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FAQs - Individual Educator Goals

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Do the individual goals need to be aligned with the school goal (e.g., Writing) or do teachers choose the subject and goal?

The individual educator goal design process is a site-based decision. If schools want to align individual goals to the school goal, they can. School decision-makers should consider the goals and objectives of each course, class, content and consider that the evaluation of the first year of implementation revealed teachers felt more strongly connected to goals and their impact on instruction when there were greater levels of choice.

Do individuals choose the assessment, or can the school create an agreed upon assessment for teachers teaching the same subject?

The individual educator goal design process is a site-based decision. If schools choose to administer a common assessment for all teachers, they can. The primary consideration when selecting an assessment should be whether the assessment is an appropriate measure of the goal.

How will individual goals affect educators' evaluations? Will the submission systems for goals and evaluations be connected to each other? Should we still use the action plan for growth on evaluation?

The action plan for growth will still be completed for the rubric part of the evaluation in PeopleSoft. The goals set in

Jeffco SOARS concern student outcomes that result from a teacher's performance. A final overall rating report will be available in PeopleSoft. This report will link to Jeffco SOARS for a detailed report of each of the components of the student outcomes portion of the rating. The Jeffco SOARS report can also be accessed directly from Jeffco SOARS. These reports should be available in September of 2014.

Where can I find examples of Individual Educator Goals?

Goal examples are posted on the Educator Effectiveness website [here](#). Additional examples of individual educator growth goals are being added on a regular basis, particularly in response to educators who reach out to us with requests for examples in specific areas. Please check back from time to time as your needs dictate.

How do we create measurable goals for the individual goal component?

Please refer to the [Individual Educator Growth Goals Guidance document](#).

Who decides, or what will determine, acceptable/valid data for evaluation purposes?

The individual educator goal design process is a site-based decision. Principals and/or their designees approve the goals created by teachers in their building. This includes the assessment instruments used to measure student learning in relationship to the learning goals.

Who submits the goals – educators or principals?

Educators work with their supervisors to agree upon the parameters of goal design. Then the educator submits the goal(s) into Jeffco SOARS where the principal and/or designee approves them.

For goals connected to the growth data, we do not have growth data at the end of the school year. What should we do?

The district does not recommend using TCAP growth data for individual educator goals because it is already used for other pieces of the educator effectiveness goals (e.g., school goal), and one of the state requirements is that "student academic growth shall be measured using multiple measures." It is strongly recommended that educators submit goal attainment results in Jeffco SOARS as soon as the data are available and all data be submitted by the end of the school year. Schools will need to consider the challenges and logistics of trying to finalize individual educator goals after the summer if they use measures that are not available by the end of the school year because educators may move to other buildings or leave the district by the beginning of the following school year.

Note: educators in collaboration with their supervisors must select an approach to measuring student learning gains. The approaches selected can involve using results from locally administered assessments, rubrics, performance tasks, etc. which should be available before the end of the school year.

Could a teacher write a goal to improve writing by improving the MGP from 49-51?

Yes. Students' proficiency levels and early classroom assessments plus some formative assessment descriptions could be used for baseline data to set groups and learning targets for students. For example:

- 50% of students with low growth last year will get typical growth (4pts)
- 75% of students with typical growth will get high growth (2pts)
- 80% of students with high growth will maintain that growth (2 points)

Here is the caveat with using TCAP for the outcome evidence; TCAP results are not available until August so points on the goal cannot be finalized until teachers come back in the fall.

Can a SPED teacher write a goal around students' IEP goal attainment?

If the IEP goal(s) are written in a manner to show growth, yes. The student learning goal would need to be academic to be used for teachers. The body of evidence would vary depending on the goal. For a literacy goal, TOWRE and WADE are possibilities for the body of evidence, as well as a previous years' COALT.

Do principals sign off on all teachers' goals at once?

Each goal should be read and considered individually prior to approving. However, the approval process in Jeffco

SOARS is designed for approval of all teachers at one time or each teacher individually – whichever method is most useful for the approver. If a few teachers have not completed the process, those educators could be “unchecked” in the system to approve at a later date. An approver, of course, would want to read each goal individually prior to approving.

