

BUILDING RESPONSIVE GOALS

Guidance for Authorizers on Working With
Schools to Develop Quality Responsive Goals





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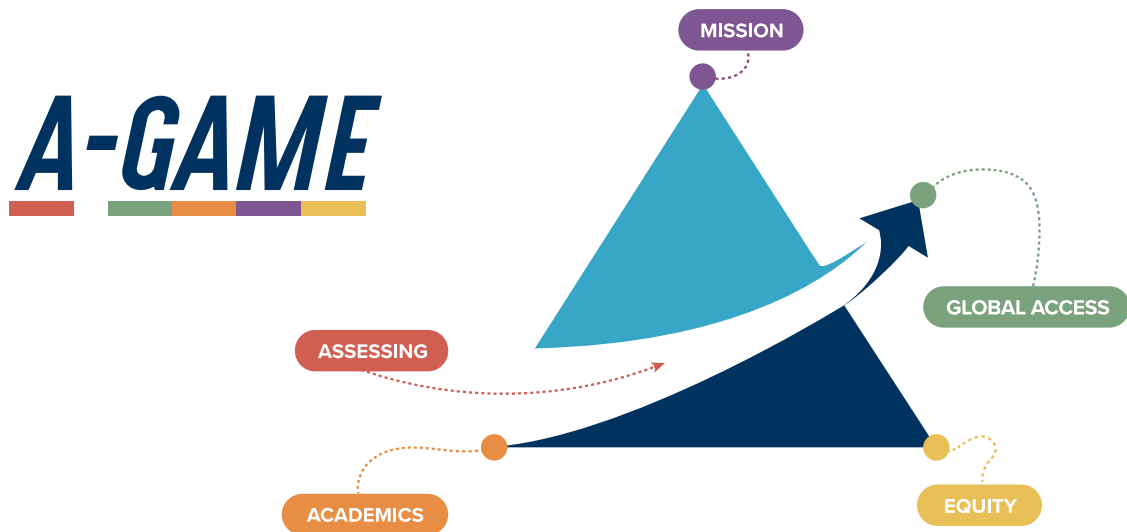
A brief history

Two years prior to pandemic related school closures and students' loss of instructional time, charter school authorizers had been searching for ways to measure quality in schools that primarily educate students who are at risk of disengaging. Through a nationally funded initiative called the A-GAME (Advancing Great Authorizing and Modeling Excellence), 50 authorizers and authorizer associations worked to answer the question: "When I walk through different school buildings, I can see differences in quality. How do I quantify them?"

A-GAME originally set out focusing exclusively on measuring the quality of alternative education campuses (or AECs). Members joined as they were frustrated by accountability systems that rely on traditional measures, because they don't tell the whole story. Schools serving large numbers of disengaged and barely-engaged students typically receive low marks on state and authorizer performance frameworks -- even if they produce positive results for students documented through other measures. To assist authorizers in developing goals that would capture the successes and challenges of the alternative schools in their portfolio, the A-GAME team worked with 12 authorizers, and 15 alternative schools through a process that came to be known as Responsive Goal setting.

Recognizing that the results of the Responsive Goal setting process, and other tools developed during the initial A-GAME work, could inform how authorizers, school districts, and states evaluate the quality of all schools following the pandemic, the A-GAME partners applied for and were awarded another charter school dissemination grant. The new initiative was reframed to address the accountability of all charter school types, post-COVID, and was called A-GAME: Measure What Matters, changing the acronym to reflect the areas of measurement to focus on (Assessing--Global Access, Academics, Mission, and Equity).

A-GAME's Responsive Goals process embraces a growing body of research showing the importance of schools providing more than an academic learning environment. When using Responsive Goals, schools can foster environments where students' well-being and social-emotional learning is front and center, and where all students, regardless of ability, home language, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, are nurtured, challenged academically, and validated. Outcomes of these programs are not often captured in proficiency rates on state standardized assessments or through growth scores alone; they are captured through "leading indicators" such as improvements in student engagement, preparedness, and competencies, to name a few.



● Global Access

Measuring beyond “on-time” graduation or college and career readiness. These goals ensure students are taking measurable steps to be successful after high school regardless of the path they choose. Goals can include different measures of high school completion, readiness to enter the workforce, FAFSA completion, college or trade school acceptance, employment status, or entry into the military or completion of an apprenticeship program.

● Academics

Going beyond proficiency or growth on the state assessment(s), these goals include performance and growth on formative assessments, performance on demonstrated works, passing on core competencies, the use of internal benchmarks, Lexile and Quantile growth and more.

● Mission

These goals measure the extent to which the school is evaluating the effectiveness of their mission. What is it that the school offers students, families, and communities that they cannot get at the school down the road, and how do we know it is having a positive impact? These goals may fit into one of the other A-GAME measurement areas, or they may fall into another measurement area, but all should align with the school’s mission, vision, and/or stated focus.

● Equity

These goals meet students where they are and ensure that ALL students have what they need to succeed. Equity goals do not prioritize students on the “bubble” or the lowest performing students and can provide students with multiple ways to succeed in a given measurement area. Goals may be differentiated, based on students’ incoming skill or ability to engage in their education, or they may focus on areas of students’ social and emotional development or whether all students experience the school environment as welcoming and feel that they belong.

How are these goals responsive?

