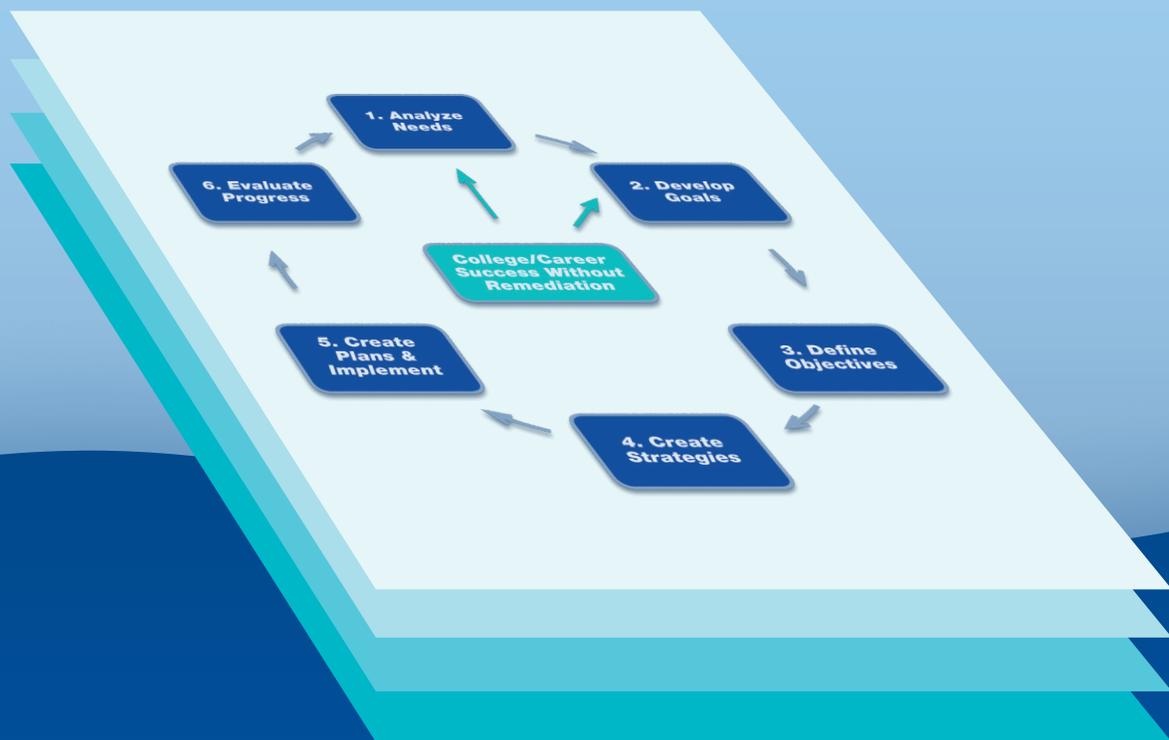


Writing Goals and Objectives

A Guide for Grantees of the
Smaller Learning Communities Program



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**A Guide for Grantees of the
Smaller Learning Communities Program**

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Overview

This guide seeks to support grantees of the Smaller Learning Communities Program (SLCP) in reaching their desired outcomes by strengthening both their goal-setting and implementation processes. The guide has two sections: the first section provides an overview of each goal-setting and implementation step; the second section, starting on page 14, provides resources to help you develop each step. The resources include tools and information to facilitate the creation of a rigorous goal-setting process within your school.

As a user of this guide, you may be coming to the goal-setting process as either a current or prospective grantee. In both cases, the guide will be of great benefit.

CURRENT SLCP GRANTEES

While your SLCP goals and objectives cannot be changed without prior approval, strategies can be modified to enhance goal attainment. If your progress is lagging, your focus has been lost, or if you just need to fine-tune your grant work, this guide will help you make adjustments to significantly improve the chances of attaining your grant goals. It provides guidance useful in all stages, from applying for a grant to achieving your desired student outcomes.

PROSPECTIVE SLCP GRANTEES

If you are applying for an SLCP grant, you will find this guide an invaluable resource for identifying appropriate SLCP goals, objectives, and supporting strategies to include in your grant proposal.

WHY WELL-DESIGNED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Many educators think of goal setting and planning as busy work—*tedious and a potential waste of time and resources*—and believe that it rarely leads to significant change. **However, creating strong, measurable goals with aligned objectives and strategies can significantly increase your chance of success.**

If you do the following, your odds of obtaining the outcomes you seek will increase even more significantly:

- Involve key stakeholders (students, faculty, administrators, parents, etc.) in the goal- and objective-setting process.
- Ensure that all goals and objectives reflect your individual and organizational values, and make it clear why they are critical to student success.
- Align current school goals with your SLCP goals.
- Make sure your resource allocation is aligned with your goals and priorities.
- Resist “over-goaling”—prioritize your goals and agree to focus your resources on only a few major goals at one time.
- Write down your goals and objectives—leave no room for ambiguity. Remember that goals and objectives must be concrete—and measurable!
- Get the word out and make a public commitment to your goals and objectives.

TIP



Remember that goal setting and implementation is a team sport. You will not meet your goals unless everyone is pulling an oar in the same direction—you cannot do this alone!