When reviewing and approving individual teacher goals, why are we (principals and assistant principals) seeing teachers on the list who no longer work in our school?

The information in Jeffco SOARS comes from live feeds of Human Resources data. Until all teacher movements are finalized, former teachers may appear on lists. We are still working through issues and trying to resolve concerns in a timely and efficient manner.

Is the submission process similar to the current evaluation process, where teachers submit information and then the central office sees it?

For individual goals, some individuals in the central office will review information in Jeffco SOARS to learn and study how schools are designing individual educator goals for adjustment to district implementation in 2014-15.

Do principals need to keep track of which teachers are setting goals by semester and which goals have ended?

This is tracked in SOARS through the entry of the instructional interval when goals are created. All goals with an instructional interval of school year, first semester, or first trimester, need to be submitted by September 30th in Jeffco SOARS and approved by principals by October 15th. If a goal needs to be modified after that date, there is a process in Jeffco SOARS for principals to unlock the educator's goal and then approve the teacher's modification after the teacher has made the revision.

What is the purpose of setting five goals as opposed to one or two?

A range of one to five goals was provided to allow for flexibility in site-based decisions. A single goal can provide heightened focus, but if the goal is not met, all educator effectiveness points are tied to the single goal. If five goals are set, it may be challenging to monitor and report on them throughout the year. Schools can decide that all educators will set the same number of goals (e.g., 1 or 2) so there is consistency throughout the building or allow educators in the building to choose the number of goals they set. One rationale for multiple goals is the case of educators who teach a different class, course, or group of students each semester or trimester. These educators may wish to set semester or trimester goals. These goals should be created at the beginning of each instructional interval (semester, trimester, etc.).

If someone decides to choose three goals (for example), how are the points calculated? Do you receive points based on whether you make it or not?

For each goal, the educator specifies the point calculation for educator effectiveness reporting. The educator can determine how many points each goal is worth and how those points will be determined. So for example, if an educator has three goals, the point calculations may look like:

- Goal 1 attainment = earned 1 out of 5 points
- Goal 2 attainment = earned 3 out of 5 points
- Goal 3 attainment = earned 5 out of 5 points

The total points earned in this example would be 9 points out of 15 for the individual educator goal.

If a teacher wants to have 2 individual goals can he/she divide the points between the goals?

Yes. Points can be entered in whole numbers or with one decimal place. The teacher could assign 7 points to one goal and 8 points to the other, or 7.5 points to each goal.

Should there be a minimum number of students tied to the individual goal?

In general, educators should establish student growth goals for all of the students in their class or course. Goals are not set for sub-groups of students within the class or course. Educators may choose to limit student population further if there is a rationale for doing so (e.g. eliminating a sub-group of students from inclusion in the student population because this teacher was not the primary instructor for them during the instructional period). However,

educators should provide a strong rationale for identifying a student population that excludes any of the students in their course/class.

Educators should keep in mind student mobility as they set individual goals. If a teacher chooses three students to include in an individual educator goal and those three students leave the district before the end of the school year, then there would be no data to report. Also, educators should consider the measure they are using for effectiveness. Percentages based on a limited number of students vary greatly when a single student moves in performance (e.g., if 50% are proficient out of two students, it means one was proficient and one was not). Some measures cannot be reported reliably with too low a count of students (e.g., CDE does not report TCAP median growth percentiles for less than 20 students). Educators may wish to state performance targets in terms of both exact numbers and percentages in the event the population experiences substantial changes.

Finally, the Individual [Educator Growth Goals Guidance document](#) recommends that there be a reasonable and justifiable explanation on why students would be excluded from the teacher's individual educator goal.

For teachers who work in more than one school, do they need to have one goal between all schools?

The individual educator goal design process is a site-based decision. Several possibilities exist and should be discussed with the principals or their designees. Educators who work across more than one school might want to set a single goal and collect data for all students they work with (e.g., an instrumental music goal that would be measured by all students the teacher works with combined across schools). If an educator sets different goals for different schools, then the principals from those schools would need to work collaboratively to approve those goals. If an educator spends the majority of his/her instructional time in one building he/she may want to set a goal(s) for that building only. Note that educators can only set up to five individual goals. If an educator works in two or more buildings, the principals in those two or more buildings can see the educator's goals in Jeffco SOARS; principals will need to decide who will approve that educator's goals.

