

# Student Growth Goals: General Guidance

## Why these changes? Why now?

The revised Student Growth Goal rubrics and guidance serve to advance educational equity through planning with a deep knowledge of students and implementing practices that will yield student and educator growth. The foundational principles below guide the process for setting, monitoring, and reflecting on Student Growth Goals:

1. The process requires *reflection* and *conversation*, and *favors learning and growth* over attainment of a certain level of performance or achievement.
2. It advocates for *racial equity* and *culturally responsive practice* at every level for every stakeholder.
3. It provides *safety* for students, teachers, and supervisors *to be vulnerable learners*.
4. It invites *personalization* to foster *student ownership* of the learning.
5. It provides an opportunity for teachers and supervisors to return to evaluation as a *natural harvest of teaching and learning*. It should not be an add-on or check-off, done simply to complete an evaluation.

**Because developing student growth goals requires deep knowledge of students and the context of a classroom, we will not be providing “exemplars.”**

### I. What is changing and what is staying the same?

- *Student Growth Goal scores figure into the overall evaluation score remains the same.* [RCW 28A.405.100](#) requires that student growth, defined as the change in student achievement between two points in time, play a significant role in the evaluation of teachers and principals/assistant principals in at least three criteria. This has not changed.
- The process of setting a learning goal, monitoring student growth and adjusting instruction is critical to the very act of teaching and student growth should be embedded in that regular flow.
  - To do so effectively, we recommend that the two points in time in which to measure student growth be contained within a *single unit of study*. This affords more than one opportunity for teachers to embed the critical attributes into their regular practice and for principals/assistant principals to support their growth in real time.
  - Because of the way the new rubrics are structured, local associations and districts may want to review their scoring methodologies to assure that the scoring accurately represents where a teacher is along their student growth and personal growth journey.
  - Teachers still set learning goals, but there is clearer direction within the rubrics on the considerations to be made in setting them.



- Teachers still collect and analyze a variety of student learning evidence to see which students made growth and how much, but the *emphasis is on how they reflect on and use that information to make decisions about next steps for students' learning, as well as next steps for their own*. In this way, the process supports teacher growth beyond the single unit that served as the focus of their student growth goal process.
- Principals/assistant principals will still discuss with teachers the growth that students made, but the focus of their conversation will be on what the teacher's analysis of their students' learning tells them about both students' next steps, and their own. What are their next instructional moves? What, if any, professional learning might be supportive in making these?
- District leaders will still have opportunities to suggest or build upon common goals developed by school or teacher teams, but care must be taken to ensure these make sense for the students a teacher is currently teaching. Any suggestions should address the question: *Why this goal for your students at this time?*

### Changes to 3.1, 6.1 and 8.1

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*Rather than limiting our students to one dimension of their identity for our pedagogical convenience (and loaded with our stereotypes and biases), the goal is to compassionately see each student as fully human, the same way you would want for a teacher to see your own child or a child you love dearly.*

*– Dr. Adeyemi Stemberge*

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Central to the revisions to the rubrics for 3.1, 6.1, and 8.1 is the recognition that culturally responsive teaching relies heavily on having a goal that is based on the teacher's knowledge of their students' cultural, academic, and social/emotional assets, and is cognitively and emotionally engaging.

- Movement along the continuum of practice from "Basic" to "Proficient" to "Distinguished" in 3.1, 6.1 and 8.1 relies on a deep knowledge of each student.
- In all three cases, what determines "Distinguished" performance is the ways in which a teacher is not only meeting and advancing the learning for their own students but also *impacting the larger system by positively influencing learning for students beyond their classroom*.

