

Setting and Monitoring District Goals: The School Committee's Role

Planning for Success: Advancing Our Current Planning Practices to Achieve Our Vision of Success

Under state law, School Committees are responsible for approving district goals in Massachusetts. School Committees are also responsible for evaluating Superintendents annually, under the state's Educator Evaluation System. School Committees must evaluate the Superintendent on at least two goals: one professional practice goal and one student learning goal. The state's model system also recommends that School Committees and Superintendents set two to four district improvement goals. The student learning and district improvement goals should mirror, and fully align with, the strategic objectives and outcomes of the District Plan. The Superintendent and School Committee may choose to set multi-year goals for the Superintendent's evaluation, also in alignment with the District Plan.

The School Committee's role in approving and monitoring the Superintendent's evaluation goals provides the Committee with an important tool in setting and achieving district goals. The School Committee monitors progress toward attainment of evaluation goals through the Superintendent's Annual Plan, which identifies the key actions, timelines, and benchmarks for each goal set, and the Superintendent's reports of progress. Similarly, the School Committee may monitor progress toward attainment of all other district goals through the District Action Plan's implementation benchmarks, and the Superintendent's reports of progress. The Committee's plan for progress monitoring may provide the structure for the School Committee's work and year-long calendar.

Interested School Committees may consider setting professional practice goal(s) of their own, for the Committee as a whole. Professional practice goals are designed to increase capacity and effectiveness, as individuals define the skills, knowledge, or practices they will develop. School Committees may also consider setting additional goals for the Committee as a whole that will support the Superintendent in achieving district goals.

Monitoring Goal Alignment

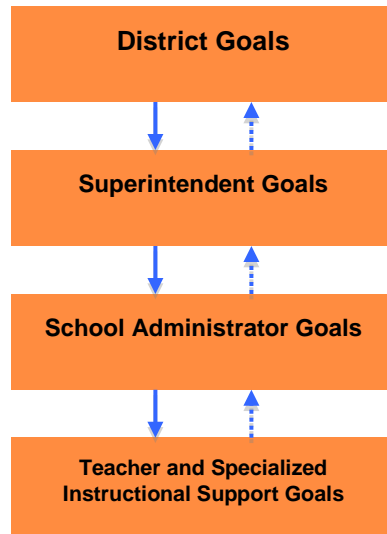


One District...One Coherent Set of Focused Goals

The School Committee, in its "big picture" oversight role, is best positioned to safeguard the district's focus by monitoring goal coherence in the midst of what can otherwise become a proliferation of district goals and strategies. Effective district planning and execution is built on a clear, consistent, shared, and achievable vision for the district and its future. Three to five strategic objectives, the key levers for improvement, are recommended to support district focus.

Any School Committee "overarching goals," Superintendent evaluation goals, district budget goals, and School Improvement Plan goals must be fully aligned with the strategic objectives and outcomes of the District Plan, the district's official roadmap for improvement. These district goal setting documents should be monitored and updated, as necessary, to ensure coherence and reflect the district's current realities and priorities. Planning for improvement is a continuous process, and the District Plan is a living document that should reflect that process.

School Committee: Educator Evaluation and District Planning



Educator Evaluation Connects the District Plan to the Classroom

The Educator Evaluation System is the process that links each classroom to the district's vision for all students. From the Superintendent, to School Administrators, to individual teachers and specialized instructional support...all individual and team goals stem from the district's goals and work to support their achievement. In return, Educator Evaluation feedback, ratings, and progress toward goals—including District Determined Measures—provide important data that inform district and school planning. The Educator Evaluation System creates coherence in planning across the district and provides critical leverage for achieving plans—from the Superintendent to the Instructional Leadership Team to the classroom.

Achieving the District Vision through Backwards Design

The District Plan articulates the district vision, strategy for achieving it, and planned outcomes for students—the district's SMART goals. The district backward designs its work from these outcomes, using the District Plan to drive goal setting for School Improvement Plans, evaluation for all educators, the district budget, technology, and grant and resource allocation. All educators—administrators, teachers, and specialized instructional support—have the opportunity to play an indispensable role in this design process by setting student learning and professional practice goals that develop their practice and capacity, as individuals and teams, to support the district strategy for success.

The District Plan: Connecting Existing District Systems to Create Coherence

Academic Plans Currently Required

Massachusetts' legislation requires the following five types of academic plans:

1. District Improvement Plan (3 years)
2. District Action Plan (annual)
3. School Improvement Plan (annual)
4. Individual Professional Development Plan (5 years)
5. Educator Plan (30 days to 2 years)