When calculating points at the end, is there a "yes/no" result, or partial attainment of the goal?

For each goal, the educator specifies the point calculation for educator effectiveness reporting. For example, an educator should distribute points earned across a range of performance groups and levels. One example might be:

-
- 0 points = <50% improve one or more levels or maintain a Level 4
- 3 points = 50-59% improve one or more levels or maintain a Level 4
- 6 points = 60-69% improve one or more levels or maintain a Level 4
- 9 points = 70-79% improve one or more levels or maintain a Level 4
- 12 points = 80-89% improve one or more levels or maintain a Level 4
- 15 points = 90-100% improve one or more levels or maintain a Level 4

Should we be more uniform for point calculation among teachers?

Approaching point calculations in a uniform way may help ensure transparency and fairness across all educators in a school. Schools, however, may have a reasonable approach that allows for variance in point calculation among teachers. Communication of the process will be critical so all staff are informed of the process and why it was developed.

How are individual educator goals vetted?

All individual educator goals are vetted at the school site. Principals can vet all goals independently, with a leadership team or through peer collaboration processes (e.g., departments or teams working together). The vetting process is separate from goal approval. Instructional coaches, teacher leaders, department chairs, content coordinators, or others with content expertise may assist educators in creating a goal and providing guidance - this is vetting. Once goals are submitted, goal approval takes place. Goal approval is evaluative in nature and is generally limited to educator evaluators.

Are Achievement Directors or anybody going to determine variance between buildings and goals? For example, if one sets goals at 15, and another at 10, etc.

The district will review the goals set across all buildings to learn what worked well and inform adjusts in subsequent years based on information gained.

Who chooses goals – teachers or principals?

It is a site-based decision, but principals must approve all goals and it is recommended that goal-setting is a collaborative process. The evaluation of the first year of implementation revealed that the more transparency and choice involved in the process, the greater the buy-in and impact on instructional practice as reported by educators.

Do teachers set goals the way they want to, or should it be consistent across the school?

This is a site-based decision, and schools will want to consider coherence, consistency, alignment, fairness, and transparency in developing their local process.

How emphatic is your statement about not using a fall semester final as the pretest?

The individual educator goal process is site-based, therefore, the individual educator goal information provided to schools is descriptive guidance, not prescriptive. Schools will want to consider the reasonableness of testing students on content they are not expected to know before they take the class and, if this approach is used, how much "growth" is enough from the pretest to the post-test. A strong rationale exists for using a body of evidence approach to determine where students are at the beginning of the course or class. This information can inform performance groups and performance targets for those groups on the assessment tool used for the growth determination and points earned at the end of the instructional interval.

Could you provide guidance around what would be the minimum instructional interval to use?

Typically semester, trimester, or year-long intervals are common and recommended. Nationally, districts and states have not used instructional units as a minimum interval for educator goals because the length of time is too short; tracking a collection of "mini-goals" for each unit of instruction is likely not manageable. This also may narrow the instructional focus in a way that could be damaging for students.

How do all pieces (district, school, SPF, and individual goals) merge into the final evaluation?

The collectively attributed goals (i.e., district, school, and SPF) will be calculated for all educators by the district. The only portion schools need to provide are the points earned for the individual educator goal. The points earned for goals are entered by educators and approved by evaluators in Jeffco SOARS. Reports will be provided in Jeffco SOARS that detail and combine all pieces of the 50% student outcomes portion of the final evaluation rating. The student outcomes number will be combined with the result of the professional practices rating to determine the final overall rating displayed in PeopleSoft. These reports will be available in September, 2014 after final results are released by CDE.

Do teachers enter individual goals in SOARS? By when?

Yes, teachers enter their own goals. All goals with an instructional interval of school year, first semester, or first trimester need to be submitted by September 30th and approved by October 15th in Jeffco SOARS. If an educator is setting additional goals for the second semester, second trimester, or third trimester, those goals should be entered at the beginning of those instructional intervals. Goals for those instructional intervals cannot be set until the educator has the students and has gathered baseline data to inform the performance groups and targets.