Responsive Goals are designed to measure ALL students' outcomes, across multiple domains and in various timeframes that schools and authorizers collaboratively create to measure school quality in ways that reflect their unique missions, values, and student populations. A-GAME's Responsive Goal process creates goals that are responsive to students' individual needs, but also are responsive to schools' missions and context as well as state and authorizer policies. The Responsive Goal approach ensures that schools get "credit" for engaging all students, regardless of where they start, and that schools are held accountable for seeing that all students remain engaged, demonstrate progress, and succeed across multiple domains.

The first version of this guide, "Measuring Quality, A Resource Guide for Authorizers and Alternative Schools," was written specifically with alternative education campuses in mind and can still be found on the [A-GAME resource web page](#)¹. This guide, however, is intended to help charter school authorizers and their schools measure quality across all charter school types, especially those seeking to avoid relying on state assessments and cohort graduation rates as the sole marker of quality.

The following sections walk through the A-GAME partners' guiding principles behind the Responsive Goal work, provide details on the recommended steps for developing Responsive Goals, point out resources for exploring Responsive Goals that were developed through both A-GAME initiatives, provide recommendations for target setting, and share insight into the implementation of the Responsive Goals.

Throughout this guide, we will highlight critical items to consider before, during, and after the goal setting process. This work is not quick, nor is it easy. It takes time to get it right and this guide provides recommendations and considerations that were often essential to address during the A-GAME Responsive Goal process, through our facilitation. With this guide, our goal is that authorizers and schools entering into this work can develop Responsive Goals without the need of a facilitator.

Before Beginning the Responsive Goal Process

Before beginning this work, we recommend that authorizers create a collaborative environment in which to work with their charter schools. To accomplish this, we recommend that the authorizer get to know their schools well, communicate to schools about the collaborative process, and agree upon a set of guiding principles.

The work to develop Responsive Goals or frameworks that incorporate Responsive Goals is a process that takes time and resources. This is why it is critical that both the schools and the authorizers are on board with these principles before undertaking the work.

Know your schools well

A lot of time invested in the initial stages of the A-GAME facilitation of goal setting was spent asking the schools to describe their mission, model, typical student population, and unique program offerings. If authorizers take the time to first develop this understanding on their own, they can reduce the amount of time spent with the school(s) in meetings.

We recommend that this stage be approached like you are doing research for your next vacation, familiarizing yourself with the school's mission, grades served, instructional modality, and design before going to visit the school. When scheduling the visit, be sure to let them know that the visit is not compliance related. During the visit, let them act as your tour guide. Let them show you what they are proud of, talk to them about their school's model and students, and ask them about their data collection practices. Appendix A includes a list of possible questions to ask schools and/or items familiarize yourself with before starting the Responsive Goal process.

¹ <https://charternetwork.org/agame/resources/>

Establish an understanding of the process

Before digging into the meat of goal setting, it is important for authorizers to help their charter schools understand how the goals will be used, why they are needed, and the timeline for the work. For example, will the goals become part of the charter schools' contracts ("Big-A" accountability) or are the goals meant to provide the schools with tools to help them monitor student progress and gauge the effectiveness of specific program areas ("Little-a" accountability)?

Insight #1: "Big-A" Vs. "Little-a" Accountability

Big-A accountability goals are often used by authorizers to monitor charter schools' progress toward meeting contractual goals or monitor the schools' progress toward meeting the goals established in the authorizers' performance frameworks. These are often used by the authorizer to make high-stakes decisions about whether to renew, revoke, or non-renew a charter school's contract or allow a charter school to replicate.

Little-a accountability, on the other hand, may be used by the authorizer as information that is good to know, but that is not used in making high stakes decisions. Some authorizers may utilize little-a accountability goals to articulate whether a school needs support with a specific group of students, or to allow the school to assess whether a new initiative is working.

Establishing a timeline and expectations for the responsibilities of each party will create a clear sense of purpose and understanding of the expected outcomes. Appendix B provides two example timelines (based on method of collaboration) that includes sample agenda items for each meeting along with "homework" assignments that are to be completed prior to the next meeting (e.g., providing copies of surveys and assessments and/or their technical documentation; providing summary data, research, and/or norms for each assessment or measure being considered; providing samples of reports that the schools are able to pull that give them the requisite data for the analysis of whether goals are being met, etc.). While it may be difficult, we recommend that meetings occur on a weekly basis to maintain momentum. During our A-GAME facilitations, we found bi-weekly meetings were less productive as often people forgot details from the prior meetings. For all meetings, we recommend that one person be assigned with taking detailed notes during each meeting and summaries of next steps and responsibilities be sent to all parties soon after.

Agree on the Guiding Principles of Responsive Goal Work

Following are six guiding principles that the authorizers and their schools should agree on prior to beginning Responsive Goal work. Authorizers may opt to provide these principles in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the schools and ask for sign off before beginning or may opt to discuss these with schools during the "getting to know you" site visit, described above.

1. Consider students first and foremost

Both authorizers and schools should come to this work with the mindset that accountability measures should be more closely aligned to the things that educators use to monitor students' progress and growth as well as to things that families and the community care about. Responsive Goals should strive to center on the individual student, taking into account their personal circumstances, progress, and challenges, rather than relying solely on group-based comparisons.

2. One-size does not fit all

Students arrive at school with a variety of different strengths and challenges. Measures of school quality, therefore, need to be sensitive to these differences and provide evidence that the school is addressing all students' needs.

3. Keep expectations high

The use of measures outside of state assessments and accountability metrics does not mean that either the school or the authorizer is “dumbing down” or “diluting” expectations for students or schools.

