Growth Goals

Using PVAAS to Inform Annual Growth Goals

STEPS 1 2 3

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Contents

Purpose of this Guide:

This guide addresses the importance of writing growth goals to pair with achievement goals, and provides a step-by-step approach that can assist in accomplishing this important work.

Identifying and writing growth goals is an important practice in ongoing continuous improvement efforts to enhance student outcomes!

As a result of using this guide, users will be able to:

- Identify **school level growth goals**
- Identify **grade/subject level growth goals**
- **Pair growth goals with achievement goals** at both the school and grade/subject and/or course levels
- **Write the goals** in a consistent format using language specific to the stakeholders

    Language for the writing of growth goals is provided within the document and also in <u>Appendix B</u>, illustrating possible wording to use when communicating goals formally as well as language suggestions to present goals in a more user-friendly format. Language for writing achievement goals is also provided in this guide.

> *Identifying and writing growth goals is an important practice in ongoing continuous improvement efforts to enhance student outcomes.*

Why Establish Goals?

Goal setting is an important practice in education, business, and industry and in one's personal life as well! For educators, establishing annual goals sets the targets and brings cohesiveness to the work being done by both teachers and administrators.

Goal setting can:

- *Set the direction and focus for the year*
- *Use student learning data to establish, monitor, and evaluate goals*
- *Connect initiatives and minimizes competing priorities*
- *Facilitate shared ownership, self-reflection, and responsibility for students' results across all teachers and staff*
- *Require staff to strive for continual improvement and success by evaluating the performance of the system (grade level/subject level) over time*
- *Inform action planning for current groups of students at a grade/subject/course level within a school*

As a critical aspect of school improvement work, many LEAs engage in a formal process of establishing annual goals at the school, subject, and grade level, and even student level. These goals are often written in results-oriented, quantitative term (i.e., SMART or SMARTIE goals). In many cases, goals are also used for local accountability purposes.

Others may not have a system-wide formal process to set goals annually, but still engage in deliberate and collaborative efforts to identify the highest priorities at the school level and/or highest priorities in a specific grade and/or subject level and classroom level.

In short, establishing priorities based on student learning data *sets the targets!* Without a focus on goals and priorities, educators may not be clear on where they are headed.

Growth Goals + Achievement Goals

Getting Started:

To get started, you may want to reflect on where your LEA/school is with regard to goal setting. Ask yourself these questions:

1. *Are we currently establishing achievement goals at the school and/or grade/subject level on an annual basis?*

2. *Are we currently establishing growth goals (based on PVAAS growth reports) at the school and/or grade/subject level on an annual basis?*
   - The use of PVAAS in the development of growth goals and priorities is one source of growth data to be used in this process.
   - Other data sources may also be considered to identify areas of strength and need in both achievement and growth.

If your answer is yes, this guide may prove helpful to review your process as well as the language you can use to write your achievement and growth goals!

If your answer is no, this guide provides you with a step-by-step process for writing growth goals as well as achievement goals, including samples of formal and less formal language you can use to create those goals.

"If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else."

YOGI BERRA

Why both achievement AND growth goals?

Goals are often written based solely on achievement. For example, a school may identify/write an achievement goal that says "70% of our students will achieve proficiency or above on the ELA 6th grade PSSA." Or " Keystone Literature scores will increase from 40% proficiency to 50% proficiency."

Achievement paints the picture of the number and/or percentage of students at various performance levels and/or reaching proficiency or higher at a given grade or subject level. Writing goals to increase your proficiency level on a yearly basis is an important practice in the school improvement efforts! However, achievement doesn't paint the whole picture. Growth is a highly important component to also consider when determining priorities and focus areas for the upcoming year.

Growth is a means of assessing and evaluating the impact of curriculum, instruction, assessment and organization on students of varying achievement levels across grades and subjects. Growth measures tell us if our students are heading in the right direction, i.e., making progress from their starting points, or said simply, heading in the right direction! Growth data through PVAAS is available for analysis at all achievement levels, allowing us to see how groups of students at all levels of performance are growing!

Pairing growth goals with achievement goals provides a broader view to guide educators in enhancing students' academic outcomes!

What do growth goals "look like"?

At this point, you might be wondering what a growth goal informed by PVAAS data actually "looks like."

Growth goals based on PVAAS data may be written with formal language, or they may be written more informally, in "user-friendly" language. The language you choose in the writing of growth goals depends on the context and your audience. For example, you may use formal language for communicating with the school board and the community while choosing less formal language for internal communication with staff.

Choose the language stems that work best for you in your setting and the audience with whom you are sharing the goals. You may also decide to customize the language below to better suit your purposes. The sentence stems examples below provide wording for you to use in writing your growth goals. The wording ranges from more informal wording to formal wording. These examples are also found in Appendix B of this document.