THE GOAL-SETTING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

SLCP Priorities

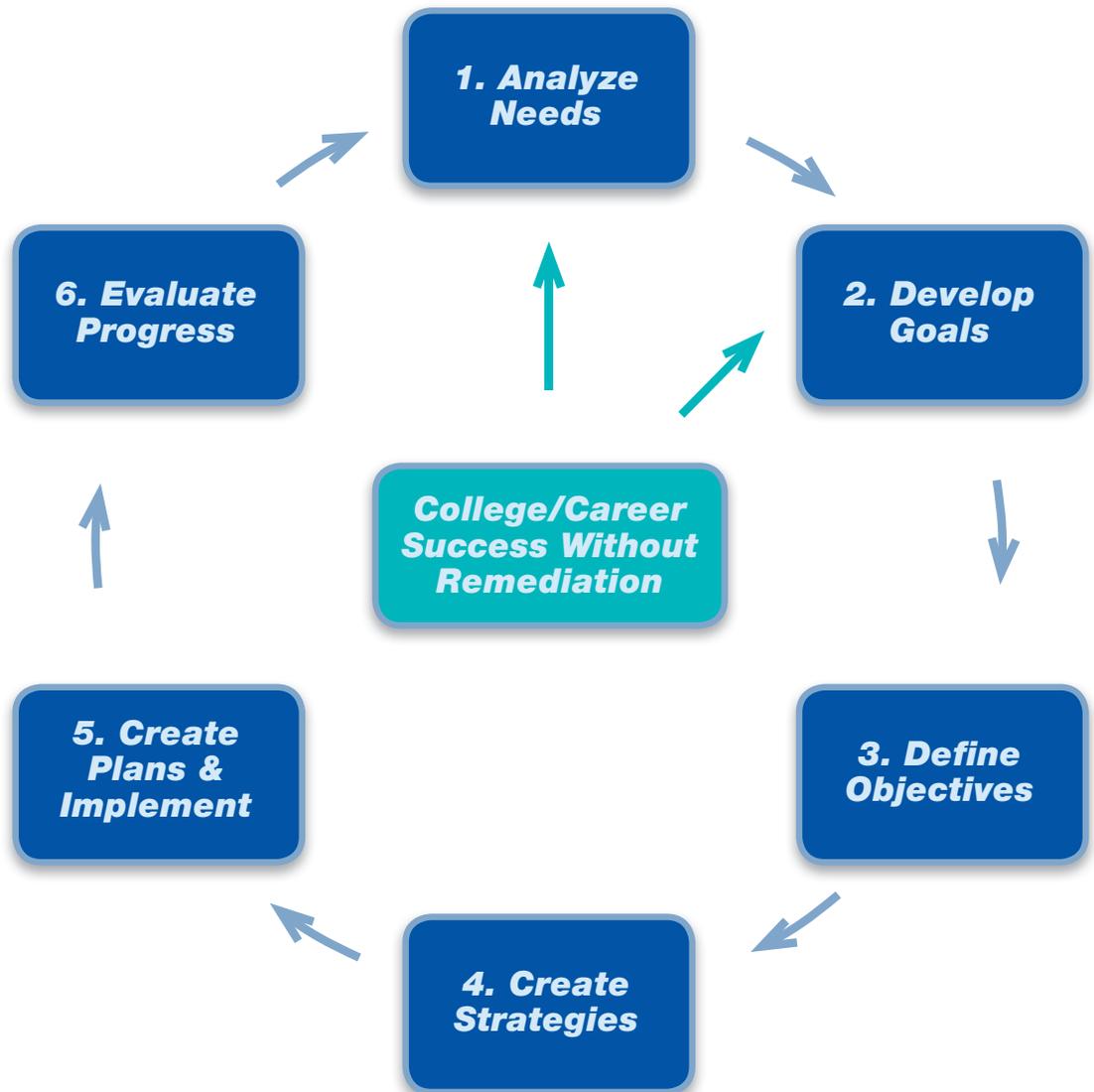
The goals you set must clearly support the absolute SLCP priority of **“preparing all students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation.”** Best practices in the areas of academic achievement, postsecondary readiness, and personalized learning environments should be incorporated throughout the goal-setting and implementation process to support meeting this priority. The following steps in the process create a strong alignment of your goals, objectives, and strategies with the absolute SLCP priority and other priorities/requirements of the SLCP grant. For additional information on the current SLCP priorities, see pages 14-15.

TIP



SLCP priorities are based on proven best practices. Be prepared to do your homework by studying needs and identifying school goals that align with SLCP priorities.

STEPS IN THE GOAL-SETTING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



Guidance for SLCP Grantees

There are 6 steps in the goal-setting process, as depicted in the graphic above and described in the following section. Your goal-attainment success will depend in large measure on how rigorous you are in putting this process in place.

If you are a current grantee and your needs/goals are well defined, you may jump to step 4 and assess the implementation, alignment and success of your strategies. If you are a prospective grantee or a current one concerned about the quality of your goals, start with step 1.

1. Analyze Needs

Form a team to identify and prioritize needs based on a review of student data. Describe performance gaps in detail for different groups of students.

- Take a close look at your school performance data and engage your stakeholders in data-based conversations about student needs. (See page 16 for more detail.)
- Identify those needs/performance gaps that, if addressed, will have a significant and positive impact on student outcomes, in particular, success in postsecondary and/or career success without remediation. For example, your needs assessment might highlight that the number of your freshmen who make it to college is very low—*i.e.*, only 32%—and 64% of them must take at least one remedial class. You decide this is an area where you aspire to make a significant change, *i.e.*, it is a high-priority need that you will turn into a goal.

Guidance for SLCP Grantees



Alignment across steps is essential for efficient and effective goal attainment. You create your goals, followed by your objectives, followed by your supporting strategies. Keep in mind that it is strategies that drive the accomplishment of an objective, which in turn drives the attainment of an SLCP goal.

2. Develop Goals

Based on the high-priority needs identified in the first step, create goals that close key performance gaps and are aligned with the SLCP priorities.

- Goals reflect large aspirations for long-term, positive change, based on well-documented needs. (See pages 17-18 for more detail.)
- Well-written goals are SMART—**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-Bound.

- Given the need described in Step 1 (Analyze Needs), the following is an appropriate SMART goal:
 - **Attain a “4-year cohort” college-going rate of 55% with no remediation by 6/30/15.**
- Once you have developed a goal, set milestones that reflect progress towards the attainment of that goal. For example, **attaining a college going rate of 44% with 10% remediation by 6/30/13** would be a milestone on the road to full goal attainment. See Step 6 on page 8, and the resource information on pages 27-30 for more detail on the milestone-setting and evaluation process.

3. Define Objectives

Write SMART objectives that support goal attainment.

- Objectives are designed to support the attainment of your SLCP goals. (See pages 19 for more detail.)
- It is typical that the attainment of more than one objective will be required to meet a specific SLCP goal.
- Two objectives that support attainment of the SLCP goal described in Step 2 (Develop Goals) are:
 - **95% of ninth graders will pass the core courses required for a college track by 6/30/12.**
 - **Increase daily attendance to 97% by 6/30/11.**
- Once again, set milestones that reflect progress towards the attainment of your objectives. See Step 6 on page 8, and resource information on pages 27-30.

TIP



People will only give their all if they know what targets/goals they are aiming for. They must also understand that “getting a bull’s-eye” is worth the effort!

4. Create Strategies

Strategies are also “SMART” and describe the initiatives or activities to be put in place to meet each objective.

- It often takes more than one strategy to meet a single objective. (See pages 20-22 for more detail.)
- Examples of strategies that support the objectives described in Step 3 (Define Objectives) are:
 - Implement a ninth-grade transition program that includes ninth-grade academies by 9/1/10.
 - Establish a literacy enhancement program by 9/1/10 for all students entering ninth-grade who are not reading at grade level.
 - Establish a comprehensive attendance improvement program by 4/1/10.

TIP



Your performance will only take off if you have clear goals, objectives and strategies—and if you have limited the number of goals and objectives to what is manageable at any one time. Focus on those goals and objectives that will make the most difference, resource them, and stick with them until done well.

5. Create Plans & Implement

Create action plans that specify steps, completion dates, “owners,” obstacles, requirements for buy-in and resources—and then implement your plan.

- The action plan segment below describes the initial steps for implementing the first strategy described in Step 4 (Create Strategies), **Implement a ninth-grade transition program with academies by 9/1/10.**
- Develop an action plan for each strategy.
- Once again, set milestones that reflect progress towards the full implementation of your strategies. See Step 6 on page 8, and resource information on pages 27-30.
- A completed action plan is provided on pages 25-26. See sample plan on page 8.