4. How schools are evaluated impacts their focus

By measuring school quality more broadly, authorizers create the space for schools to be more innovative in their pedagogical approaches and foster the education of broader topics of study. In fact, it actually provides a more comprehensive, well-rounded understanding of student learning and progress. Responsive goals should strive to provide actionable insights that help schools improve over time. Goals should focus on identifying areas of strength and weakness, guiding educators to refine practices that lead to better student outcomes.

5. Alignment of schools’ mission/purpose

In addition to the core subject areas, schools are responsible for teaching students how to engage with their peers, interact in group settings, effectively manage time, make good decisions, and approach problems (to name a few). Therefore, where states’ policies allow, authorizers’ measures of school quality, too, should include more than subject area proficiency and growth and graduation rates.

6. Targets for success should be rooted in data

The data and evidence used to measure school quality should match each schools’ context as best as possible. This could be accomplished through the use of comparison data from other schools, the use of assessment or survey norms, research, or the analysis of the school’s own historic data.

The Responsive Goal Process

In this section we walk through the process that the A-GAME facilitators most commonly followed, offering insight into the lessons we learned along the way. The steps offered below are recommendations and some groups may find that not all of them are required. The process we describe entails authorizers and school leaders working hand in hand throughout the process, as we believe this is the best way to build buy-in from the schools and we have found this also builds a lot of trust between the organizations. However, a handful of authorizers who participated in the Responsive Goal setting process took on a bulk of the work on their own, with the A-GAME facilitators, and had several touch points throughout the process during which they presented draft goals to schools and collected feedback. The feedback was then incorporated, to the extent the authorizer agreed with it, into the subsequent drafts. Two examples of timelines for this work have been provided, one for authorizers working hand and hand with schools and one for authorizers doing the bulk of the work and getting feedback from schools, in Appendix B.

Following, we will provide scenarios and caveats that will help authorizers and their schools understand the benefits of each step in the collaborative process, but also call out where some of the recommendations may need to be modified or skipped, based on contextual factors that authorizers often grapple with including capacity, policy limitations, and timelines.

It should be noted that these recommended steps assume that the authorizers have completed the recommended pre-work outlined in the prior section of this guide.

Step 1. Identify Current Goals’ Alignment and Efficacy

The first step in the process of developing Responsive Goals involves cataloging schools’ current goals, the assessments or data that are used for those goals, and the entities that utilize those data/goals (e.g., school district, authorizer, state department of education, and/or the feds). Knowing which entities require the schools to provide the data informs which of the goals, and their corresponding assessments and data, are non-negotiable.

Along with cataloging what measures are being assessed in each of the schools’ goals, and for whom, schools should then provide details on whether they feel the measures are aligned with the growth and accomplishments of all the students who attend their school. If schools do not believe one or more of the measures are aligned with their specific student population, school model, etc. and don’t reflect the outcomes of all their students, they should provide information on the source of the misalignment or divergence. See

Insight #2 for additional detail on identifying student groups whose data may not align with current goals.

Insight #2: Identifying Student Groups Whose Results May Not Align with Current Accountability Measures

When discussing students for whom a measure or assessment is not aligned or does not effectively capture outcomes among the group, we are not talking about just a few outliers (e.g., 4-5 students) but rather, we are talking about large groups of students within the school. Below is a small sample of the student groups that participants in the A-GAME Responsive Goal Process have articulated for this purpose:

- Students in untested grades (e.g., K-2, 9, 10, & 12)
- Students enrolled in a school with a non-traditional pedagogical approach (e.g., Montessori, dual-language immersion, and project-based or expeditionary learning schools)
- Students who are two or more years behind in math and/or reading
- Students with significant gaps in their educational history
- Students who were previously incarcerated
- Students with multiple life challenges
- Pregnant or parenting students

For example, Happy Valley Montessori enrolls students in grades K-5. The table below provides an example of how schools can provide information to their authorizers on the students for whom an assessment does not provide information that is aligned with the school model.

Table 1. Sample Method to Collect Information on Groups of Students for Whom Current Measures do not Capture their Skills or Outcomes

Measure/ Assessment	Entity(ies) that uses the data to evaluate the school	Student group(s) who are not captured	Reason for misalignment
Statewide math test	State and authorizer	3rd and 4th grade students	Happy Valley is a traditional Montessori school that uses counting beads and other manipulative tools to teach students mathematics. Students in 3-4th grade are not allowed to use these tools when taking the state assessment, so they tend to perform below grade level. By 5th grade, the students comprehend math in the abstract and no longer need the tangible tools when testing, and tend to perform much better than the 3-4th grade students.

In addition to student circumstances or school design elements that might render some misaligned measures and assessments, there are also some situations that do not yield valid results for student groups, or even an entire school. Most notably, very small student groups are problematic when it comes to evaluating schools. All states have suppression policies that identify the minimum size a group of students’ results can be from in

order to be used for accountability purposes, varying from as small as five (5) students in a group to as large as 30 students ². Therefore, schools that are in rural areas, which tend to be small, or those that are intentionally small can often receive no valid data on the measures used in the states' accountability systems.

Another factor impacting the number of students with valid state test results is how long the students are enrolled in a given year. States have policies outlining how long students need to be enrolled in a school before they count toward the schools' accountability ratings, with students who count being considered "Full Academic Year" students, or "Continuously Enrolled" students. For some schools, even if they enroll 200 students over the course of the year, the number of students who tested and qualify to be included in the accountability metrics can be too small to "count." This is often due to the students being highly mobile, as with many alternative education schools. For smaller high schools in particular, small numbers of students can be an issue when the state only tests students in one of the four grade levels.