Informal

- Students in ELA will gain as evidenced by PVAAS.
- Students in ELA will gain (blue) as evidenced by PVAAS.
- Students in ELA will move from maintaining to gaining as evidenced by PVAAS.
- Students in ELA will move from falling behind to (maintaining or gaining) as evidenced by PVAAS.
- Students in ELA will move from maintaining (green) to gaining (blue) as evidenced by PVAAS.
- Students in ELA will exceed the growth standard as evidenced by PVAAS.
- Students in ELA will gain (blue), as evidenced by a PVAAS Average Index of +1.0 or higher.

Formal

PVAAS Review

PVAAS growth reports are a key resource highly useful in establishing growth goals!

PVAAS growth reports provide a highly reliable indicator of whether groups of students are gaining, meeting, or falling behind the expected PA standard of growth

The use of PVAAS in the development of growth goals and priorities is one source of growth data to be used in this process. Other data sources may also be considered to identify areas of strength and need in both achievement and growth.

For the purposes of the wording useful in the writing of growth goals, the graphic below provides a review of the PVAAS growth colors, using the simplified language of gained, maintained, and fell behind.

DARK BLUE ⤊ ↗ *Gained***

LIGHT BLUE ⌃ ↗ *Gained**

GREEN ✓ → *Maintained*

YELLOW ⌄ ↘ *Fell Behind**

RED ⤋ ↘ *Fell Behind***

Remember, **Green (maintaining achievement) is not enough** for schools with a history of lower achievement!

*Some evidence
**Significant evidence

Growth Goals - Key PVAAS Reports

PVAAS provides a variety of growth reports. This guide focuses on two key growth reports useful in informing priorities and patterns in the growth data which then leads to the development of growth goals.

1. **School Value-Added Report**

2. **Growth of Student Group Report**

    • The PVAAS Diagnostic Report is an additional growth report with interactive features that allow you to drill down to specific data relating to groups of students of varying demographic and achievement levels and more.

    • Some users may also choose to add information gleaned from the Diagnostic report in the identification and development of growth goals.

Note: This resource will not provide detailed information on how to interpret the PVAAS growth reports. Users are encouraged to use the HELP button on the PVAAS site to learn more about these reports and how to use and interpret them.
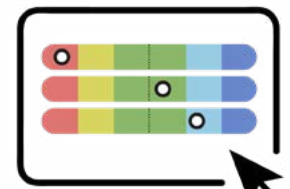
School Value-Added Report
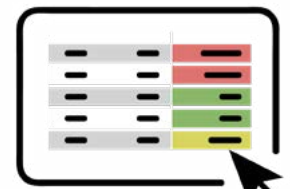
Growth of Student Group Report

Writing Growth Goals (PVAAS), Step By Step

Below you see a series of 6 steps that begin with analyzing student learning data and end with the monitoring and evaluation of the action plan.

For the purposes of this resource, we will focus only on Steps 1, 2 and 3. There are other resources available on the PVAAS website that support processes involved with Steps 4, 5, and 6.

1

Step 1: Find Patterns
Get to know your data and reveal trends that matter

2

Step 2: Determine Priorities
Focus your efforts on the most relevant needs

3

Step 3: Write Growth Goals
to Pair with Achievement Goals

4

Step 4: Dig Deeply for Root Cause(s)
Uncover new opportunities to support learning

5

Step 5: Develop Plans of Action and Align Practices to Goals
Map the strategic steps that can support progress

6

Step 6: Monitor, Adjust, and Evaluate Plans of Action
Use data to optimize for maximum results

1 Step 1: Find Patterns

To set goals, it is important to analyze both growth and achievement data for patterns.

Finding growth patterns in your data starts by looking across grades/subjects for the bigger school-level patterns to determine your school-level goals. After observing and documenting school-level patterns, you will want then dig down to grade and/or subject data for the identification of growth goals at each grade/subject level.

Begin with the PVAAS Value Added Report:

1. Analyze the most recent year growth data, looking at the school level.

2. Use the filters to add previous years, if available.

FIRST:
School-level patterns

THEN:
Subject/grade-level patterns

Key Questions:
What patterns and trends do you see in your data that represent schoolwide growth needs?

On Your Worksheet: Table 1 >
☐ Write several statements about trends in your Value-Added data.
☐ Record strengths and areas for focus.

3. Next, analyze your achievement data across subjects at the school level.

Key Questions:
What patterns and trends do you see in your data that represent schoolwide achievement needs?

On Your Worksheet: Table 1 >
☐ Write one or more statements about school level trends/patterns in your achievement data.
☐ Record strengths and areas for focus.