Who has access in SOARS for entering, approving, and reporting individual goals?

All educators will have access to Jeffco SOARS to enter their own goals and see reports for their own goal attainment. Only principals and assistant principals will be able to view all educators' goals in the building. Principals and assistant principals have access to approve individual educator goals and the points earned in Jeffco SOARS. Achievement directors have access to the goals of principals for the same approval processes.

Do we have a mastery management? (new to district)

If this question refers to an online assessment bank, the district uses CTB's Acuity and Acuity Progress Monitoring. This system supports custom test authoring and currently students in grades 3 through 10 are rostered in Acuity.

Can we use the assessments in C-CAP?

The individual educator goal process is site-based. There are a number of assessments available in C-CAP but

those assessments were not designed to measure educator effectiveness. Schools need to carefully consider the quality of assessment instruments and ensure that they align with the intended use.

For teachers (e.g., high school level) who have semester-long classes of students, should they select one goal per semester?

Schools can decide to set goals by semester and also can modify goals in Jeffco SOARS after the first semester to adjust for any changes that may have occurred (e.g., teacher is no longer instructing the course a second semester goal was set on). Educators can only set from one to five goals.

For teachers (secondary schools) with significant changes in student rosters at semester (thus a change in the sample (n) for the goal), can goals be revised?

If a teacher's course or student roster changes, goals can be unlocked by the approver, adjusted by the educator, and then re-approved. The teacher should have a conversation with the approver if adjustments to the goal are needed. If the teacher has a full-year course with significant changes in the roster at the semester, it will be important to consider the matched cohort group for baseline and outcome measures. A single semester time frame for goal interval is appropriate for teachers teaching single semester courses. For middle school elective teachers, the time frame might be a trimester.

Do the individual educator goals need to be completed by the April deadline for probationary teachers and the May deadline for non-probationary teachers?

The evaluation rubric for professional practices will need to be completed in PeopleSoft by mid-April (probationary) and mid-May (non-probationary). Individual goals should be finalized when the goal interval is over and the data is available, but no later than the end of the school year (May 29th). The only exception is if the goal is based on data that is not available by the end of the school year. Because finalizing goals when teachers return in August can be challenging, it is recommended a specific plan for finalizing goals not completed by May 29th be made before educators leave for summer break. Goals with a first semester, first trimester, or second trimester interval should be completed at the end of each of these intervals.

A statement in the Individual Educator Growth Goals guidance needs clarification: "The measurement of individual educator goals..." It says to use existing assessments – school and classroom assessments – but these have not gone through the development process needed for reliability and validity.

The individual educator goal process allows for the use of existing assessments in a body of evidence. Refer to the [Individual Educator Growth Goals guidance document](#) for assistance in developing goals.

Are teachers supposed to include scores from the assessment they will use, or the assessment itself, in SOARS?

The actual assessment and the scores from the assessment will not be entered into Jeffco SOARS. For more information on what will be collected in Jeffco SOARS, refer to the Examples of Individual Educator Growth Goals or the IEG blank template on this website.

Should teachers use semester vs. trimester windows for entering individual educator goals?

Schools can decide to set goals by school year, semesters, or trimester. Goals in Jeffco SOARS can be modified, if needed, to adjust for any changes that may have occurred at semesters or trimesters (e.g., teacher is no longer instructing the course a goal was set on). Principals will need to approve the goal again after the educator has modified it.

Can all goals be in the same content area?

It is possible to set all goals in a single content area. This alignment could provide focus and coherence in a building. Also, consider that some educators (e.g., art teachers) may want to have all or at least a portion of their individual educator goal in the area of the expertise tied to their content standards. In that instance, schools could consider a school-wide aligned goal (like writing) and another goal that is specific to the educator's content area. All decisions about individual educator goals are site-based.

Can we get the TCAP data sooner than in past years?

The district is dependent on CDE for release of TCAP data. As soon as results are available to the district, they will be provided to principals.

Could we choose a shorter instructional interval than a semester or year?

The instructional interval is a site-based decision. Schools can decide to set goals by semester or trimester and also can modify goals in Jeffco SOARS to adjust for any changes that may have occurred (e.g., teacher is no longer instructing the course a second semester goal was set on). Typically semester, trimester, or year-long intervals are common. Nationally, districts and states have not used instructional units as a minimum interval for educator goals because the length of time is too short; tracking a collection of "mini-goals" for each unit of instruction is likely not manageable. The goal input form does allow for the identification of an "other" interval. The form should then be filled out with the specific start and end dates for the goal interval. The goal approver may wish to ask for the rationale behind an "other" instructional interval.

For subjects where students are expected to come with no baseline knowledge (e.g., Spanish) – can I just have a good rigorous final exam and set a goal that x% students have x% learning?

Schools can decide which assessments they want to use to measure the individual educator goal. The [Individual Educator Growth Goals guidance document](#) recommends that schools assess where students begin in their learning with a body of evidence that can include formative assessment. In the World Languages example, a teacher may identify a group of students in the class who are struggling with the content early in the semester, a second group who are progressing as expected, and a third group who are accelerated. The teacher may want to set targets for the rigorous final exam based on those groupings. Teachers in unique courses may wish to develop a baseline around the level of skill, mastery, or experience in regard to prerequisite skills for the course.

Will having a student teacher affect my goal(s)?

As a district we state having a student teacher will not impact students. A teacher's goal would remain unadjusted and the supervising teacher will need to ensure, as the mentor for the student teacher, effective delivery and student mastery of the content. Another option would be to develop a goal for content that is not delivered by the student teacher.

Can we use SMART goals?

The SMART goal format is appropriate for individual educator goals. Student growth goals need to be Specific to content standards, competencies or learner needs; Measurable using a high quality assessment instrument or practice; Appropriate in that it is within a teacher's control and is meaningful to student learning; Realistic such that it is ambitious yet attainable within the Time limits or specified instructional interval.

How are instructional rounds tied to individual educator goals?

The problem of practice focus areas used by instructional round teams may support goal focus areas and serve to provide feedback on instructional practices that are critical to the success of goals and student achievement.

What if a teacher is out on leave for a portion of the school year?

For instructional staff who do not work the full year, whether a late start, termination or leave, the general guidance is if the teacher works at least 90 days or a semester, we should complete an evaluation. This would include establishing an Individual Educator Goal(s). If a teacher will receive an evaluation he/she will need to set an IEG. For unique situations that might require further conversations, please talk to your principal. Principals can talk to their Achievement Directors or their manager in Human Resources if they need assistance.

When will the process for recording individual educator goals be available for teachers in SOARS?

The individual educator goal input site is available now. Educators will need to select the correct school year (e.g. 2013-14, 2014-15) when working in Jeffco SOARS.

Is TCAP data never used for individual goals?

The district does not recommend using TCAP growth data for measuring student attainment of individual educator goals because it is already used for other pieces of the educator effectiveness goals (e.g., school goal), and one of

the state requirements is "student academic growth shall be measured using multiple measures." However, TCAP data is appropriate to use as part of the baseline data being analyzed to establish student performance groups and performance targets at the beginning of the school year.

Additionally, remember that TCAP data is not available in May which would delay reporting on goal outcomes. Further, smaller group sizes (n) could be an issue as TCAP data is not reported for groups of less than 16 students for proficiency and 20 for growth.

Can Acuity data be used for individual goals?

Acuity results from the first administration of the school year may be an appropriate data source to include in the baseline data educators analyze to establish student performance groups at the beginning of the school year. Acuity and the metrics generated by the test for Jeffco was not designed to be used to evaluate the impact of teachers on students learning growth. Schools who consider using it in this way should review the technical information available from the vendor to determine if it is an appropriate measure for their purposes.

To what degree can administrators determine parameters of individual goals?

Schools have discretion in determining the process educators will use to set individual growth goals within each school in Jeffco. However, the process used at each school must meet state requirements, and the district has established some common components and processes that will be the same across all schools. See the Individual Growth Goals Guidance for more information about state and district requirements and school-level decision-points. The guidance document recommends local leaders work collaboratively with educators to determine the local individual growth goals process.

