The importance of SMART goals

IL-EMPOWER

What is a SMART goal and why is it important?

A goal is much more than simply saying that you want to learn about and/or improve on something; rather, it more specifically describes what you want to achieve. SMART goals, with their detailed structure, provide focus as well as a clear idea of what you want to achieve. This structure makes it easier to:

- plan relevant action steps/activities
- measure progress toward achieving the goal
- know when you have met your goal

	SPECIFIC	MEASUREABLE	ACHIEVABLE	RELEVANT	TIMEBOUND
Definition	When setting a goal, be specific, focused, and clear.	Use metrics to keep your plan on track and measure results.	Know how you will accomplish the goal and if you have the tools/skills needed.	Focus your goal so it aligns with the school and district vision/mission and larger, long-term goals.	Set a timeline for action items, benchmarks and deliverables.
Guiding questions	Answer the "W" questions: • Who should be involved? • What do we want to accomplish? • When do we want to accomplish the goal? • Where will the goal have an impact? (school, grade level, department) • Why do we want to accomplish the goal? • Which requirements or constraints could influence the goal?	How much? How will I know when it is accomplished? What are indicators of progress?	What steps are necessary to achieve the goal? What steps to take, in what order, on what timeline and involving whom?	Why is this goal important to our students and school? Will achieving this goal help our students and school? Does this match our identified need? How will this goal contribute toward our long-term goals? Does this goal align with the district and other school goals?	Does my goal have a deadline? What is the timeline to achieve this goal?

Illinois State Board of Education

Coaching others on steps to developing SMART goals
When working with school leaders, it is important to ask a lot of questions. Below are examples of regular goals and SMART goals that pertain to improving student academic and non-academic outcomes.

GOAL	SMART GOAL
Students will meet or exceed the Projected Growth Goals on iReady.	By May 2022, using the i-Ready Reading Program, 60% of all students in Grades K-5 will meet or exceed the Projected Growth Goal as measured by the 2020-21 i-Ready assessment.
Grade 5 students will meet proficiency on the spring MAP test.	By the end of the 2021-22 school year, 90% of fifth-grade students will meet or exceed proficiency in ELA on the spring MAP test.
There will be a decrease in the number of suspensions.	By the end of the 2021-22 school year, suspensions reported for all students in Grade 9 will be reduced by 50% from 2020-21 School Wide Information System (SWIS)* data. *SWIS is a web-based decision system designed to help school/facility personnel improve the behavior support in schools and other educational facilities by providing school personnel with accurate, timely, and practical information for making decisions that lead to better outcomes for students, staff, and families.
We will increase graduation rate.	Within the four years of their ninth-grade entry date, increase by 15% the number of seniors that complete high school with a traditional diploma by June 2022 as measured by the U.S. Department of Education's Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate.