

NCA Standard

Each member school shall maximize the proportion of its promoted or graduated students who are self-directed learners and are prepared to make successful transitions from school-to-school or school-to-career.

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Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement**

Table of Contents

Overview	1
Criteria for Writing and Evaluating Student Performance Goals	2
Sample Goals	4
Rubrics for Evaluating Student Performance Goals	5
Appendix	
A Procedure for Approval of Student Performance Goals	8
B Making the Holistic Decision.....	9
C Practice Exercises for Goal Writing	10

Overview

American schools strive continuously to improve the lives of students and to improve our country. School personnel must be careful that the pursuit of improved results yields something worthwhile. It is not only important to achieve goals, but it is also important that those goals be significant in the lives of individual students.

Some of the goals incorporated into the improvement process come from a careful analysis of school data and others are mandated by sources external to the school. In either case, the goals, the data that support them and a rationale for implementing them provide some of the basis of the school improvement plan.

Some goals describe improvements in student performance, while others have to do with improving the capacity of the system to support improved student performance. Although both are important, this handbook addresses only student performance goals.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this handbook is to assist school personnel in writing and evaluating meaningful student performance goals. The main body of this handbook contains an overview, criteria for writing and evaluating goals, sample goals, and rubrics for evaluating student performance goals. The appendices contain procedures for approval of student performance goals, practice exercises, and a rubric for holistic evaluation.

It is important for school personnel to remember that every goal will have assessments and interventions aligned with it that will require resources and staff time and effort. Therefore, both the quality of goals and the number of goals selected are important considerations. For the improvement plan, school personnel may select as many goals as they can implement successfully; generally the effective implementation of three goals will place considerable demand on a staff.

Criteria for Writing and Evaluating Student Performance Goals

Student performance goals identify what the school community wishes to develop within students. This might include: knowledge, the ability to apply knowledge, habits, or attitudes. The following criteria for writing goals are provided to assist the faculty in developing and implementing the goals.

The criteria for writing appropriate goals are:

a) Goals are supported by an analysis of data from the profile.

Whether the goals are mandated or derived from the data, the profile should provide current levels of student performance and perceptions relative to that performance. NCA strongly recommends the use of multiple assessments as a means of obtaining varied perspectives about a goal. Many schools support their goals with three data sources. When three different perspectives are used to support a goal, NCA refers to this as triangulation.

b) Goals are supportive of the mission and beliefs of the school.

When writing the goals, a review of the mission and beliefs is appropriate. The faculty must identify the major focus of the school and write the goals in a manner that is aligned with and supportive of that focus.

c) Goals should be phrased in terms of student performance.

An emphasis on student performance can be recognized in the goal statement by the reference to what students will do or by how student performance will change.

d) Goals should address all of the school's learners.

An emphasis on “all of the school’s’ learners” can be recognized in the goal statement by such words as “all,” “every,” or “each.”

- 1) All students ...
- 2) Every student ...
- 3) Each student ...

e) Goals should emphasize student growth.

An emphasis on student growth can be recognized in a goal statement that uses “growth verbs.”

- 1) All students will increase ...
- 2) All students will improve ...
- 3) All students will demonstrate improvement ...

f) Goals should not contain interventions or assessments.

The following goals are examples of what should **not** be written:

- 1) All students will improve reading comprehension by participating in sustained silent reading.
- 2) All students will improve writing across the curriculum as measured by the ITBS.

g) Goals should not contain the anticipated increase in achievement or change in student behavior.

The following goals are examples of what should **not** be written:

- 1) All students will improve their performance by 10 percentile points.
- 2) All students will score above the 50th percentile.

h) Goals should be generic enough so they can be implemented school wide.

An emphasis on school-wide implementation can be recognized in a goal statement that uses such words as “across the curriculum”, “school wide”, or “in all classrooms.”

- 1) All students will improve writing skills across the curriculum.
- 2) All students will improve their ability to access information in all grades.

i) Goals should focus upon higher level thinking skills.

An emphasis on higher level thinking skills can be recognized by student actions requiring analysis, synthesis, or evaluation level thinking.

- 1) All students will improve their skills in analyzing problems to determine probable causes.
- 2) All students will improve their skills in synthesizing solutions for social problems.
- 3) All students will improve their skill in evaluating and rank ordering three solutions to the same social problem.

f) Goals should focus on real-world applications.

An emphasis on “real-world” applications can be recognized in student performance goals where student actions can be applied in out-of-school settings.

g) Goals should be written to provide clarity about the focus desired by the faculty.

For example, a citizenship goal might focus on compliance with rules, learning about government, or serving humanity.

NOTE:

Additional help in clarifying goals can be found on the NCA CASI web site at <http://www.ncacasi.org> (See Member Services, Neville, and the Expert Database. Look for the “essence” of each goal.)