When schools do not have enough students to be included in their accountability ratings for one or more of the state accountability metrics, we strongly recommend that authorizers allow schools to utilize other assessments or data to provide authorizers with evidence of their effectiveness. More on the type of data or assessments will be covered in the following section.

Step 2. Identifying Supplemental Measures

Once schools have identified the student groups for whom state or authorizer accountability measures work, and those for whom they do not work, other measures of the same indicator (e.g., math achievement and growth, post-secondary readiness, high school completion) should be explored. We strongly recommend reviewing the internal assessments, tools, and data points that a school already collects and uses to track school improvement, monitor students' progress, and/or evaluate the effectiveness of a new program. We feel that this helps to better align how schools are being evaluated to what is being used by educators, which not only helps to build buy-in, but also reduces burden on the school to collect and report out on students' outcomes. It is important, however, to be sure to select measures that evaluate the same indicator within the accountability framework.

Insight #3: Defining Indicators, Measures, and Metrics for our Purposes

The terms indicator, measure, and metric can often mean different things between people, states, or organizations, and sometimes might be used interchangeably. For clarity, we have provided our meaning of these terms as they are used throughout this guide.

Indicators are the large buckets or categories that are often used in accountability frameworks and systems. Some common indicators include academic achievement, academic growth, student engagement, college and career readiness, and high school completion. There are often a number of goals for each indicator in an accountability framework or system. For example, we often measure both math and reading under the academic achievement indicator.

Measures are the tools or data points that we use to evaluate specific indicators. A measure of achievement, for example, is a reading test. A measure of student engagement can be student attendance or a student engagement survey. Goals call out the measure that will be used to evaluate a school's effectiveness under an indicator.

Metrics are the computational methods used to quantify how a school (or student) is performing on a specific measure. Proficiency rates, growth percentiles, graduation rates, attendance rates, average scores, or index scores, for example. Targets of success for each goal are established using metrics.

Table 2 provides an example of how these terms appear in A-GAME Responsive Goals.

² In addition, some states, as well as federal databases, mask the outcomes of groups with up to 100 students, by providing a range in which the school's outcomes are included. For example, if the results from 60 students were 65% proficient, the school's data would show that the result was between 50-75%.

Table 2. Example of A-GAME’s use of the terms Indicator, Measure, and Metric

Goal: Each year, students in grades 3-5 will demonstrate growth on the statewide ELA assessment by achieving a median student growth percentile of at least 50.		
Indicator: Academic Growth	Measure: The state’s ELA assessment	Metric: Median student growth percentile

Continuing with the example from Table 1, Happy Valley Montessori may assess all their students using a third-party assessment of math and allow their students to utilize the same manipulative tools that are used when the students are learning math concepts during their testing. Conceptually, this is no different than allowing students to use paper and pencil to work out math problems during the state’s math assessment. Happy Valley may then suggest to their authorizer the use of those third-party test results for their students in grades 3-4 to evaluate their math proficiency for accountability purposes. Thus, the authorizer will see the school’s proficiency rates for all students on the state report card (“little-a” accountability), but for the school’s annual evaluation and contract renewal application (“Big-A” accountability), the authorizer would consider the results of the 3rd and 4th grade students’ performance on the internal third-party assessment, and the 5th graders’ performance on the state test.

Insight #4: Authorizer Considerations for Schools’ Use of Internal Assessments for Accountability Purposes

1. Does the assessment measure the same indicator of interest?
2. How many times a year is the assessment given?
3. Which students will take the assessment each year?
4. Was the assessment developed for students in the grade levels (or student skill levels) that the school is administering it to?
5. What data is available (e.g., scale scores, norms, growth projections, achievement levels, etc.) from the vendor and do any of their data fit the purpose of the indicator?
6. Will the school use raw data, or are some data transformations needed to produce the metric of interest?
7. Are the results from the assessment verifiable?
8. Can the authorizer get direct access to the data?

Step 3. Identifying Whether Goals need to be Differentiated by Student Groups

The Happy Valley Montessori example provides one way that a school might differentiate a goal, by using an internal assessment of the same indicator, and may presume that the target of success is the same (e.g., each year, at least 70% of students in grades 3-5 will show evidence of grade level proficiency in math). Other ways of differentiating goals may involve adjusting the definition of success for one or more student groups. To illustrate this point, consider students who have been identified as chronically absent (i.e., absent 10% or more of instructional days). We know that students cannot learn if they are not in school to receive instruction. Therefore, while we want all students to be proficient and grow in their academics, perhaps the definition of success for the chronically absent students is for them to attend school on a regular basis. Then, once they are attending school regularly, their goal would be to show growth in their academics. Table 3 provides an example of what this might look like.

Table 3. Example of Goal Differentiation based on Student Attendance Groupings

Student Group	Goal	Business Rules
Students with a 90% or better attendance rate	Each year, students with an average daily attendance rate of at least 90% will have a median growth percentile in reading of at least 50.	Metric: Median growth percentile among all students who had an average daily attendance (ADA) rate of 90% or higher for the year. Exclusion rule: Students whose ADA is less than 90% for the year
Students with an attendance rate below 90%	Each year, students who are identified as chronically absent in the prior semester, will have an average daily attendance rate of at least 90% in the following semester.	Numerator: Sum of the number of days in attendance in semester 2 among students identified as chronically absent in semester 1 Denominator: Sum of the total days enrolled in semester 2 among students who were identified as chronically absent in semester 1 Exclusion rule: Students whose ADA was 90% or higher in Semester 1

Alternatively, the goal for the students who are identified as chronically absent could have a lower growth expectation--such as a median growth percentile of at least 40. However, growth data for chronically absent students should be reviewed to determine their target growth. More details on the use of data to inform target setting are explored in Step 6.

