

Setting and Monitoring District Goals: The School Committee's Role

Planning for Success: Advancing Our Current Planning Practices to Achieve Our Vision of Success

Under state law, School Committees are responsible for approving district goals in Massachusetts. School Committees are also responsible for evaluating Superintendents annually, under the state's Educator Evaluation System. School Committees must evaluate the Superintendent on at least two goals: one professional practice goal and one student learning goal. The state's model system also recommends that School Committees and Superintendents set two to four district improvement goals. The student learning and district improvement goals should mirror, and fully align with, the strategic objectives and outcomes of the District Plan. The Superintendent and School Committee may choose to set multi-year goals for the Superintendent's evaluation, also in alignment with the District Plan.

The School Committee's role in approving and monitoring the Superintendent's evaluation goals provides the Committee with an important tool in setting and achieving district goals. The School Committee monitors progress toward attainment of evaluation goals through the Superintendent's Annual Plan, which identifies the key actions, timelines, and benchmarks for each goal set, and the Superintendent's reports of progress. Similarly, the School Committee may monitor progress toward attainment of all other district goals through the District Action Plan's implementation benchmarks, and the Superintendent's reports of progress. The Committee's plan for progress monitoring may provide the structure for the School Committee's work and year-long calendar.

Interested School Committees may consider setting professional practice goal(s) of their own, for the Committee as a whole. Professional practice goals are designed to increase capacity and effectiveness, as individuals define the skills, knowledge, or practices they will develop. School Committees may also consider setting additional goals for the Committee as a whole that will support the Superintendent in achieving district goals.

Monitoring Goal Alignment



One District...One Coherent Set of Focused Goals

The School Committee, in its "big picture" oversight role, is best positioned to safeguard the district's focus by monitoring goal coherence in the midst of what can otherwise become a proliferation of district goals and strategies. Effective district planning and execution is built on a clear, consistent, shared, and achievable vision for the district and its future. Three to five strategic objectives, the key levers for improvement, are recommended to support district focus.

Any School Committee "overarching goals," Superintendent evaluation goals, district budget goals, and School Improvement Plan goals must be fully aligned with the strategic objectives and outcomes of the District Plan, the district's official roadmap for improvement. These district goal setting documents should be monitored and updated, as necessary, to ensure coherence and reflect the district's current realities and priorities. Planning for improvement is a continuous process, and the District Plan is a living document that should reflect that process.