STEP 5: ACTION PLAN

STEP 5: ACTION PLAN				
STRATEGY: Implement a grade 9 transition program by 9/1/10		OBJECTIVE(S) SUPPORTED: 95% of grade 9 students will pass grade 9 core courses by 6/30/12		GOAL(S) SUPPORTED: Attain a college-going rate of 55% without remediation by 6/30/15
STEPS	COMP DATE	WHO OWNS & WORKS ON	OBSTACLES & INFLUENCE/ BUY-IN REQUIREMENTS	RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS
1. Announce plan to create a Freshman Transition (FT) Program and recruit members	1/30/10	Dept heads & other interested stakeholders recruited as members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty are feeling overwhelmed—working hard to prep for accreditation evaluation during the same time period Need to do a good job selling the value of this strategy to the faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to provide stipends to team members for extra time spent on this project in line with contractual requirements
2. Develop team	2/28/10	Team leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and assign roles, e.g. team leader, facilitator, recorder, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time for regular meetings

Guidance for SLCP Grantees

Keep in mind that SLCP grantees are required to report on the following student outcomes: State Reading/English language arts test scores, State math test scores, graduation rate and postsecondary placement rates.

If you have identified key needs in other areas, you can create additional goals as long as they are aligned with SLCP priorities as described on pages 14-15.

6. Evaluate Progress

Assess success in meeting goal, objective, and strategy milestones.

- When you are assessing your progress in meeting goals and objectives, your milestones reflect *outcome* measures. When you are assessing your progress towards successful implementation of a strategy, your milestones reflect *process* measures—i.e., measures of how well you are putting activities in place that support the accomplishment of your objectives and goals. Assessment of process milestones should include an assessment of the quality/fidelity of implementation; not just a checklist of what is on the ground.
- A sample section of a *Step 6: Evaluate Progress – Milestone Worksheet* is provided below. You will find the full version on page 29-30.
- Both the process and outcome measures are contained in the *Step 6: Evaluate Progress – Milestone Worksheet* (see pages 29-30). The information required to fill in this worksheet is obtained from your *Goal-Setting Process Worksheet* (see page 32) and from your *Step 5: Action Plan* (see pages 25-26).

- Employing the milestone worksheet will help you track your progress and identify where you can overcome obstacles. Adjust your objectives, strategies and action plans as required to keep moving toward SLCP goal attainment.

STEP 6: EVALUATE PROGRESS – MILESTONE WORKSHEET

PERFORMANCE / PROCESS ELEMENTS	MET	NOT MET	COMMENTS/ ACTION NEEDED
GOAL: Attain a college-going rate of 55% without remediation by 6/30/15			• Starting point is 32%
• Milestone 1: 35% by 6/30/11			
• Milestone 2: 38% by 6/30/12			
• Milestone 3: 44% by 6/30/13			
• Milestone 4: 48% by 6/30/14			
OBJECTIVE: 95% of 9th grade students will pass 9th grade core courses by 6/30/12			• Starting point is 32%
• Milestone 1: 89% by 6/30/11			
STRATEGY: Implement a 9th grade transition program by 9/1/10			
• Milestone 1: Fully functioning transition team in place by 2/28/10			
• Milestone 2: Research and benchmarking done by 4/15/10			
• Milestone 3: Implementation planning and training done by 7/30/10			
STRATEGY: Establish a literacy enhancement program by 9/1/10 for all students entering grade 9 who are not reading at grade level			
• Milestone 1: Research and benchmarking done by 4/15/10			
• Milestone 2: Implementation planning and training done by 7/30/10			

Guidance for SLCP Grantees

Showing fidelity to the goal-setting process will not only help you meet your goals, it will also make life easier for you when it comes to reporting your progress. The data you need will be readily at hand.

SLCP grantees are required to report their annual progress with regard to the strategies implemented and selected outcomes. Review the SLCP Annual Performance Report (APR) template to see how your progress must be documented.

TIP



You cannot avoid resistance. Getting everyone on the bus is a big challenge! Tighten your seat belt and prepare yourself for some bumps along the way because, if you are not getting resistance, you are not changing anything!

FOSTERING BUY-IN FOR SLCP GOALS

Most program staff members are dedicated individuals with high hopes for young people. But they are often overworked and overwhelmed by one new program after another. Right from the start, it is essential to initiate the buy-in process for the SLCP goals, objectives, and strategies to be implemented. To gain support for school improvement and SLCP goals, consider the following:

- **People will not support (and a few may even undermine)** your SLCP goals unless there is a common set of values and a common vision for change.

***Action:** Form a team to drive the goal-setting and implementation process. The benefits of having a strong team cannot be overestimated: leadership and system capacity are built, a common vision is developed, and the workload is shared. In addition, buy-in is enhanced, “change champions” are born, and courage and resolve are bolstered!*

- **People feel overwhelmed,** and do not want more put on their plate.

***Action:** Conduct an analysis of all of the initiatives that are in place or planned. Identify what is most important and focus all efforts on what will make the most difference for students. In a high-demand environment like schools, you cannot add major responsibilities without taking something off of the plate. “Over-goaling” is a recipe for failure.*

- **People have “seen it all before,”** and do not believe this initiative will be any more successful than those in the past.

***Action:** It is essential that project leaders understand the process of leading change, including how to communicate and engage stakeholders to build support for the proposed goals. Once again, employing strong teams can go a long way to making this happen.*

- **People do not like to be taken out of their comfort zone.** They may be concerned that they do not have the skills necessary to be successful; they may feel their control will be diminished; and they may not want the level of accountability that comes with the change and increased empowerment.

***Action:** It is essential that everyone understand the payoff of meeting goals for students and themselves. Everyone must be reassured that they will receive the professional development needed to be successful if their role has changed. This starts with the redefinition of the roles that are integral to your success in implementing your strategies and meeting your objectives and goals.*

WRAPPING IT UP

In summary, consider the following key points before you begin and as you move through this important and challenging work. Taking the time to be thoughtful in the goal-setting process up front will save you time and frustration in the end and increase your likelihood of improving secondary and postsecondary outcomes for all of your students.

1. Goals and objectives must reflect the core values that support enhancing student success, *e.g., every student deserves an education that positions him or her for postsecondary success*. When goals and objectives clearly reflect core values, they will motivate and be embraced by stakeholders.
2. Goals and objectives are the *ends*, and strategies are the *means*. If you understand your needs well, the ends will stay the same, and you can adjust your strategies/means as necessary to meet your goals and objectives.
3. SLCP goals are significant and meaningful, and the degree of change required is large. It will require a realignment of focus and resources to accomplish them. Be sure not to underestimate the impact of what you are doing, or proposing to do, on all stakeholders, including those who may initially resist the changes that SLCP will require.

4. To increase your chances of success, anticipate, plan for, and manage the change process—**get smart as fast as possible**. Some of the key elements of leading and managing change are:
- Leadership capacity building—developing genuine distributed/ collaborative leadership
 - System capacity building—improving processes, policies, and structures
 - Absolute role clarity at all levels for all positions
 - Extensive communication and buy-in strategies
 - Strong teams that own and drive the change process

Additional examples and guidelines are provided starting on the next page.