Sample Goals

The following sample goals are provided to familiarize the reader with appropriate goals.

1. All students will improve their reasoning skills to solve problems in all curricular areas.
2. All students will improve their skills working with others on a team.
3. All students will improve their technical writing skills across the curriculum.
4. All students will demonstrate an improved ability to read and comprehend expository text in all curricular areas.
5. All students will increase their scientific reasoning skills across the curriculum.
6. All students will increase their time management skills.

Rubrics for Writing and Evaluating Student Performance Goals

The next three pages contain rubrics from the NCA CASI team chair software. These rubrics provide assistance in evaluating goals before submitting them for review.

NOTE:

Team Chair software is available on the NCA website for downloading.

Rubrics: Student Performance Goals

Criterion a:

Enter Score

The student performance goals are supported by an analysis of data from the profile.

- 5 points All goals are supported by an analysis of data from the profile.
- 2 points Some of the goals are supported by an analysis of data from the profile.
- 0 points None of the goals are based upon an analysis of data from the profile.

Criterion b:

The student performance goals are supportive of the mission and belief statements of the school.

- 2 points All of the student performance goals are supportive of the mission and belief statements of the school.
- 1 point Some of the student performance goals are supportive of the mission and belief statements of the school.
- 0 points None of the student performance goals are supportive of the mission and belief statements of the school.

Criterion c:

The student performance goals are phrased in terms of student performance.

- 4 points All goals are written in terms of student performance.
- 2 points Some of the goals are written in terms of student performance.
- 0 points None of the goals are written in terms of student performance.

Criterion d:

The student performance goals address all of the school's learners.

- 4 points All goals address the entire student body.
- 2 points Some goals address the entire student body.
- 0 points None of the goals address the entire student body.

Criterion e

The student performance goals emphasize student growth.

- 4 points All goals contain a growth verb or other indication of improved performance.
- 2 points Some goals contain a growth verb or other indication of improved performance.
- 0 points None of the goals contain a growth verb or other indication of improved performance.

Criterion f:

The student performance goals do not contain interventions or assessments.

- 2 points None of the goals contains interventions or assessments.
- 1 point Some of the goals contain interventions or assessments.
- 0 points All of the goals contain interventions or assessments.

Criterion g:

The student performance goals do not contain the anticipated increase in achievement or change in behavior.

- 2 points None of the student performance goals contain the anticipated increase in achievement or change in behavior.
- 1 point Some student performance goals contain the anticipated increase in achievement or change in behavior.
- 0 points All of the student performance goals contain the anticipated increase in achievement or change in behavior.

Criterion h:

The student performance goals are generic enough to be implemented school wide.

- 6 points All student performance goals are designed to be implemented school wide.
- 3 points Some of the student performance goals are designed to be implemented school wide.
- 0 points None of the student performance goals are designed to be implemented school wide.

Criterion i:

The student performance goals focus upon higher levels of thinking.

- 3 points All goals require thinking at the analysis, synthesis, or evaluation levels.
- 1 point Some of the goals require thinking at the analysis, synthesis, or evaluation levels.
- 0 points None of the goals require thinking at the analysis, synthesis, or evaluation levels.

Criterion j:

The student performance goals focus on real-world applications.

- 3 points All goals require real-world application of what is learned.
- 1 point Some of the goals require real-world application of what is learned.
- 0 points None of the goals requires real-world application of what is learned.

Criterion k:

There is consensus among the faculty on the essence of each of the goals.

- 3 points There is consensus on the essence of every goal.
- 1 point There is consensus on the essence of some of the goals.
- 0 points There is no consensus on the essence of any of the goals.

Student Performance Goals Evaluation

Criteria

- | | | |
|----------------------|----|---|
| <input type="text"/> | a. | The student performance goals are supported by an analysis of data from the profile. (5 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | b. | The student performance goals are supportive of the mission and belief statements of the school. (2 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | c. | The student performance goals are phrased in terms of student performance. (4 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | d. | The student performance goals address all of the school's learners. (4 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | e. | The student performance goals emphasize student growth. (4 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | f. | The student performance goals do not contain interventions or assessments. (2 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | g. | The student performance goals do not contain the anticipated increase in achievement or change in behavior. (2 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | h. | The student performance goals can be implemented school wide. (6 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | i. | The student performance goals focus upon higher levels of thinking. (3 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | j. | The student performance goals focus on real-world applications. (3 points possible) |
| <input type="text"/> | k. | There is consensus among the faculty on the essence of each of the goals. (3 points possible) |

Total Points Possible:

38

Total Points Earned:

Appendix A:

PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL OF NCA STUDENT PERFORMANCE GOALS

- Step 1 With the guidance of the steering committee, a school faculty writes the student performance goals. The peer review chairperson provides initial review of the goals.
- Step 2 The peer review chairperson or the steering committee chairperson submits the goals to the NCA state office for review and approval.
- Step 3 State office personnel review and approve the goals. The state office returns the approved goals with comments, if any, to the school.
- Step 4 School personnel begin to prepare the school improvement plan based on the approved student performance goals.