- A key aspect of having high expectations for our students (State Evaluation Criterion 2) is setting goals that foster *cognitive and emotional engagement*.
  - *Cognitively engaging students* rests upon knowledge of students and knowledge of our standards.
  - *Complex and higher-order thinking* are evident in all grade level standards. Karin Hess's Cognitive Rigor Matrix provides content-specific examples of complex and higher order thinking.
  - *Creating emotional engagement*, without which learning does not take place, also demands that a teacher know their students and understand what students will find to be compelling about the learning.
  - The components and indicators from the *instructional frameworks* describe instruction that is cognitively and emotionally engaging.
  
- Perhaps more deeply than before, educators have come to appreciate the *role that families can play in offering unique insights into a student's assets, goals and needs*.
  - While addressed in much more depth in State Evaluation Criterion 7 and in specific components and indicators in the instructional frameworks, the revised Student Growth Goal Rubric for 3.1 asks teachers to engage *families as partners as they develop their learning goal*.

## Changes to 3.2 and 6.2

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*If a teacher cannot find something positive to say, then feedback is not what needs to come next. Additional teaching needs to come next.*

– Rick Stiggins

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In between setting a goal (the “.1s”) and analyzing student growth (the “.2s”) lives the work of the district’s adopted instructional framework and the State 8 Evaluation Criteria.

The revised .2 rubrics necessitate:

- Developing a plan for monitoring student learning progress using both formative and summative assessments.
  - In the revised .2s, both formative and summative assessments are expected at a “Basic” level of performance. This is a shift from the original Student Growth rubrics.
  
- Empowering students by engaging them in monitoring and assessing their own progress.

- Student engagement in assessment supports students to become agents of their own learning. Students gain deeper ownership of their learning when they have the tools and support to evaluate their own work, and to understand what steps they can take to address any learning gaps.
- Gathering and attending to feedback from students on how they are experiencing the classroom environment, the instruction, and their own learning.
  - Teachers can most accurately access students’ assets and meet their needs when they understand how students are experiencing the classroom as a learning environment, and the best way to learn about this is to ask them. In addressing the critical attribute, “feedback from students on their experience of the learning,” students must feel safe to use their voices. Part of that safety comes when the teacher shares the purpose of the feedback they’re being asked to provide and explains how their feedback will be used.
- Reflecting on progress made by students and how this information will be used to benefit future instruction.
  - Teachers, too, must feel safe in asking these questions for this element to be effective. Their general reflections on student feedback should be part of the conversation with their evaluators; it would be up to the teacher to decide to share specific responses and results.

**Note:** As was the case in the revised .1 rubrics, the changes to both 3.2 and 6.2 include effecting a change beyond the teacher’s classroom as the difference between “Proficient” and “Distinguished.”

## II. General Guidance by Role for the Revised Student Growth Goal Process

### Considerations for teachers

- ❖ The revised Student Growth Goals emphasize learning, growth and reflection in both students and teachers. There is an increased expectation to know individual students and their cultural, academic, and social/emotional assets, and to personalize instruction using student “voice and choice” to promote growth in every student.
- ❖ Student Growth Goals should generally live inside of a unit of instruction rather than over a whole year of instruction. Placing the goal inside a unit of instruction allows for deeper attention to the students’ learning progress, as well as the teacher moves necessary to support it. It also allows for multiple opportunities to set and meet growth goals during the year, capitalizing on teacher learning from the previous unit.

Even so, the goal *may* include a habit of mind or SEL or thinking/process target that is a year-long focus, or be part of a spiraling curriculum, and therefore provide later opportunities for students to show even greater understanding. Consider what would provide the most useful “dipstick” interval to support a robust cycle of inquiry on the specific learning target(s).

- ❖ Evidence of student progress should be authentic to the learning goal and embedded in the instruction and learning activities designed for that unit. Standardized assessments are unlikely to best serve this purpose because they don’t necessarily capture each student’s learning.
- ❖ Teacher reflection on the learning process is as important as student progress in the learning, to the extent the teacher uses that reflection to adjust their instruction.
- ❖ Using the critical attributes described on the rubrics for 3.1, 6.1 and 8.1 can help a teacher plan instruction that empowers students to be independent learners. The instructional frameworks provide guidance for planning and implementing instruction that supports students in becoming independent learners, particularly at the “Distinguished” level of practice.
- ❖ Culturally responsive teaching compels us to value the skills, abilities and strengths each of our students bring to the classroom and to build upon those by providing them with multiple ways to demonstrate learning.