BE SURE TO TAKE A LOOK!

TIP



Great goals and good intentions are not enough to ensure success. Determining what needs to be done is much easier than making it happen! Leadership skills are essential. Be prepared to orchestrate all the elements of the change process, including building the leadership and capacity required to sustain success. Don't wait to be invited—take charge now!!!

Writing Goals and Objectives: Companion Resources

A Companion Guide for Grantees of the
Smaller Learning Communities Program



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This section of the guide provides additional information to facilitate the development of your SLCP goal-setting and implementation process, beginning with description of the SLCP priorities. If you are in the process of applying for an SLCP grant, it is essential that you understand these priorities because your grant goals must be aligned with them. The SLCP priorities are followed by a detailed example of each of the six steps in the goal-setting process. This is followed by a worksheet that ties all steps in the process together.

SLCP PRIORITIES

The SLCP Absolute Priority

- Preparing all students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation.

The Current SLCP Priorities

The following are the current priorities of the SLCP program. These support the attainment of the absolute SLCP priority listed above. In order to meet the absolutely priority, you must use your SLCP funds to do the following and establish your goals accordingly:

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- Assist students who are significantly below grade level in reading/language arts and/or mathematics to catch up quickly and attain proficiency by the end of grade 10.
- Equip students with the English language arts, mathematics, and science skills and content knowledge needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers—without the need for remediation.
- Provide tutoring and other academic supports to help students succeed in rigorous academic courses.

POSTSECONDARY READINESS

- Provide comprehensive guidance and academic advising to students and parents to maximize students' chances for success in postsecondary education. This should include:
 - Assistance in selecting courses and planning a program of study that will provide the academic knowledge and skills necessary for success in postsecondary education
 - Early and ongoing college awareness and planning activities
 - Improved access by providing help in identifying and applying for financial aid
 - Increased opportunities for postsecondary credit through Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses or dual-credit programs

PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

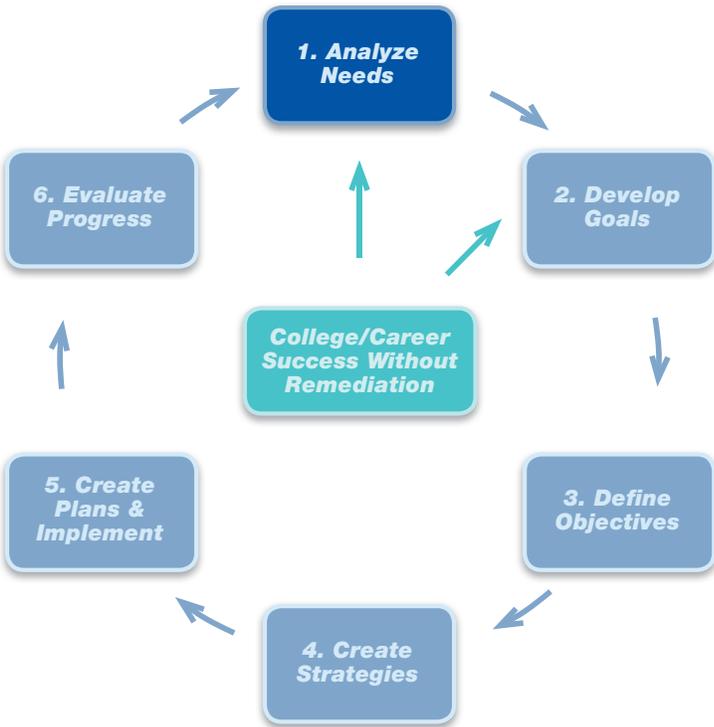
- Create an environment where a core group of teachers and other adults know the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well; closely monitor each student's progress; and provide the support each student needs to succeed
- Ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult in the school, who can be relied upon to continuously pay attention to the academic, postsecondary preparation, and personal needs of the student.

STEP 1: ANALYZE NEEDS – EXAMPLES

Overview

The needs you identify must be based on high quality data—data that is valid, reliable, and disaggregated. Be sure you have a deep understanding of the performance issues for each student subgroup. In this way, you will be able to set focused and meaningful long-range goals and track student progress against solid baseline data.

The data/needs of interest are those directly related to outcomes—i.e., those measures related to academic achievement and postsecondary readiness. Examples are provided below.



Examples

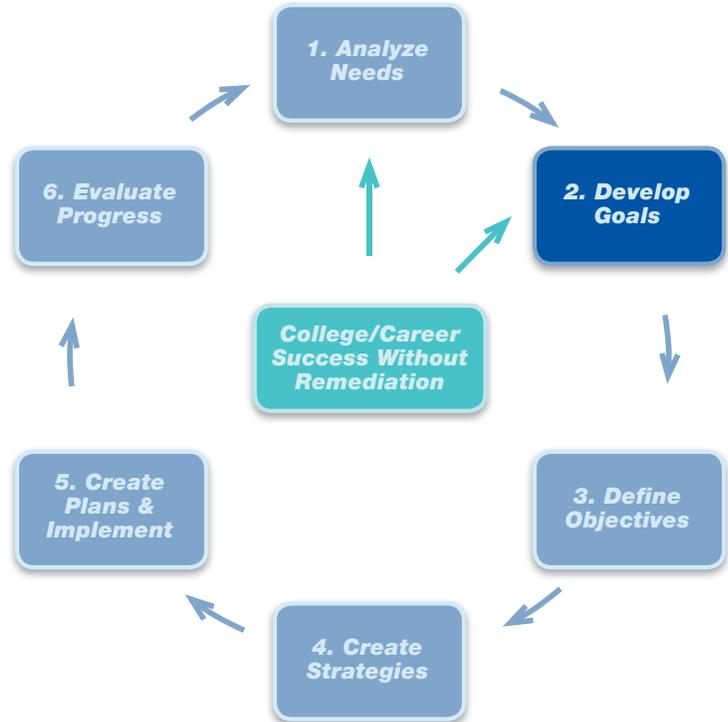
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	POSTSECONDARY READINESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scores on state literacy/reading tests • Scores on state math tests • Scores on state science tests • Level of student performance in core academic courses • Dropout rates • Graduation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance on college-readiness tests, e.g., ACT & SAT • Level of student performance on AP and IB courses • Percentage of students successfully completing dual-credit courses • Percentage of students going to college • Percentage of students not requiring remediation in college • Percentage of students going to four- vs. two-year colleges, e.g., state colleges vs. community colleges

STEP 2: DEVELOP GOALS – EXAMPLES

Overview

After you have a clear picture of your needs and priorities for closing gaps, you are ready to set SLCP goals. Goals reflect large aspirations, and attaining them will require the development of a number of objectives, and supporting strategies.

Developing a goal is just a matter of turning your most important measures of academic achievement and/or postsecondary readiness into clear goals. In the case of one of the examples presented on page 18 it is, “Attain a college-going rate of 55% with no remediation by 6/30/15.” This is directly related to the SLCP priorities focused on postsecondary readiness. Remember to use SMART criteria when developing your goals. SMART goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-Bound.