Similarly, authorizers might consider how tracking engagement looks different for a school that has both online and brick-and-mortar campuses or programs. Students enrolled in the online program may need to have a different definition of attendance or engagement than students who are enrolled in the full-time brick and mortar. For example, the online school may define engagement as logging in to the web-based portal, calling or emailing with an instructor or counselor, minutes spent interacting with online asynchronous content, attending a virtual synchronous lesson, or the number of assignments and/or quizzes turned in. For schools that operate a hybrid model, where students can access content and instructors both remotely and in-person, these same indicators of engagement could be used in addition to students' more traditional measures of in-person attendance.

Step 4. Draft Responsive Goals

Equipped with an understanding of the internal measures, assessments, or data that schools might use to supplement the non-negotiable goals in the state and/or authorizer frameworks, and the student groups that may require differentiated goals, your team is now ready to draft a set of Responsive Goals. While the A-GAME collaborations often involved coming up with draft goals from scratch, we have added all the goals that were developed through the course of both A-GAME initiatives into a searchable [Responsive Goals Bank](https://charternetwork.org/agame-resource/responsive-goal-repository/)³. The Responsive Goals Bank is meant to provide examples of goals for authorizers and schools to use as a starting

3 <https://charternetwork.org/agame-resource/responsive-goal-repository/>

point when drafting their own goals. The tool allows users to search over 100 goals by four “filters:” A-GAME indicators (Global Access, Academics, Mission, and Equity), school type (Early childhood (PK-2), Elementary (K-5/6), Middle (6-8), and High, (9-12)), school specialization (e.g., adult, alternative, Montessori, and project-based), and subject area (e.g., ELA, math, high school completion, school climate, and post-secondary readiness). Users may select one option from each filter and will end up with a short(er) list of goals that others have developed that fit within the filtered parameters.

As stated previously, the goals in the Responsive Goals Bank are to provide examples of what others have developed for their own context. In cases where the goal language includes targets for success, we do not intend for users to use those targets as their own. Rather, we intend for users to do their own data analysis to arrive at their own targets of success that match their own context. See Step 5 for guidance on target setting.

Step 5. Setting Targets for Success

Whereas goal development might be considered more of an art than a science, target setting should be more science than art. Targets here refer to the numeric value that the school is expected to achieve, such as the percentage of students to meet specific outcomes, or an average school value. Using the goal from Table 2:

Each year, students in grades 3-5 will demonstrate growth on the statewide ELA assessment by achieving a median student growth percentile of at least 50.

The target is for the school to achieve a median student growth percentile of 50. In this case there is not a specific student-level goal, but it is expected that at least half of the students obtain a growth percentile of at least 50.

Another goal might be: *Each year, at least 90% of students will have an engagement rate of at least 80%.*

Here the school-level target is that 90% of students will achieve the specified engagement rate, and each student’s goal (or expected outcome) is to engage at least 80% of the time.

These targets, however, should not be arrived at arbitrarily (or copied from the sample goals in the Responsive Goal Bank), but should be based on norms, research, and/or data from national, state, district, or historic data from the school itself. Insight #5 outlines the caveats for the use of the different sources of data.

Insight #5: Using the Best Available Data for the School’s Context

All data sources have limitations to their applicability across various scenarios. In most cases, including the use of testing norms, the student population from which the resulting norms are derived are what we call “normal” (thus the term “norms”). A normal sample consists of students with varying outcomes that cluster around the middle (or average) range. The farther students’ results are from the average (higher or lower), the less frequent the results are.

The use of norms for evaluating a school’s performance, then, assumes that students in the school also have a normal distribution of skill, or outcomes. By-and-large, this works. However, when a school has a high proportion of students who either tend to score really high, or really low, on an assessment the school does not have a “normal” student population—rather the population is a-typical.

Schools with a-typical student populations, therefore, may require additional analysis of their performance data to arrive at rigorous and attainable targets for success. This is why the use of comparisons to school districts and/or comparison schools (with similar student populations) are often used. However, these methods too can be less accurate than we would like because they use things like income status, special education status, and English learner status as proxies for students’ ability or skill level. And, certainly, these kinds of comparisons are better than comparisons to larger, more normal student populations.

The gold standard for comparisons would include analysis of schools whose students have similar academic starting places, rather than using proxies. For example, for state assessment outcomes using the proportion of students scoring in each performance category (as well as the percent of special education and English learners) to the school of interest would be a better comparison than the use of the percent of low income, special education, and English learners. This type of anchoring of students' academic starting point is what has made the Student Growth Percentile Methodology so popular across the country. Unfortunately, we have not seen a parallel methodology developed for proficiency rates.

This is one reason the A-GAME goals developed over the last seven years have focused so heavily on student growth AND proficiency merged into a single goal.

All that to say that test vendor norms and state and district comparisons are okay when the school and authorizer agree that a school's student population is relatively "normal." However, when it is well understood that the student population is skewed one way or the other, it is worth doing some additional analysis. This could mean using the school's own historic data to establish baselines and set targets for success.

