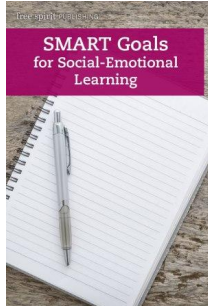


SMART Goals for Social-Emotional Learning

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Because goals know no calendar, goal setting is one of those things that can be done around the clock, at any time of the year. The start of a new year and the beginning of a new semester in school, however, can be a particularly smart time to partake in the process of crafting and setting new campus-improvement goals. But how do you turn those thoughts of grandeur into something actionable? Consider transforming your average goals into [SMART](#) goals.

This goal-setting framework dates back to 1981, so chances are you've seen it and possibly even used it with success already. To refresh, the SMART acronym stands for:

Specific: What do I want to accomplish? Who is involved? Where will it happen? How? Are there any limitations or hurdles I need to consider?

Measurable: How will I know that I've accomplished my goal? What data (or anecdotal indicators) will I use to measure success?

Attainable: How realistic is this goal? Will achieving it be well within my control?

Relevant: Is this a worthwhile goal? Is this the right time to go after it? Does it align with our school's core values, vision, and mission?

Time-Bound: What is my target time frame and deadline for achieving my goal? By day's end? Week's end? In a month? Six months? A year?

Setting SMART goals helps us go from just wishing for something, thinking about it, and hoping it'll happen to seeing that goal through from start to finish. So how might a SMART goal look in social-emotional learning (SEL) and character development?

Let's start with a short-term relationships goal: *By the end of the lesson, all students will understand and be able to articulate and implement strategies for upstanding in a bullying situation.*

Is it specific? This goal addresses what we plan to accomplish in our lesson.

Is it measurable? We can use a tool like Kahoot! to measure whether we've achieved our goal that all students know and can articulate the strategies. We can role-play to make sure students have the skills they need to implement upstanding.

Is it attainable? It ought to be within reach to involve all students by teaching the strategies and skills to the whole group then breaking into small groups to practice through role play and reflection.

Is it relevant? This goal is relevant to students because educating and equipping bystanders can elevate empathy and decrease bullying. It aligns with our vision that our school be a bully-free zone.

Is it time-bound? *By the end of the lesson* puts a time frame on the goal.

Next, let's look at a character goal designed to give kindness wings: *Students will carry out 500 intentional acts of kindness during the 2018 Great Kindness Challenge.*

Is it specific? Yes, though you may have to teach and/or model the kind of kindness you're anticipating.

Is it measurable? Create a checklist to make it easier for students to document acts of kindness. Encourage leaders in a Kindness Club or Student Council to tally and share the results.

Is it attainable? With a school population of 500, that's only one intentional act of kindness per student—a reasonably attainable rate. If you reach your goal before the week is out, by all means set a higher end goal.

Is it relevant? Since caring is one of our core values, a kindness campaign does align with our mission and is relevant.

Is it time-bound? The Great Kindness Challenge is celebrated every year during the last week of January, giving this goal a start and an end date and making it time sensitive.

Here's a goal to help connect a class socially and emotionally: *Every day for one month, students will engage in a 10-minute classroom circle time meeting.*

Is it specific? We will intentionally set aside 10 minutes each day. To make it more specific, we might add what time of the day we want to schedule this circle time.

Is it measurable? We can keep track on a calendar as the meetings happen. *Note:* If the meetings are set to reach a specific goal related to classroom climate or culture, their effectiveness can be measured through a climate survey, through discipline referral data, or by comparing pre- and post-absenteeism reports.

Is it attainable? Yes, we ought to be able to devote 10 minutes each day to connect as a class.

Is it relevant? It's important to students' well-being that they know they matter to one another and that they have time to share what's in their hearts before getting to the business of academic content.

Is it time-bound? There is a designated one-month time frame, after which you can decide if there is benefit in this circle time ritual.

Finally, consider this long-term self-regulation character goal: *Students will be able to self-regulate through appropriate grade-level tasks by the end of the year so we can host a Silent Day during which the teacher won't talk at all and students will run the class.*

Is it specific? Yes. This goal asks for students to self-regulate through the whole day by understanding, embracing, and doing the right thing without adult guidance or voice.

Is it measurable? Yes. The teacher must document as certain skills, habits, and routines are established and mastered. With enough front-loading and evidence, the true measure will be if and when a Silent Day happens.

Is it attainable? Illinois teacher and author Paul Solarz of [*Learn Like a Pirate*](#) says yes, Silent Day is attainable. His fifth-grade students enjoy the success of self-regulating enough to be in charge every year on a day in May—a day they consistently name as their favorite of the year.

Is it relevant? As it's a school goal to create self-reliant learners, this goal does align with our core values and is relevant.

Is it time-bound? This long-term goal will need benchmarks along the way and will culminate at the end of the school year with a day in which the teacher is silent and students lead.