Keep the following points in mind as you set your goals:

- You must have at least one goal related to each of the following SLCP measures:
 - **Literary scores**
 - **Math scores**
 - **Graduation rate**
 - **Postsecondary placement**
- Each SLCP goal you select must be attainable within the life of the SLCP project—i.e., five years.
- Be judicious in the number of goals you select. As you can see in the example provided in the action plan on pages 25-26, attaining even one major SLCP goal can be complex, time-consuming, and resource-intensive, as reflected in the number of objectives and strategies required to attain the goal.
- During the data analysis, you may conclude that certain actions are necessary to close a gap—e.g., the need to create advisories to provide a vehicle for personalization and enhancing postsecondary readiness. However, keep in mind that there is a clear difference between a goal and an objective, as well as between an objective and a strategy. Creating advisories is a strategy, not a goal. Be sure your goals are similar to the examples provided in the chart below, which reflect positive changes in academic and/or postsecondary outcomes.

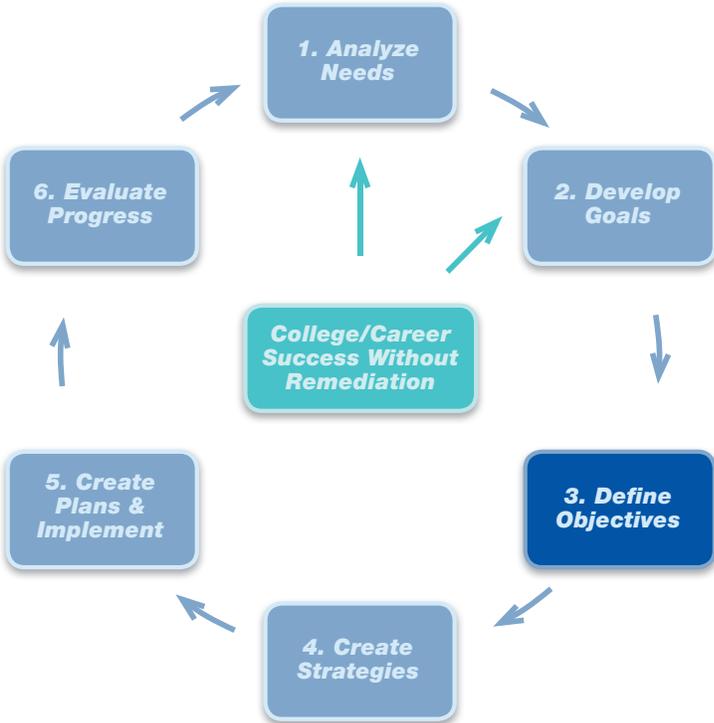
Examples

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	POSTSECONDARY READINESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scores on state literacy/reading tests <i>Improve reading test scores by 10 points for all student subgroups by 6/30/14</i> • Scores on state math tests <i>Improve math scores by 5% for all student subgroups by 1/1/12</i> • Scores on state science tests <i>Improve science test scores for students scoring in the lowest quartile by 20% by 6/30/13</i> • Level of student performance on core academic courses <i>Increase the average performance in English I & II of African American students from C- to B- by 6/30/13</i> • Dropout rate <i>Reduce the dropout rate for ninth graders from 44% to 20% by 1/1/14</i> • Graduation rate <i>Increase the graduation rate (based on grade 9 cohort) for male students from 66% to 85% by 6/30/15</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance on college readiness tests, e.g., ACT & SAT <i>Improve ACT math scores for all juniors and seniors an average of three points by 6/30/12</i> • Percentage of students successfully completing dual-credit courses • Percentage of students going to two- or four-year colleges <i>Increase the percentage of students applying to two- and four-year-colleges from 40% to 75% by 1/1/15</i> <i>Increase the percentage of students accepted at two- and four-year colleges from 35% to 70% by 6/30/15</i> • Level of student performance on AP and IB courses <i>Increase the percentage of students scoring at least a 3 on the English Language AP from 45% to 80% by 6/30/12</i> • Percentage of students not requiring remediation in college <i>By 6/30/15, 55% of our four-year cohort graduates will finish their first year of postsecondary education without requiring remediation</i>

STEP 3: DEFINE OBJECTIVES – EXAMPLES

Overview

Objectives are created using the SMART criteria and reflect outcome measures that support the attainment of a goal. It often requires more than one objective to meet a goal. On the other hand, one objective could facilitate the attainment of more than one goal.



Keep the following points in mind as you define your objectives:

- The challenge of defining good objectives is to ensure that they reflect outcome measures and not strategies (initiatives or activities). Consider the goal example below of increasing graduation rates. It would be easy to consider creating an advisory program as an objective because advisories have a good chance of improving the graduation rate. However, creating an advisory program is a strategy, not an objective.
- Invest the time necessary to identify and quantify the performance measures that must be improved to attain each of your SLCP goals. This takes some careful thought, as the objectives set will determine the strategies you will employ, resulting in a large expenditure of resources. You will find this best done by a dedicated team.

Examples

GOAL: Attain a college-going rate of 55% without remediation by 6/30/15	GOAL: Increase the graduation rate (based on grade 9 cohort) for male students from 66% to 85% by 6/30/15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of ninth graders will pass grade 9 core courses by 6/30/12 • Increase daily attendance to 97% by 6/30/11 • 75% of all juniors and seniors will be enrolled in dual-credit courses by 9/1/14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase daily attendance from 82% to 94% by 1/1/13 Decrease tardiness from 11% to 3% by 1/1/13 • 92% of students entering grade 9 with core reading skills one or more grades below grade level will attain proficiency by the end of grade 10

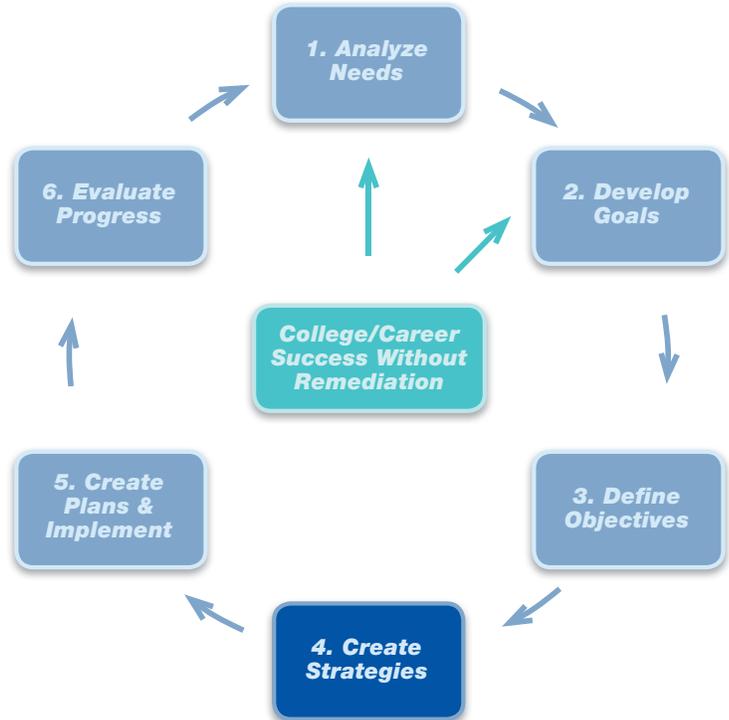
STEP 4: CREATE STRATEGIES – EXAMPLES

Overview

Strategies are the specific initiatives or activities that are put in place to meet objectives. As with objectives and goals, it often requires more than one strategy to meet one objective, and one strategy can facilitate the attainment of more than one objective.