Step 6. Gather Stakeholder Feedback & Refine Goals

Often, the authorizer and/or schools arrive at a large set of potential goals from which to select. We recommend that schools have no more than 8-10 goals, including both required and Responsive Goals. There are a few practices that will help to eliminate some goals from the pool of potential ones, these include:

- Collecting feedback on potential goals from the school and authorizer communities, such as boards of directors, families, teachers, and students;
- Collecting and analyzing the data to see whether the data you may have thought was readily available is, and in the format needed to calculate the metric per the goals' specifications;
- Asking the question of whether each goal captures all, or the vast majority of, students who enroll in the school;
- Asking the question of whether each goal addresses the school's mission, student population, and indicator of interest; and finally
- Asking whether and how teachers can use the data produced for the goal in the classroom to place and monitor students' progress.

Feedback from our earliest collaborations suggest that the collection and analysis of the data is needed before selecting the goal and setting targets. Often our earliest adopters found that the data may have been available but was cumbersome to collect and/or formatted in a way that was not usable. This often led to the groups needing to revisit the goal and either select a different measure or strike the goal altogether.

Getting feedback from boards of directors and staff members prior to the adoption of a goal will go a long way to help build buy-in—especially if teachers find the data useful in their own work with students. And, authorizing boards (or their designee) seemed much more willing to approve goals that addressed all, or nearly all, students as opposed to one or two grade levels, or a small sub-group of students.

Implementing Responsive Goals

In addition to the activities described on how to refine the pool of potential goals, the authorizers who helped develop this guide felt strongly that there also needs to be a number of implementation tools to help both their own offices and their schools implement the goals with fidelity and attempt to make the implementation as painless as possible. Some of these authorizers' recommendations follow:

- Map out a data collection plan, including the identification of the sources of the data and when the data becomes available. [See Appendix C](#)
- Identify who is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting the results for the goals.
- Consider a pilot period where the school(s) is not being held to the goal for high stakes purposes until all involved parties are comfortable that the data is collectable and valid, benchmarks can be set with confidence, and targets are rigorous AND attainable.
- Build a schedule of regular check-ins so the issues can be identified early and addressed and/or goals can be revised prior to the data's use for high stakes decisions.

Appendix A

Sample Information to Help You Get to Know Your School(s)

Questions Related to...	Example Questions (May be gleaned from document review or by asking school leadership)
School Info & Practices	-What grades does the school offer? -How often are students able to enroll? -Does the school have any approved enrollment preferences or criteria? If so, what are they? -What is the school's mission? -Does the school have a specific model/design (e.g., Montessori, STEM, Project Based Learning, etc.)? -How is students' content mastery demonstrated (e.g., class/subject grades, mastery of competencies, etc.)? -How do students access instructional content (e.g., direct instruction on campus, remote synchronous instruction, remote asynchronous instruction, blend of remote and on-campus synchronous and asynchronous instruction, etc.)? -Does the school provide social-emotional or character education to students? If so, do they use a purchased curriculum or one developed in house? -Does the school provide any wrap-around services to students. If so, what are those?
Student Characteristics	-What percentage of students are enrolled in the fall and are still enrolled in the spring? -What percentage of students receive special education services? -What percentage of students are identified as multilingual learners/ English language learners? -On average, are students functioning at grade level in reading and math when they enroll in the school for the first time? If not, approximately how far behind are they when they enroll, on average? -Are the majority of students of typical age for their grade level?
Assessments	-What internal assessments do the students take? -What does the assessment measure? -Which students will take the assessment? -If only some students take the assessment, which ones and why? -Who is qualified to administer the assessment? -Are there norms provided for the assessment? -How many times do students take that assessment each year? -How do teachers use the assessment results? -What else are the assessment results used for? -(If assessment measures social and emotional competencies), Does the school use a specific SEL curriculum and is the SEL survey developed by the curriculum provider? If not, how do you know that you are measuring (changes in) the competencies that your curriculum is targeting?

Appendix B

Example #1 Timeline with Sample Topics and Homework Assignments

This sample timeline and meeting content is best for when the authorizer is working with the school in real time collaboration—when schools are invited and expected to actively participate in all meetings.

Meeting	Topic/Agenda	Objective/Outcome	Homework
Week 1 Location Time	Current goals, their purpose, and disconnects	Understand which measures are non-negotiable, where there are disconnects between current goals and mission, student population (or some students), and telling the school's whole story.	Schools: Upload list of measures and data points that you are regularly tracking, including where the data is stored and whether data can be exported in a usable way. Authorizers: Review state and internal accountability policies to determine whether flexibility in authorizer accountability is allowable.
Week 2 Location Time	Internal measures, assessments, and data collection	Understand what schools are measuring internally that may be used to supplement other goals to either tell the full story or more accurately show the outcomes of specific students.	Schools: Identify student populations for whom specific measures are not valid (e.g., students who enter after 9th grade, students who did not attend pre-school, students who assess 2 or more grade levels behind) and ideas for whether internal measures do a better job for those groups. -Send out stakeholder surveys to students and/or families. Authorizers: Review state and internal accountability policies to determine whether goal differentiation is allowable.
Week 3 Location Time	Are there student groups who will need different measures and/or goals?	Determine whether the school will need to develop differentiated goals for some students' groups and how those students' groups are defined.	Schools: Analyze the school's historic data for the whole school and by specific student groups (as identified in week 2 homework) for measures of interest, beginning with Global Access. Authorizers: Meet with authorizing board (BOD), if needed, to approve the use of differentiated goals. Review relevant data sources to inform potential targets for Global Access.