4. Then: Do the same process for each grade and/or subject level.

Key Questions:
What patterns and trends in your data represent [grade level or subject] growth and achievement needs?

On Your Worksheet: Table 2 >
☐ Analyze growth and achievement for each grade and/or subject level.
☐ Document your findings.

Growth of Student Groups Report:

This report allows you to dig further into your student group data. Depending on your identified patterns and trends in the Value Added report, you may choose to also use the Growth of Student Group report to dig even further. In interpreting this report, it is important to know the demographics of your student population. Use the PVAAS Help button if you need to learn more about how to interpret this report.

- Analyze the data you see in the Growth of Student Group report at the school and grade/subject levels. If available, use the Select Year tab to see historical data.

- Note the colors for each student group and compare to color(s) of ALL students.

Key Questions:

Where do you see differences between the ALL STUDENTS and each specific student group?

Where do you see strengths and needs?

On Your Worksheet: Table 3 >

☐ Write one or more statements about trends in your Growth of Student Group report.

☐ Identify strengths and areas for focus.

2 Step 2:
Determine Priorities

The next step is to identify the priorities in your findings so that you and your team can focus your school-level, as well as your grade/subject-level goals, on the highest priorities. This step requires careful thought to truly identify what areas of focus (need) are the most relevant, accurate, and appropriate targets based on your data. For the purpose of goal setting, it is important to narrow down to the priorities of focus. Remember: If everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority!

When determining priorities, pay attention to the relationship between growth and achievement. This relationship is very important when determining highest priorities.

- For example, if you are seeing low growth AND low achievement in a subject at the school and grade level, then that is most often a very high priority, requiring growth and achievement goals at the school and most if not all grade/subject levels.

- If you are observing high growth AND high achievement, you of course want to maintain that high growth and achievement, but using the Growth of Student Group report will help you drill down even further to identify areas of improvement. There is typically room for growth somewhere!

- Maintaining growth (green) with lower achievement is not enough to "move the needle," or in other words, to increase the achievement level! Lower achievement levels always want to be gaining (blues) in growth!

- If you are a school in ATSI, it is important for you to use the Growth of Student Group report to identify growth needs in specific groups.

The following chart may help as you collectively discuss and consider where your highest priorities may be:

	HIGH ACHIEVEMENT	LOW ACHIEVEMENT
HIGH GROWTH	**Growth:** Maintain high growth; Look to Growth of Student Group report to identify student groups relative to growth needs **Achievement:** Increase by agreed-upon percentage	**Growth:** Maintain where there is high growth; Establish growth goal at light or dark blue (gaining) **Achievement:** Increase by agreed-upon percentage
LOW GROWTH	**Growth:** Growth needs to at least maintain (green) or gain (blue) **Achievement:** Increase by agreed-upon percentage	**Growth:** Increase to green or higher **Achievement:** Increase by agreed-upon percentage

On Your Worksheet: Table 4 >

☐ Record your thoughts relative to high priority needs on Table 4 by writing statements that are observations of what you have noted in the data.

3 Step 3:
Write Growth Goals
to Pair with Achievement Goals

Typically, you want to write growth goals at both the school level as well as the grade and/or subject level. The same holds true for achievement goals:

- Write growth goals paired with achievement goals at the school level AND
- Write growth goals paired with achievement goals at the grade and/or subject level

There are, however, some considerations when creating those goals.

Considerations:

1. In deciding on both growth and achievement goals, think about the degree of rigor that is appropriate to your setting.
2. When developing goals, consider the realistic number of growth goals for a particular grade and/or subject.
    a. For example, if your elementary teachers are teaching 3 subjects (ELA, Math, Science), it may not be realistic to have growth and achievement goals in all 3 subjects. This is where identifying the highest priorities in that grade level is so important!
    b. Conversely, Middle School and High School teachers are typically teaching single tested subjects, so it is likely realistic to have subject specific goals in each content area.
3. Use language (formal or less formal) to align with your audience.
4. Start by writing your growth goal (refer to suggested language in Appendix B).
5. Add the paired achievement goal.

Below are some examples to illustrate recommended wording and what it "looks like" to pair growth and achievement goals together:

School Level

GROWTH GOAL	ACHIEVEMENT GOAL	GOAL STATEMENT(PAIRED)
Student will gain in ELA	The percent of students reaching proficiency or above in ELA will increase by 25% (50 students) from ____ to ____% proficiency or advanced	Students will gain in ELA; The percent of students reaching proficiency or above in ELA will increase by 25% (50 students) from ____ to ____% proficiency or advanced
Students will maintain (blue) in Keystone Biology	The percent of students reaching proficiency or above in Keystone Biology will increase by 10% (10 students) from ____ to ____% profiency or advanced.	Students will maintain (blue) in Keystone Biology; The percent of students reaching proficiency or above in Keystone Biology will increase by 10% (10 students) from ____ to ____% profiency or advanced.

Grade/Subject Level:

GROWTH GOAL	ACHIEVEMENT GOAL	GOAL STATEMENT(PAIRED)
Students with IEPs in grade 8 Math will gain	The percent of students with IEPs in grade 8 Math reaching proficiency will increase by 15% (5 students) from _____ to _____% proficiency or advanced.	Students with IEPs in grade 8 Math will gain; The percent of students with IEPs in grade 8 Math reaching proficiency will increase by 15% (5 students) from _____ to _____% proficiency or advanced.
Students in grade 4 ELA will gain	The percent of students in grade 4 ELA reaching proficiency will increase by 20% (10 students) from _____ to _____% proficient or advanced.	Students in grade 4 ELA will gain; The percent of students in grade 4 ELA reaching proficiency will increase by 20% (10 students) from _____ to _____% proficient or advanced.

NOTE: *Examples reflect state assessed subjects and grades. For non-state assessed subjects and grades, LEA's can utilize locally administered assessments for achievement goals and use PVAAS locally administered assessments for growth goals if available.*

On Your Worksheet: **Return to Table 5** >

☐ Locate Table 5, *Writing Growth Goals to Pair with Achievement Goals* in the worksheet.

☐ Complete this table. It will include subject and grade level goals for your school.

Summary: Steps 1 through 3

The purpose of developing growth and achievement goals is to focus all educators within the school on the identified and highest priority targets for continuous improvement.

Writing growth and achievement goals is the first step in the process of continual school improvement! The next step is to align the work to the goals, i.e., to form a tight connection with goals to practice. A tight alignment increases the probability of achieving the established goals.

Connecting the work to the goals brings a shared commitment to achieving the established goals!

APPENDIX A:

Data Analysis and Growth Goals Fillable Worksheet

TABLE 1: Value-Added Report Findings: School Level

Write several statements about the *school-level* trends/patterns in your Value-Added data, most recent year + previous years.

Write one or more statements about *school-level* trends/patterns in your Achievement data, recent and historical.

Where are the strengths? (growth and achievement)

Where are the needs? (growth and achievement)

TABLE 2: Value Added Report Findings: Grade/Subject Level

Write several statements about the *grade/subject-level* trends/patterns in your Value-Added data, most recent year + previous years.

Write one or more statements about *grade/subject-level* trends/patterns in your achievement data, recent and historical.

Where are the strengths? (growth and achievement)

Where are the needs? (growth and achievement)

TABLE 3: Growth of Student Groups Report

Write several statements about the *grade/subject-level* trends/patterns in your Growth of Student Groups report, most recent year + previous years.

Where are the strengths?

Where are the needs?

TABLE 4: Highest Priorities

Write statements about your highest priority needs:

TABLE 5: Writing Growth Goals to Pair with Achievement Goals

School & Grade/Subject Growth and Achievement Goals

School Level:
Write your growth and achievement goals at the school level.

Grade Level:
Write your growth and achievement goals at the grade level.

K

(Use Local Assessment Data/Local Assessment & PVAAS Reporting)

1st

(Use Local Assessment Data/Local Assessment & PVAAS Reporting)

2nd

(Use Local Assessment Data/Local Assessment & PVAAS Reporting)

3rd

(Use Local Assessment Data/Local Assessment & PVAAS Reporting)

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

Subject Level:

Write your growth and achievement goals at the subject level.

Algebra

(Use Local Assessment Data/Local Assessment & PVAAS Reporting)

Biology

(Use Local Assessment Data/Local Assessment & PVAAS Reporting)

Literature

(Use Local Assessment Data/Local Assessment & PVAAS Reporting)

Other

(Use Local Assessment Data/Local Assessment & PVAAS Reporting)

APPENDIX B:

Options for School-Level Growth Goal Language

You may customize the alternate language below as needed for communicating with various stakeholders and audiences. Choose the language stems that work best for you in your setting and the audience with whom you are sharing the goals.

- Students in ELA will gain as evidenced by PVAAS.

- Students in ELA will gain (blue) as evidenced by PVAAS.

- Students in ELA will move from maintaining to gaining as evidenced by PVAAS.

- Students in ELA will move from falling behind to (maintaining or gaining) as evidenced by PVAAS.

- Students in ELA will move from maintaining (green) to gaining (blue) as evidenced by PVAAS.

- Students in ELA will exceed the growth standard as evidenced by PVAAS.

- Students in ELA will gain (blue), as evidenced by a PVAAS Average Index of +1.0 or higher.

Explore additional resources at

education.pa.gov/pvaas >