Keep the following in mind as you create your strategies:

- Take a look at best-practice research to identify proven strategies. Identify what has been employed successfully in other schools with similar goals and objectives. If resources are available, conduct site visits to schools that have been successful.
- There are dozens of proven strategies/best practices to choose from to support the attainment of your objectives. The goal is to identify those strategies most likely to be effective in your school and with your students. In choosing appropriate strategies, consider the questions in the following chart.



RELEVANCE & IMPACT	CAPACITY	IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies are directly linked to the objective? • Which strategies will have the most impact in meeting the objective? • Is there one particular strategy that is powerful enough to allow us to drop other strategies already being used? • Is one strategy sufficient, or will multiple strategies be required? • Will one strategy help meet more than one of our objectives? • What strategies have worked well in schools like ours? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which strategies are we already skilled enough to implement? • What strategies are we already using, and if successful, can they be expanded or enhanced? • Are there strategies that students could take the lead on implementing? • Are there already structures—e.g., teams—in place that can take on the strategy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which strategies take the fewest resources to implement? • Which strategies will cause the least disruption and resistance? • Should the strategies be “staged”—that is, implemented in stages—and if so, in what sequence?

Review the following list of sample strategies and identify those that will best support the attainment of each of your objectives. The strategies have been grouped to reflect the SLCP priorities.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT			
Structural	Instructional Methodology	Content	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible and/or block scheduling • Heterogeneous grouping • Reduced class size • Best teachers work with most-at-risk students • Looping • Department structure: STEM, humanities, & community-based learning • Common planning time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated instruction • Project-based learning • Senior project • Internships • Adult mentoring • Revised grading practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic/skill-competency-based assessment • Essential learnings • Literacy and math/numeracy support • Rigorous core curriculum • Interdisciplinary curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher teaming; professional learning communities • Classroom management & discipline • Technology integral to curriculum • Credit recovery

POSTSECONDARY READINESS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College expectations program • College access program • College partnership program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College mentors • Alumni advising program • College prep core curriculum for all AP programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IB program • Dual-credit courses e.g., community college
PERSONALIZING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult advocacy • Advisories • Personal learning plans • RTI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent engagement • Student-centered governance • Student engagement programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical design/redesign of school
Creating Smaller Learning Communities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshman academy • Houses • Career academies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career clusters/themed pathways • Magnet programs • School-within-a-school 	

When you have selected and matched strategies to your objectives, take the next step and turn each strategy into a SMART strategy, including a completion date, as noted in examples below.

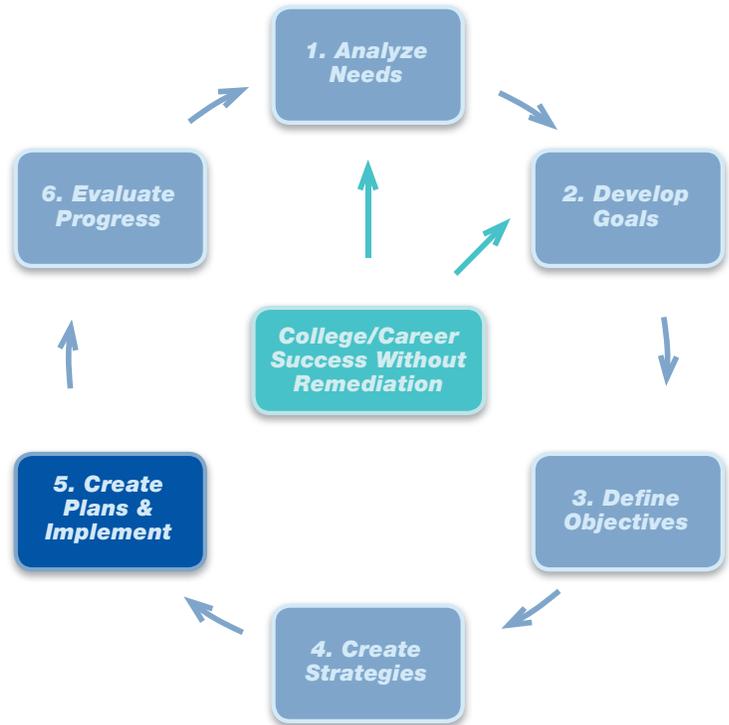
Examples

OBJECTIVE: 95% of ninth graders will pass grade 9 core courses by 6/30/12	OBJECTIVE: 75% of all juniors and seniors will be enrolled in dual-credit courses by 9/1/14
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a grade 9 transition program by 9/1/10 • Establish a literacy enhancement program by 9/1/10 for all students entering grade 9 who are not reading at grade level • Establish a comprehensive attendance improvement program by 4/1/10 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add three additional sections of AP calculus by 9/1/12 • Add two additional sections of AP chemistry by 1/1/13 • Initiate two sections of AP biology by 9/1/13 • Establish dual-credit courses in math and literature with the local community college by 1/1/1

STEP 5: CREATE PLANS AND IMPLEMENT – EXAMPLES

Overview

The attainment of objectives and goals takes a great deal of discipline and focus. When you have determined your goals and supporting objectives and strategies, you have identified “what” you wish to do, but not “how” you are going to do it. Identifying what you want to do is always much easier than actually doing it. Creating an action plan for each strategy will give you the information and resources you need to implement your strategies in a fashion that will ensure success. In other words, the action plan is the recipe for “how.” Creating an action plan forces you to look at the allocation of resources, timeframes, level of effort, skills required, buy-in needed, and practicality of what you are trying to accomplish.



Keep the following points in mind as you create your plan and start implementation:

- Each action plan provides the information required to guide your actions and track your progress on a regular basis. The steps and completion dates are the basis for creating accomplishment milestones for each strategy, as described in Step 6 (Evaluate Progress).
- Create an action plan for each strategy. An example is provided starting on page 25. Fill out the plan as follows:
 - The three boxes at the top ensure that alignment is always the primary focus and the rationale for action is clear.
 - In the top left box (Strategy) enter the strategy for which you are creating the plan.
 - In the top center box (Objective(s)) list the objectives the strategy supports, which may be more than one.
 - In the top right box (Goal(s)) list the goal(s) the strategy supports, which may be more than one.
 - Column 1) Steps: List as many steps as necessary to ensure the process is well understood and can be implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible.