Meeting	Topic/Agenda	Objective/Outcome	Homework
Week 4 Location Time	Draft Goals: Global Access -Review Goal Directory for examples.	-Identify example goals from Goal Directory and revise to match school/ authorizer/state/ district context. -At least two draft goals should be developed by the end of the meeting.	Schools: Analyze the school's historic data for the whole school and by specific student groups (as identified in week 2 homework) for measures of interest, in Academics. Authorizer: Review relevant data sources to inform potential targets for academic goals.
Week 5 Location Time	Draft Goals: Academics.	-Identify example goals from Goal Directory and revise to match school/ authorizer/state/ district context. -At least two draft goals should be developed by the end of the meeting.	Schools: Analyze the school's historic data for the whole school and by specific student groups (as identified in week 2 homework) for measures of interest related to the school's mission. Close stakeholder feedback surveys and review results internally. Authorizer: Review relevant data sources to inform potential targets for Mission goals.
Week 6 Location Time	Draft Goals: Mission. Review of stakeholder survey results.	-Identify area(s) of importance to stakeholders and what, if any, goal might be set to measure the school's success at the identified area(s) of importance. -Identify example goals from Goal Directory and revise to match school/ authorizer/state/ district context. -At least two draft goals should be developed by the end of the meeting.	Schools: Analyze the school's historic data for the whole school and by specific student groups (as identified in week 2 homework) for measures of interest related to equity. Authorizer: Review relevant data sources to inform potential targets for Equity goals.
Week 7 Location Time	Draft Goals: Equity	-Identify example goals from Goal Directory and revise to match school/ authorizer/state/ district context. -At least two draft goals should be developed by the end of the meeting.	Schools: Share draft goals with stakeholders (e.g., board, families, staff, larger community, etc.) for feedback. Identify any measures for which data collection is cumbersome or not feasible. Authorizer: Share draft goals with stakeholders (e.g., board, larger community, etc.) for feedback.

Meeting	Topic/Agenda	Objective/Outcome	Homework
Week 8 Location Time	Review stakeholder feedback on draft goals, as well as for school/authorizer feasibility, utility, duplication, etc. and refine the list.	Identify no more than 8-10 goals per school type (including mandated goals) for authorizer framework/ charter contract goals. Example School types: K-8, 9-12, adult schools, alternative schools, etc.	Schools: Finalize analysis of data relevant to the smaller set of measures involving measures of global access and academics..
Week 9 Location Time	Setting Targets: Global Access and Academics Review school data, research, and comparison data (if applicable)	Draft targets of success for each of the Global Access and Academic goals.	Schools: Finalize analysis of data relevant to the smaller set of measures involving measures of mission and equity.
Week 10 Location Time	Setting Targets: Mission and Equity. Review school data, research, and comparison data (if applicable).	Draft targets of success for each of the Mission and Equity goals.	Schools: Draft a list of the agreed upon measures, where the data is stored, how the data can be exported, and when results become available for export for each administration. Authorizers who will be analyzing the data on behalf of the schools): Draft a list of the agreed upon measures, where the data is stored, how the data can be exported, and when results become available for export for each administration. Authorizers who will collect data from the schools: Identify a validation process for each of the measures being used in the goals.

Meeting	Topic/Agenda	Objective/Outcome	Homework
Week 11 Location Time	Data collection planning and reporting timeline.	Establish a data collection calendar, regular check in schedule, and reporting timeline.	Authorizers: Draft business rules for each goal identifying the definition of success for each measure/ goal (numerator), which students are included in each analysis (denominator), and which students should be excluded from the analysis of the measure/goal. Send documents to schools for feedback and adjust as necessary.

Example #2 Timeline with Sample Topics and Homework Assignments

This sample timeline and meeting content example is best for when the authorizer is doing the bulk of the work internally, and asking their schools for feedback during focused meetings.

Meeting	Topic/Agenda	Objective/Outcome	Homework
Meeting 1 Location Time	What is the purpose of establishing a Responsive Goal Framework (RGF)	Arrive at answers to the following: Which schools will the RGF apply to? What will the RGF be used for? Is more than one RGF needed?	Review of current goals/ framework for relevant schools. Identify indicators that the current goals/ framework include and consider whether those need updating Establish a communication plan to inform schools about the RGF process, what the RGF will be used for, anticipated requests for information, etc.
Meeting 2 Location Time	What indicators do we care about/ are consistent with our own mission and priorities?	Identify 3-5 categories that we want relevant schools' RGF to include.	Identify measures in the current goals/ framework that fit into the identified categories/indicators and where the current goals/ framework has gaps.

Meeting	Topic/Agenda	Objective/Outcome	Homework
Meeting 3 Location Time	Stakeholder meeting.	Introduce process, present priorities, discuss why current framework needs revising, gather feedback on schools' priorities and feedback.	Compile feedback for review at next meeting.
Meeting 4 Location Time	What measures do we need to add to address the gaps between the current and new RGF?	Identify possible measures needed for new RGF.	Request a list of measures or data points that the relevant schools routinely collect outside of their current accountability goals or frameworks.
Meeting 5 Location Time	Review schools' lists of measures or data points that the relevant schools routinely collect outside of their current accountability goals or frameworks.	Identify common measures or common types of assessments that relevant schools are routinely collecting that could be used in new RGF.	If questions arise about how schools are collecting data or whether specific assessments have validity information, send inquiries to the schools.
Meeting 6 Location Time	Develop a strawman RGF.	First draft of new RGF developed.	Socialize draft RGF with internal stakeholders.
Meeting 7 Location Time	Review stakeholder feedback.	Second draft of RGF.	Get internal approval to share 2nd draft RGF with external stakeholders.
Meeting 8 Location Time	Stakeholder meeting	Present draft RGF and collect feedback via survey or some other form where feedback can be captured in writing.	Send out recorded meeting or meeting documents and open feedback to those who could not attend.
Meeting 9+ Location Time	Review feedback and discuss how to address it.	3rd draft RGF.	Continue collection of internal and external feedback until final RGF is developed.
BOD meeting date	Authorizer Board (or their designee's) Approval.		
Finalization of documents.	Finalize documents including RGF and accompanying business rules.		