### Considerations for principals/assistant principals

- ❖ Existing structures and systems for evaluating teachers can include conversations for the purposes of evaluating the Student Growth Goals, thus making efficient use of time. Similarly, evidence used for feedback on the state criteria/instructional framework may now prove useful with Student Growth Goals.
- ❖ Teachers, especially beginning educators, must have the safety to be vulnerable learners to try new strategies and grow. Because the Student Growth Goal process can be implemented in any unit, it allows teachers to “try again” with their next unit/learning goal to address any areas that have not yet met proficiency. For newer teachers, consider enlisting the new teacher’s mentor in providing support.
- ❖ For the goals to be meaningful to students and teachers, teachers must have ownership in developing a goal that sufficiently addresses the question, “Why this goal for your students at this time?” This may necessitate personalizing larger district or building goals in ways that reflect the authentic learning in the teacher’s standards and allows for building on the assets

of their students during the unit of study in which the progress is evaluated using the Student Growth Goals.

- ❖ In the revised Student Growth Goal rubrics, there are similar elements listed under the performance descriptors of "Basic", "Proficient", and "Distinguished". It is important to read and refer to the rubric language carefully when providing feedback about the degree to which the elements are evident in the process. Additionally, "Distinguished" now includes demonstrated ways in which a teacher is working to affect a change in student learning through their own professional learning and leadership. This is different from previous descriptions of "Distinguished" practice.

### Considerations for district administrators

- ❖ Implementing the revised Student Growth Goals is an opportunity to revisit and re-center the evaluation process as a tool for promoting student and educator growth and development, and to make significant and sustainable change in promoting equitable access for all students. To the extent possible, having principals/assistant principals and teachers learn about this work together promotes partnership in the ownership of student learning and consistency in messaging.
- ❖ Additionally, implementing the revised Student Growth Goals yields an opportunity for districts and their associations to consider where their current evaluation practices might benefit from review.
- ❖ The revised Student Growth Goal rubrics favor live conversation between teachers and principals/assistant principals over asynchronous communication. Recognizing that engaging in meaningful evaluation takes time, consider how existing time (e.g., required evaluation conferences, teacher team time) can be used for conversations about student growth.
- ❖ Implementing the revised Student Growth Goals calls for reflection on how a district's adopted curriculum/materials can create opportunities instead of barriers for educators to engage with the critical attributes of the revised Student Growth Goals. Implementation also affords the opportunity to ensure equitable access to the state-supported and required "Since Time Immemorial" curriculum, as well as Washington State K-12 Learning Standards and national for each grade level and content area.

### In conclusion

These changes to Student Growth Goals represent significant shifts from what was captured in the original process. For some educators, this may require something new in their practice – a new perspective on student engagement in assessment, a new way of communicating with families, a new structure for teacher and supervisor interaction, a new appreciation for student

voice. These shifts are not just meant for this process; they signal what we know to be essential for effective, culturally responsive pedagogy, no matter the goal, no matter the student.

Because every year, every teacher and principal in our state develops and works to meet at least one student growth goal in service of their evaluation, this activity holds huge potential to leverage educator growth. It deserves our full and committed attention.

### **Key Resources:**

Chappius, J., & Stiggins, R. (2020). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right – using it well* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pearson Education.

Hammond, Z.L. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain*. Corwin Press.

Stembridge, A. (2020). *Culturally Responsive Education in the Classroom: An equity framework for pedagogy*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

William, D. (2017). *Embedded formative assessment*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Solution Tree Press.

*Additional resources including the Instructional Frameworks and Case Stories are available on the [TPEP section](#) of the OSPI website.*