- Column 2) Completion Date: This is the completion date for the step.
- Column 3) Who Owns & Works On: This identifies who is responsible for the step, and who else is going to do the work on it. If a responsible party is not identified, it is unlikely the step will be accomplished.
- Column 4) Obstacles & Influence/Buy-in Requirements: Roadblocks must be planned for, including resistance to what you are trying to do. Communication and buy-in activities are essential if you are going to be successful in implementing something new. Be sure to stay tuned into the influence requirements as you go through the steps.
- Column 5) Resource Requirements: These are the resources and actions required to overcome the obstacles and address the influence requirements you noted in the previous column. It can be helpful to specify the exact dollar and time requirements for the people involved in each step.

STEP 5: ACTION PLAN

STRATEGY: Implement a grade 9 transition program by 9/1/10	OBJECTIVE(S) SUPPORTED: 95% of grade 9 students will pass grade 9 core courses by 6/30/12	GOAL(S) SUPPORTED: Attain a college-going rate of 55% without remediation by 6/30/15
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STEPS	COMP DATE	WHO OWNS & WORKS ON	OBSTACLES & INFLUENCE/ BUY-IN REQUIREMENTS	RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS
1. Announce plan to create a Freshman Transition (FT) Program and recruit members	1/30/10	Dept heads & other interested stakeholders recruited as members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty are feeling overwhelmed—working hard to prep for accreditation evaluation during the same time period • Need to do a good job selling the value of this strategy to the faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to provide stipends to team members for extra time spent on this project in line with contractual requirements
2. Develop team	2/28/10	Team leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and assign roles, e.g. team leader, facilitator, recorder, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for regular meetings
3. Study data on freshman issues	3/15/10	Team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No problems foreseen—sources of data are available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of freshman to interview
4. Do research on FT best practices	3/15/10	Team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No problems foreseen—research sources easily obtained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to articles • Purchase books
5. Benchmark effective FT programs	4/15/10	Team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freeing up faculty to prepare for and make at least three school site visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds to cover the cost of having faculty conduct site visits
6. Prepare report of findings and recs	5/30/10	Team members		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative support for report preparation

Step 5: Action Plan, continued

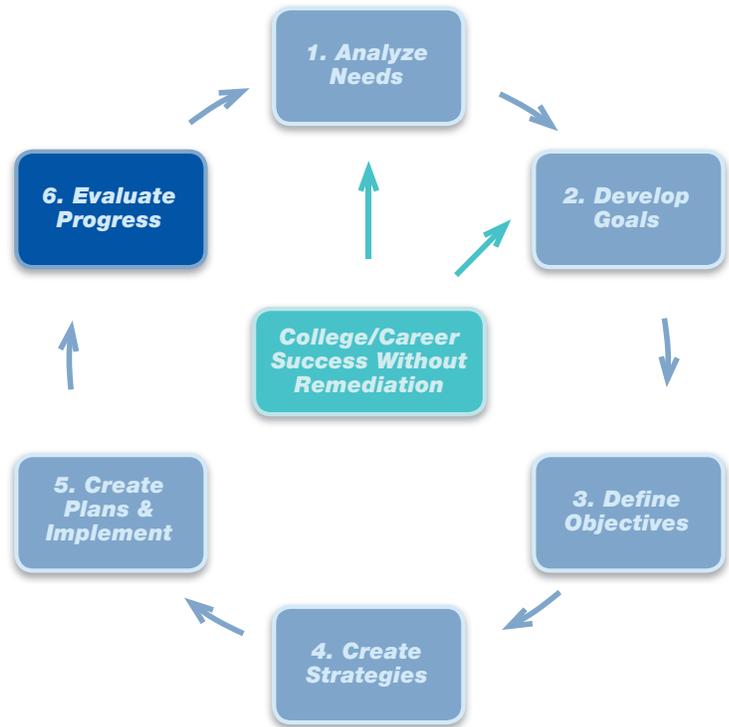
STEPS	COMP DATE	WHO OWNS & WORKS ON	OBSTACLES & INFLUENCE/ BUY-IN REQUIREMENTS	RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS
7. Present findings & recommendations	6/7/10	Team leader & team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to present findings in a way that engenders support from the faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to schedule a separate faculty meeting for the presentation
8. Create plan for implementing recommendations	6/30/10	Team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to recruit faculty to staff the freshman transition program • The plan needs to include evaluation points to check on how it is functioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need funds for training • Need funds for TA consultant to train specific FT skills
9. Conduct training for FT faculty	7/30/10	Team leader; faculty who volunteered to staff the FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a time when all FT faculty can meet for training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Release time
10. Implement program	9/1/10	FT faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to bring the rest of the faculty up to speed on the program and to deal with any questions and concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to keep everyone informed through emails and the weekly newsletter

STEP 6: EVALUATE PROGRESS – EXAMPLES

Overview

Tracking your progress formally is one of the best practices associated with effective project management. It is an essential component of the discipline necessary for you to succeed in meeting your SLCP goals.

You should assess two types of measures to determine how you are progressing in attaining your goal—i.e., *outcome* measures and *process* measures. Outcome measures tell you what progress you are making toward meeting your objectives and goals. Process measures tell you how well you are doing in implementing your strategies. Since your activities and goal-attainment process are spread out over time, it is important to create interim measures/milestones for your goals, objectives and strategies. The *Step 6: Evaluate Progress—Milestone Worksheet* below illustrates how you can track your progress towards goals, objectives, and the strategies used.



Keep the following in mind as you develop your worksheet to evaluate your progress:

- Create a Worksheet for *each* SLCP goal.
 - In the rows, list your goal, objectives, strategies, and the milestones for each.
 - For each goal and objective, note what the baseline starting point is—e.g., current college-going rate is 32%. This reminder will help as you create milestones.
 - When you reach the milestone date, you check off whether the milestone has been met or not. If not, a comment and appropriate actions must be noted in the right column.
 - Create as many milestones for each goal, objective, and strategy as necessary to monitor progress, while allowing time for adjustments if you run into problems/delays. The number of milestones will depend on two factors. The first is how much oversight is needed. If the strategies are new and complex, requiring considerable skill development for the team implementing them, milestones should be more frequent. The second factor is the timeframe involved: an objective that only takes six months to attain may only have one milestone, while an objective that takes three years may have four or five.

- The process milestones for the strategies can easily be developed by referring back to the *Step 5: Action Plan* you created for each strategy (pages 25-26). Look at the activities and associated completion dates and develop your milestones from that.
- When filling out the milestones for each goal, be sure to take into account the level of effort involved. Progress toward a “longer” goal will be more evident as time passes. For example, you may see less improvement in reading scores during the first year of a literacy program than in year three when the skills of both implementers and students have been enhanced and challenges addressed. Some objectives and associated strategies may even result in negative outcomes in the short run. For example, if there is an increase in the graduation rate as a result of a reduction in student dropout, overall math and reading scores may go down in the short run, given that students who would have dropped out in the past are now not doing so because of the program’s retention strategies. Until these students receive help with their math and reading skills, your overall outcome measures for testing scores may decrease.