Can teachers write goals based on subgroups of students? e.g. LEPs. Can administrators require them to?

For most educators, the student population to which individual growth goals apply will include all students for which the educator has responsibility during that course/class. Educators may choose to limit student population further if there is a rationale for doing so (e.g., eliminating a sub-group of students from inclusion in the student population because this teacher was not the primary instructor for them during the instructional period). Educators should provide a strong rationale for identifying a student population that excludes any of the students in his/her course/class.

How do we deal with cheating?

In general, educators should follow school and district policies related to student cheating. However, if students cheat on an assessment that is being used to measure their learning in relationship to an educator individual growth goal, educators may choose to require the students to take a comparable assessment to ensure that students' performance is included in the calculation of the educator's results. The educator should indicate that one student's results were based on a different instrument and would need to provide relevant information about the quality of that instrument.

Educators who are caught cheating on assessments related to their individual educator goal are subject to disciplinary procedures.

Do teachers need to make sure all of the students they teach are included in one or more of their Individual Growth Goals so they have data on everyone?

No. However, schools need to think deeply about exclusions. Why are certain students or groups of students excluded? Are there patterns in those exclusions (e.g. all the low performing students)? As educators we are responsible for the growth of all students.

Do teachers need to create multiple content area goals? For example, in a case where teachers have multiple preps (e.g. Math 7, Math 9, Algebra I, Geometry) to ensure they include all of their students in a goal?

No. It is okay for a teacher to focus on one prep this semester and maybe another prep next semester. There should be some rhyme or reason, based on data, as to why teachers are focusing on Math 8 instead of Algebra I.

Can a teacher exclude students with a high absentee rate from her/his individual goal? Does this seem okay?

*For educator effectiveness, exclusions are a site-based decision. Schools are encouraged to consider the behaviors and messages that certain exclusions, particularly attendance, might encourage and convey. There may be a rationale for excluding students who are not **enrolled** for a majority of the instructional interval. There is a distinction between being in attendance and being enrolled.*

What about teachers working at schools with high mobility rates? Are teachers able to baseline and change performance targets? When should they do this?

Each school is very unique in this area. Schools have control over the interval teachers choose for their goals (year, semester, trimester, or other). This is important because schools and teachers may choose a typical time of the year for their goal interval. Schools also have control over the student population teachers may choose for the goal. This is important because we want teachers to be thoughtful and reflective about the group of students in their goal. Goals may be revised with the approval of the principal or assistant principal. The approver will need to “unlock” the goal in order for changes to be made.

Is it okay to create a team goal in which the teachers use the SAME students when measuring that team goal? For example, middle level students will . . . , third and fourth grade students will . . . , all freshman English student will . . . ?

No. According to state statute, teachers must have some individually attributed goals. The goals focus and measurement approach might be the same, but the students cannot be identical across the teachers and likewise the baseline data should be different. There could be some overlap of students. Conversely, there could be two identical sets of students, but with different goals. Teachers teaching the same content or grade level are encouraged to collaborate on goal setting and progress monitoring to strengthen and support the process.

Two grade level science teachers would like to use pre-assessments that have been created in units to set baseline data for groups of students and goals. Could they then, at the end of the unit, use the DOK level 3 and 4 questions as a summative assessment and use the outcome data for their goal? Could they continue to use the same pattern in subsequent units?

Example: C-Cap; 8th grade science; Unit: Our Place in Space; 40-48 day unit, Stage 2: Our Place in Space Pre-Assessment (9 question pre-assessment with no immediate relation to the post-assessment), DOK 1-4 Question Bank - Our Place in Space

The final decision rests with the principal, however, there are some things to consider. Teachers would want to consider the validity and reliability of the assessments. Here are some additional questions for consideration. Does the assessment measure the range of learning possibilities with the unit? What does the difference in score or percent of points mean between pre- and post-assessments. How do the items measure a construct of learning representative of the unit, etc.? This could be a great idea if the considerations are thought through and the principal is in agreement.

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