

# Student Goal Setting

## An Overview for Schools

### Why Should Educators be Interested in Student Goal Setting?

Teaching students to use data to understand their own performance, set learning goals, and monitor progress toward those goals can motivate students to achieve more! To be effective, data must be reported in a user-friendly format and align with learning objectives and long-term goals that schools and families share, such as graduation and college readiness.



### Does Research Support This Practice?

Yes! Research supports teaching students to examine their own data and set learning goals. See the following publications for more information.

- Black, A. R., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, N., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Brunner, C., Fasca, C., Heinze, J., Honey, M., Light, D., Mandinach, E., & Wexler, D. (2005). Linking data and learning: The Grow Network study. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 10(3), 241-267.
- Clymer, J. G., & Wiliam, D. (2007). Improving the way we grade science. *Educational Leadership*, 64(4), 36-42.
- May, H., & Robinson, M. A. (2007). *A randomized evaluation of Ohio's Personalized Assessment Reporting System (PARS)*. Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

# Teaching Students to Set Goals

Students should be taught to **reflect on their data** (using user-friendly data reports prepared by schools) and **develop appropriate and meaningful responses to that data** with guidance from teachers. These skills align with state standards related to measurement and data (e.g., representing data graphically, interpreting data), so math teachers may provide key guidance to other staff members when initially teaching students to reflect on and respond to their data.

## Two Ways to Set Goals

### Student Goal-Setting Conference

Students are provided with performance data reports and use these to write down areas they would like to improve. During the students' conference with a teacher, one area of focus is decided on, and implications for instruction and study are developed. Conference sheets are kept in the student's school portfolio.

### Course Goals

Students are given a goal sheet to keep in their course binder. Students set a goal for one major assessment (usually the end-of-year state exam) and monitor their performance on course exams and benchmarks throughout the year. Study and learning strategies are adjusted for each exam.

**Detailed instructions, examples, and editable templates are available in our Student Goal Setting Toolkit!**  
**[www.GreatMiddleSchools.org/goal-setting](http://www.GreatMiddleSchools.org/goal-setting)**