Appendix B:

MAKING THE HOLISTIC DECISION

Student performance goal are reviewed by the peer review team chairperson and by personnel associated with the respective state office. At times some goals are forwarded to the NCA Commission on Schools as part of the summary review process that is conducted on a regional basis. Most reviewers will use the following guide in making a holistic decision on the set of student performance goals that has been submitted by the school.

After analyzing the student performance goals a reviewer is asked to make a decision about the overall impact upon the school if all of the goals were achieved. This holistic assessment is made by selecting one of the four positions below in response to the question:

To what extent would overall student performance be improved if this set of student performance goals were faithfully implemented?

4. _____ Overall student performance in this building would improve in an exemplary manner.
3. _____ Student performance in this building would improve to a fully acceptable degree.
2. _____ Even if successfully attained, this set of student performance goals would not make quite enough impact on overall achievement in this school to be acceptable.
1. _____ Even if successfully attained, this set of student performance goals would simply not make any significant impact on the overall achievement in this school.

The reviewers focus on the entire set of student performance goals and on the demarcation between acceptable and unacceptable.

Appendix C:

PRACTICE EXERCISES FOR GOAL WRITING

Examine all of the goals listed below and rewrite them to be more consistent with the criteria on pages 5-7 of this handbook.

1. Students in math classes will demonstrate computation skills.

2. The number of students failing the state writing assessment will decrease by 10%.

3. The school will increase the number of parents who attend parent teacher conferences and other school functions.

4. The faculty will implement the ABC Problem Solving Skills program across the curriculum.

5. All students in the third grade will improve their writing skills

6. All students will improve their reading comprehension skills through Sustained Silent Reading

7. All students will be responsible about following rules at school.

See pages 11 and 12 for suggestions on how these goals could be improved.

Responses to Practice Exercises

Although the way a goal is stated is important, it is even more important that the faculty discuss why the goal is important and how to make it meaningful through assessment and intervention. It is also important that the goal support the mission and beliefs of the school. Once it is determined that a goal is worth doing and it is consistent with the school mission, then it is examined to ensure that both the intent of the goal and the statement of the goal comply with the criteria contained in this handbook.

The goals on page 10 could be improved as follows:

1. As stated: Students in math classes will demonstrate computation skills.
Revised: All students will improve their computational skills across the curriculum.

The use of the word “all” addresses all of the school’s learners; the use of the word “improve” emphasizes student growth; and the inclusion of “across all grade levels” indicates school wide implementation. These combined changes improve the goal. (Criteria d, e, h)

2. As stated: The number of students failing the state writing assessment will decrease by 10%.
Revised: All students will demonstrate improvements in writing in all classes.

Of course school personnel want all of their students to pass the state writing assessment, but the meaningful dimension to students is that they **all** improve their writing. If all students improve their writing, scores on the state writing exam should improve. (Criteria f, g)

3. As stated: The school will increase the number of parents who attend parent teacher conferences and other school functions.

This goal is not written in terms of student performance (Criterion c)

4. As stated: The faculty will implement the ABC Problem Solving Skills program across the curriculum.
Revised: All students will improve their math problem solving skills in applications across the curriculum.

What is important is that all students improve their problem-solving skills, not how they improve them. ABC Problem Solving is an intervention (Criterion f)

5. As stated: All students in the third grade will improve their writing skills.
Revised: All students will improve their writing skills.

The goal statement focuses only upon the students in third grade; it should address all of the students in the school. (Criterion d)

6. As stated: All students will improve their reading comprehension skills through Sustained Silent Reading.
Revised: All students will improve their reading comprehension skills as applied across the curriculum.

The goal statement identifies the intervention, Sustained Silent Reading. What is important is that all students improve reading comprehension skills, not how they improve them. The "how" is left to the intervention section of the school improvement plan. (Criterion f)

7. As stated: All students will be responsible about following rules at school.
Revised: All students will comply with school rules. **OR**
All students will increase their ability to identify what a responsible action would look like in school situations.

Although the word **responsible** is used in the goal statement, it is important that the faculty discuss the essence of the goal to determine that what is stated is what is desired. The first revision focuses on compliance while the second revision focuses on responsibility. Knowing the intent helps the faculty identify and select assessments and interventions that are aligned with the goal. (Criterion k)