STEP 6: EVALUATE PROGRESS—MILESTONE WORKSHEET

PERFORMANCE / PROCESS ELEMENTS	MET	NOT MET	COMMENTS/ ACTION NEEDED
GOAL: Attain a college-going rate of 55% without remediation by 6/30/15			• Starting point is 32%
• Milestone 1: 35% by 6/30/11			
• Milestone 2: 38% by 6/30/12			
• Milestone 3: 44% by 6/30/13			
• Milestone 4: 48% by 6/30/14			
OBJECTIVE: 95% of 9th grade students will pass 9th grade core courses by 6/30/12			• Starting point is 32%
• Milestone 1: 89% by 6/30/11			
STRATEGY: Implement a 9th grade transition program by 9/1/10			
• Milestone 1: Fully functioning transition team in place by 2/28/10			
• Milestone 2: Research and benchmarking done by 4/15/10			
• Milestone 3: Implementation planning and training done by 7/30/10			
STRATEGY: Establish a literacy enhancement program by 9/1/10 for all students entering grade 9 who are not reading at grade level			
• Milestone 1: Research and benchmarking done by 4/15/10			
• Milestone 2: Implementation planning and training done by 7/30/10			
OBJECTIVE: Increase daily attendance rate to 97% by 6/30/11			• Starting point is 92%
• Milestone 1: 93% by 6/30/10			
• Milestone 2: 95% by 1/1/11			

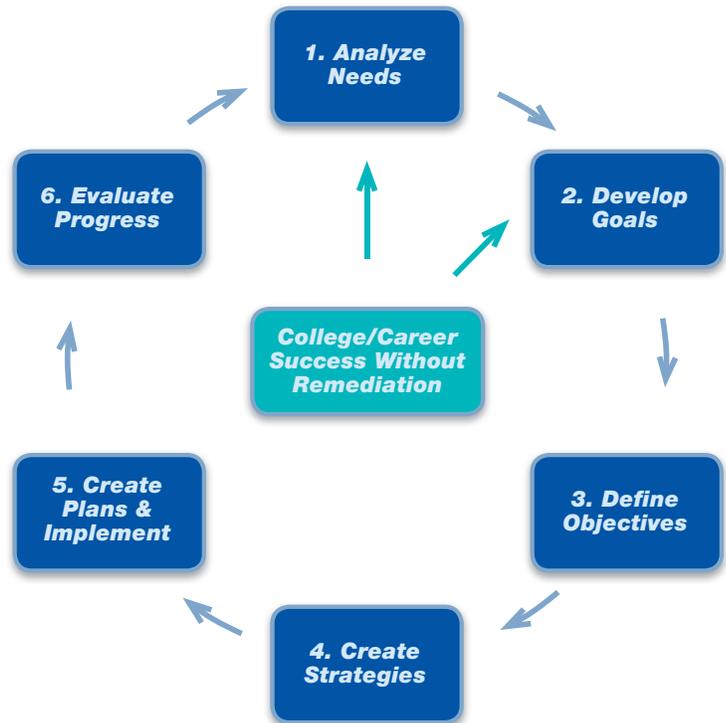
Step 6: Worksheet, continued

PERFORMANCE / PROCESS ELEMENTS	MET	NOT MET	COMMENTS/ ACTION NEEDED
STRATEGY: Increase the number of different AP courses from 3 to 6 by 9/1/12			
• Milestone 1: Establish team to manage project by 6/30/10			
• Milestone 2: Research and recs done by 1/30/11			
• Milestone 3: Complete training and schedule adjustments by 6/30/12			
STRATEGY: Increase the number of different AP courses from 3 to 6 by 9/1/12			
• Milestone 1: Establish team to manage project by 6/30/10			
• Milestone 2: Research and recs done by 1/30/11			
• Milestone 3: Complete training and schedule adjustments by 6/30/12			
STRATEGY: Create a dual-credit program with the local junior college for English and math courses by 9/1/13			
• Milestone 1: Establish team to manage project by 6/30/10			
• Milestone 2: Research and recs done by 6/30/11			
• Milestone 3: Faculty approval and formal arrangement with the junior college by 6/30/12			
• Milestone 4: Schedule adjustments and recording and tracking systems in place by 6/30/10			

STEPS 1-6: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Overview

It is essential that all elements of the goal-setting process be aligned and support one or more of the SLCP priorities as described in the academic achievement, postsecondary readiness, and personalizing the learning environment categories on pages 14-15. To reinforce that alignment, in the chart below, you will see how the elements of each of the six goal-setting and implementation steps are aligned with the SLCP priority categories. In this case, the elements related to the need to address a low college-going rate are presented. The chart provides a framework for thinking through all steps of the goal-setting and implementation processes, as well as for ensuring alignment across SLCP goals, objectives, and supporting strategies. Note that personalization priorities/strategies, such as advisories and personal learning plans (as listed in the box on page 22) facilitate the attainment of the academic achievement and postsecondary readiness priorities.



Keep the following in mind as you develop your SLCP goals and related objectives and strategies:

- Be sure the completed description of the whole goal-setting process, based on each defined need, tells a clear and compelling story. Anyone in your school who reads the description should easily understand how each step in the process is supported by the following step, and how that will make a difference in the lives of your students.
- Challenge yourself (your team) to make sure that each step in the process reflects the best way of addressing the major needs you have identified. The course of action you prescribe must be practical and doable, even if it's a stretch. It makes no sense to create something on paper that cannot be implemented in real life. However, this does not mean that you must accept current constraints. The goal-setting process is a tool for breaking out of the boxes we find ourselves in.
- Use the *Goal-Setting Process Worksheet* below to assist in describing the entire goal-setting process for each of your major needs and related SLCP goals.

Example

GOAL-SETTING PROCESS WORKSHEET

1. ANALYZE NEEDS	2. DEVELOP GOALS	3. DEFINE OBJECTIVES	4. CREATE STRATEGIES	5. CREATE PLANS & IMPLEMENT	6. EVALUATE PROGRESS
<p>Academic Achievement Postsecondary Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current college-going rate is only 32% as of 1/1/10 	<p>Academic Achievement Postsecondary Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attain a college-going rate of 55% without remediation by 6/30/15 	<p>Academic Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of ninth graders will pass grade 9 core courses by 6/30/12 • Increase daily attendance to 97% by 6/30/11 <p>Postsecondary Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of all juniors and seniors will be enrolled in dual-credit courses by 9/1/14 	<p>Academic Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a grade 9 transition program by 9/1/10 • Establish a literacy enhancement program by 9/1/10 for all students entering grade 9 who are not reading at grade level • Establish a comprehensive attendance improvement program by 4/1/10 <p>Postsecondary Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of different AP courses from 3 to 6 by 9/1/12 • Create a dual-credit program with the local junior college for English and math courses by 9/1/13 	<p>See the Step 5: Action Plan example on pages 25-26 for the first strategy listed in this example—keep in mind there needs to be a plan for each strategy.</p>	<p>See the Step 6: Evaluate Progress -Milestone Worksheet on pages 29-31 for the goal, objective, and strategy milestones employed in this example.</p>