Develop Annual Goals

As the emphasis on goal setting for teachers and students increases, it is important to understand why this process is valuable. A goal gives both teachers and students a target at which to aim. Goal setting correlates positively with students' persistence, academic results, and deeper processing of materials. Instructional goals focus students to the extent that they generally score higher on assessments when content and skills on the assessment are directly related to their goal (Stronge & Grant, 2009). In addition to the benefits for students, setting goals and tracking progress towards them have clear benefits for teachers. Goal setting focuses teacher planning and allows teachers to make decisions about instructional priorities.

Instructional goals need to be aligned to the required standards/curricula and appropriate for students at the correct level of rigor in order to master the content. In addition to being aligned, goals should be made with the students' starting points in mind. Once teachers have determined their students' current levels, they can assign goals that are based on growth. Students respond best to goals that are demanding but achievable. A goal that is too difficult manifests frustration, but a goal that is not difficult enough correlates with underperformance (Marzano, 2009).

How do I know how much my students should grow this year?

Step 1: Prep Work

- Review the checklist at the end of the document to provide direction for creating annual goals.

- Review the assigned Student Performance Measures and end of year assessment/performance task for the current course to determine how student growth will be measured.

- Self-reflect on past instructional success using the EVAAS Teacher Report or Comparative Growth Report (if applicable) to identify strengths and growth areas in working with students at different levels.

- Reflect on student levels from the previous year and projections for the current year (if applicable).

    o SAS-EVAAS Student Projection Reports
    o IOWA or Logramos (found in individual student reports)

- Gather data for students' starting points.

    o Give students a diagnostic assessment or performance task that is directly aligned to how they will be assessed at the end of the year.
    o Access Chancery or individual student reports to find students' raw scores for the previous year STAAR or IOWA/Logramos.

Step 2: Draft Plan

- Growth should be ambitious yet feasible for each student, and goals should be based on growth rather than blanket achievement. (Use historical data about student achievement in combination with conversations with colleagues to determine goals from baseline data.)

- Apply the growth goal to students' starting points to find the target for each student. In departmentalized or secondary classrooms, this may be done with groups of students.

- Adjust goals that are unreasonable for some students.

    o If applying the growth goal produces an individual student goal of 100% or above, change the goal to be more reasonable.
    o If teaching a class in which students are taking assessments in English for the first time, take into account their English proficiency levels when creating individual student goals.

- Break the annual student goals into smaller benchmark goals by objective, concept, skill, strand, or student expectation so that students can see how they are progressing toward their larger goal throughout the year.

- Prepare to introduce and communicate goals to students.

  o Plan an introduction to goal setting as part of a lesson with a focus on the importance of goals to student success.
  o Meet with students individually to deliver the message of their goals for the year. Departmentalized or secondary classrooms may have annual goals for groups of students.

- Plan strategies to Invest Students in the process of goal setting and their individual goals

Step 3: Evaluate the Plan

- Ensure the components of the checklist are used in developing the annual goals.

Checklist

☐ I have created goals based on growth from previous year or beginning of year student data.

☐ I have created smaller benchmark goals.

☐ I have identified ways to communicate goals to students.

☐ I have chosen strategies to invest students in goals.

- Consider constructing non-cognitive goals (i.e. behavior) in addition to academic goals with students. Improvements in behavior and focus contribute to student achievement (Marzano, 2009).

- Think about providing a framework for creating rigorous goals, but allow students to create their own goals. This gives students ownership for their learning and growth.

- Prepare to spend the bulk of time constructing goals at the beginning of the year. Work time into lesson plans to communicate goals to students either individually or in a whole group. Revisit, re-evaluate, and re-invest students in goals on a regular basis.

- Discuss within the PLC or staff meeting what the student starting point data would imply, as well as strategies for communication and student investment of goals.

BURNING QUESTIONS

How do I create diagnostic measures that are appropriate to content, grade level, students' age, and developmental needs?
Check with the HISD Curriculum Resources and the Student Performance Guidebook for guidance.

How do annual goals relate to grouping in the classroom?
It is beneficial to create groups based on ability or academic readiness. However, even students who are at the same level attain mastery differently based on ease or difficulty of content. Remember to use Flexible Grouping throughout the year as you plan lessons and interventions.

When will I find time to communicate goals to students?
Schedule student conferences during group practice, independent practice, and/or workstation time. These do not need to cut into planning periods or direct instruction time.

How do I make sure that high achieving students show growth?
Adjust for that when making your goals (i.e. 100% is not a good goal even if it would account for the same percentage of progress as other students). For these students, consider assigning a primary goal based on the end-of-year assessment or performance task and also investing them in goals that show they are pushing their limits in other ways, such as an ongoing research project.