Appendix C

Example Data Collections Timeline (insert appropriate years)

Task	Roles and Responsibilities	Timeline
Goals finalized and draft targets set	End Responsive Goal setting process. Initial Goals and Targets set and approved for pilot year.	Spring 2025
Pilot Year		
Data collection calendar established	SCHOOL -Develops data collection calendar AUTHORIZER -Reviews and approves data collection calendar.	Summer 2025
Pilot year data collection	SCHOOL - Gathers data from the prior year using its various systems (assessment reports, student information system, data management system, state data pulls, etc.)	Summer 2025
School & Authorizer Check-in	SCHOOL reports on data collection process: - identifies data that is easily obtainable with minimal effort. - Highlight data that requires significant effort to format and use. AUTHORIZER: - Suggests adjustments to goals if key data is difficult to access. - Propose alternative data sources to demonstrate the same indicators.	Fall 2025
Revised goals reviewed and approved, if applicable.	SCHOOL: -Submits revised goals and data collection plan to authorizer for approval.	Fall 2025
School implements new plan and collects data according to new plan, if applicable		ongoing
School & Authorizer Check in	SCHOOL and AUTHORIZER: -Check in on the progress of the new or current data collection plan(s)	Spring 2026
Data submitting End of Pilot Year	SCHOOL: -Submits data and results to authorizer, against the targets set in the Responsive Goal Setting process, making suggestions for revisions of targets, if needed.	Summer 2026

Task	Roles and Responsibilities	Timeline
Data validation and verification	AUTHORIZER: -Reviews raw data provided by the school and analyzes them. Discussions between school and authorizer about inconsistencies occur.	Summer 2026
Revision of targets presented to Authorizing Board for Approval	AUTHORIZER: -Staff present data and their recommendation for whether the newly proposed targets should be adopted. -AUTHORIZING BOARD votes on the adoption of the revised targets, if applicable (alternatively handled through their designee).	Before the 2026-2027 school year begins
Year 1		
Final goals entered into contract (or revised)	AUTHORIZER: -Finalizes documents.	Before the 2026-2027 school year begins
Data collection	SCHOOL: -Follows data collection plan and notified authorizer of any challenges.	ongoing
Mid-year check in	SCHOOL and AUTHORIZER -Meet and review the data collection plan and the school's progress toward meeting their goals, noting successes and changes.	Fall 2026
Data submission	SCHOOL: -Provides authorizer with Year 1 outcomes against final goals and targets.	Summer 2027
Data validation and verification	AUTHORIZER: -Reviews raw data, provided by the school and analyzes them. Discussions between school and authorizer about inconsistencies occur.	Summer 2027
Annual report published	AUTHORIZER: -Enters data into the authorizer's annual report for publication and review by authorizing board, if applicable.	Fall 2027

Task	Roles and Responsibilities	Timeline
Year 2		
Data collection	SCHOOL: -Follows data collection plan and notifies authorizer of any challenges.	ongoing
Mid-year check in, ONLY FOR SCHOOL WITH CONDITIONS	SCHOOL and AUTHORIZER -Meet and review the data collection plan and the school's progress toward meeting their goals, noting successes and changes.	Spring 2028
Data submission	SCHOOL: -Provides authorizer with Year 2 outcomes against final goals and targets.	end of June 2028
Data validation and verification	AUTHORIZER: -Reviews raw data, provided by the school and analyzes them. Discussions between school and authorizer about inconsistencies occur.	end of August 2028
Annual report published	AUTHORIZER: -Enters data into the authorizer's annual report for publication and review by authorizing board, if applicable.	Fall 2028

Acknowledgements

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Authorizing Organization	State
Alameda County Office of Education	CA
Arizona State Board for Charter Schools	AZ
Atlanta Public Schools	GA
Bay Mills Community College	MI
Buckeye Community Hope Foundation	OH
Central Michigan University	MI
Chicago Public Schools	IL
Colorado Charter School Institute	CO
DC Public Charter School Board	DC

Authorizing Organization	State
Delaware Department of Education	DE
Detroit Public Schools	MI
Eastern Michigan University	MI
Education One at Trine University	IN
Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West	OH
Farris State University	MI
Florida Charter Institute	FL
Grand Valley State University	MI
Hillsborough County Public Schools	FL
Idaho Public Charter School Commission	ID
Indiana Charter School Board	IN
Inyo County Office of Education	CA
Limestone Charter Association	SC
Los Angeles County Office of Education	CA
Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education	MA
Missouri Public School Commission	MO
Nevada State Charter School Authority	NV
New Mexico Public Education Commission	NM
New York State Department of Education	NY
Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center	MN
Pillsbury United Communities	MN
Riverside County Office of Education	CA
Thomas B. Fordham Institute	OH
SUNY Charter School Institute	NY
University of St. Thomas's Charter Office	MN
Utah State Charter School Board	UT
Washoe Couty School District	NV

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across the entire width of the page, providing a guide for writing. The background is a solid off-white color. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

