

## Identifying the Characteristics of S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Everyone is required to develop goals that are specific, actionable, and measurable. In addition, these goals must be accompanied by action plans with benchmarks to assess progress. The S.M.A.R.T. goals framework is a useful tool that individuals and teams can use to create effective goals and action plans. The key characteristics of S.M.A.R.T. goals are as follows:

**S = Specific and Strategic** – goals should be specific so that at the end of the evaluation cycle educators and evaluators can determine whether they have been achieved. Goals should also be strategic, i.e., serve an important purpose for students, the school, and/or the district.

**M = Measurable** – Goals should be measurable so that progress toward the goals can be evaluated and managed.

**A = Action Oriented** – Goals have active, not passive verbs. The action steps attached to the goals indicate who is doing what.

**R = Rigorous, Results Focused, and Realistic of Resources/Support** – Goals should make clear what will be different as a result of achieving the goal. The goal needs to be realistic yet ambitious and can be accomplished with given support and resources. It needs to stretch the educator, team, school, or district toward improvement, but it should not be out of reach.

**T = Timed and Tracked** – A goal needs to have a final deadline, as well as interim deadlines by when key actions will be completed and benchmarks achieved. Tracking progress on both action steps and outcome benchmarks is important, as they help educators know whether they are on track to achieve the goal, and give educators information they need to make midcourse corrections.