Setting meaningful and realistic growth goals

All students deserve the opportunity to work toward meaningful and realistic academic goals. Teachers can have individual and class-wide goal setting conversations with specificity and precision, using NWEA® normative data.

Read below about three students in sixth-grade reading. Marcus, Danielle, and Anissa are in different places academically and will require different interventions and support.

**Setting meaningful and realistic growth goals**

- Marcus is an average reading student. His goal is to meet or exceed proficiency.
- Danielle is a struggling reader and is falling behind. Her goal is to meet proficiency, but she has a lot of ground to make up.
- Anissa is an advanced reader who has surpassed proficiency benchmarks. She has her sights set on attending a competitive university.

**CATCH UP**

- **NEXT STEPS**
  - There is a significant gap between where Danielle is and where she needs to be. That type of growth is atypical and unlikely in a single academic year. Pursuing an unlikely goal may lead to a student feeling discouraged and frustrated with their progress.

  **RECOMMENDATION**
  - A multi-year, catch-up strategy, along with teacher-led interventions and support to get her on track.

**KEEP UP**

- **NEXT STEPS**
  - If Marcus makes slightly better than average growth, he will keep up with proficiency.

  **RECOMMENDATION**
  - Set a more aggressive growth goal and create an action plan to target any skills or competencies gaps.

**MOVE UP**

- **NEXT STEPS**
  - The amount of growth required for Anissa to get on track for her dream college is atypical, but could be an attainable stretch goal.

  **RECOMMENDATION**
  - An enrichment or acceleration activity and assisting this motivated student on a detailed action plan.

**GOAL SETTING ACTION PLAN**

- Start developing what a meaningful growth target is for each student; it will vary.

  1. **Ask important questions to create student-centric goals. Is the student:**
     - continuing to grow at typical rate to stay on track for grade-level proficiency?
     - making significant progress towards closing the gap to proficiency?
     - meeting college and career readiness expectations?
     - on track to get into their dream college?

  2. **Determine if the growth goal is realistic**
     - Student data reports can help you estimate the challenge of the goal
     - Use these insights from a student’s past performance to evaluate how a new goal would fit in their trend line

  3. **Engage the student**
     - Share the assessment results and projected target
     - Create an action plan together using the learning continuum

  4. **Adjust goal as necessary**
     - Make the goal visible and check in regularly on actions and progress