From Compliance to Collaboration: Improving Access and Achievement Through Goal Setting



THE CHALLENGE

In 2023, Morongo Unified School District identified persistent academic achievement gaps for students with disabilities as an area for improvement. Data revealed that assessment outcomes often reflected inconsistent adult practices—limited communication of results, minimal student-teacher data conversations, and test administration focused more on participation than performance. Educators recognized that improving student outcomes required a shift in adult behavior: establishing shared responsibility for assessment engagement and creating consistent, systemwide routines for data reflection and goal setting.



"I feel like our district's greatest success has been recognizing the interconnectedness of student needs and performance. LCAP, Differentiated Assistance, and student performance are all tied together."

Eric Smith
Program Specialist,
Morongo Unified School District

THE SOLUTION

Through the Compliance and Improvement Monitoring (CIM) process, district and SELPA leaders at Morongo USD developed a Goal-Setting Activity (GSA) to strengthen how adults use and discuss data. Case managers met individually with students to review past results, identify needed supports, and set growth targets. Using UDL principles as a lens for removing barriers to access, educators prepared personalized goal-setting forms that included each student's historical CAASPP/SBAC data—ensuring consistent, data-driven conversations across all sites.



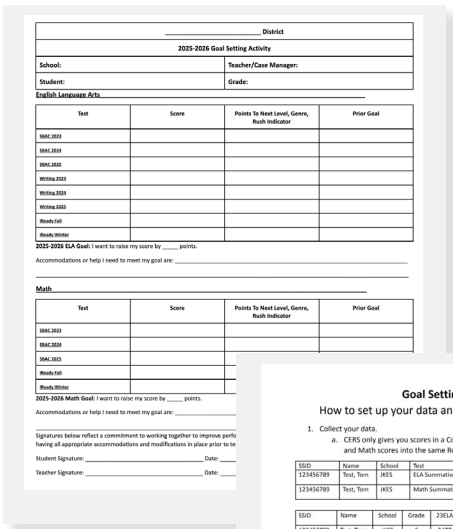
Staff used a standardized Goal Setting Template and Goal Setting Activity Guide to support accuracy and alignment across schools. By embedding these

practices into existing workflows, educators built predictable, repeatable routines that emphasized adult accountability, data literacy, and instructional alignment rather than one-time test preparation

THE IMPACT

Implementation of the Goal-Setting Activity resulted in measurable improvement. Students with disabilities who participated demonstrated an **average 42-point increase in ELA scores on the SBAC in one year**. More importantly, the process fostered stronger collaboration among departments. Instructional Services, Special Education, and LCAP teams now work together to interpret results and plan targeted supports.

This shift from compliance to collective ownership created a sustainable model for data-informed reflection and increased access to meaningful instruction for all learners.



_____ District

2025-2026 Goal Setting Activity

School: | Teacher/Case Manager:

Student: | Grade:

English Language Arts

Test	Score	Points To Next Level, Genre, Rush Indicator	Prior Goal
SBAC 2023			
SBAC 2024			
SBAC 2025			
Writing 2023			
Writing 2024			
Writing 2025			
iReady Fall			
iReady Winter			

2025-2026 ELA Goal: I want to raise my score by _____ points.

Accommodations or help I need to meet my goal are: _____

Math

Test	Score	Points To Next Level, Genre, Rush Indicator	Prior Goal
SBAC 2023			
SBAC 2024			
SBAC 2025			
iReady Fall			
iReady Winter			

2025-2026 Math Goal: I want to raise my score by _____ points.

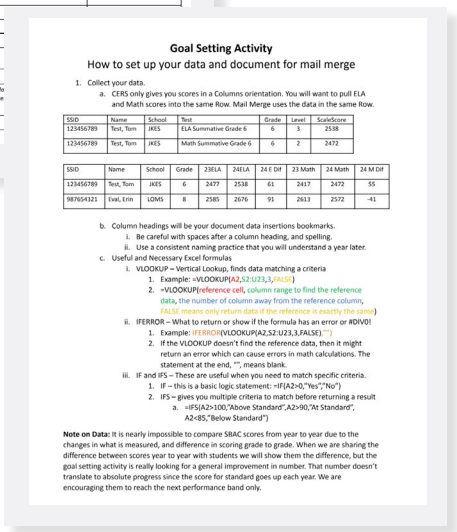
Accommodations or help I need to meet my goal are: _____

Signatures below reflect a commitment to working together to improve perfo
having all appropriate accommodations and modifications in place prior to te

Student Signature: _____ Date: ____

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: ____

[Goal Setting Template]



Goal Setting Activity

How to set up your data and document for mail merge

1. Collect your data.
   a. CERS only gives you scores in a Columns orientation. You will want to pull ELA and Math scores into the same Row. Mail Merge uses the data in the same Row.

SSID	Name	School	Test	Grade	Level	ScaleScore
123456789	Test, Tom	JKES	ELA Summative Grade 6	6	3	2538
123456789	Test, Tom	JKES	Math Summative Grade 6	6	2	2472

SSID	Name	School	Grade	23ELA	24ELA	24 E Dif	23 Math	24 Math	24 M Dif
123456789	Test, Tom	JKES	6	2477	2538	61	2417	2472	55
987654321	Eval, Erin	LOMS	8	2585	2676	91	2613	2572	-41

   b. Column headings will be your document data insertions bookmarks.
      i. Be careful with spaces after a column heading, and spelling.
      ii. Use a consistent naming practice that you will understand a year later.
   c. Useful and Necessary Excel formulas
      i. VLOOKUP – Vertical Lookup, finds data matching a criteria
         1. Example: =VLOOKUP(A2,S2:U23,3,FALSE)
         2. =VLOOKUP(reference cell, column range to find the reference data, the number of column away from the reference column, FALSE means only return data if the reference is exactly the same)
      ii. IFERROR – What to return or show if the formula has an error or #DIV0!
         1. Example: IFERROR(VLOOKUP(A2,S2:U23,3,FALSE),"")
         2. If the VLOOKUP doesn't find the reference data, then it might return an error which can cause errors in math calculations. The statement at the end, "", means blank.
      iii. IF and IFS – These are useful when you need to match specific criteria.
         1. IF – this is a basic logic statement: =IF(A2>0,"Yes","No")
         2. IFS – gives you multiple criteria to match before returning a result
            a. =IFS(A2>100,"Above Standard",A2>90,"At Standard", A2<85,"Below Standard")

Note on Data: It is nearly impossible to compare SBAC scores from year to year due to the changes in what is measured, and difference in scoring grade to grade. When we are sharing the difference between scores year to year with students we will show them the difference, but the goal setting activity is really looking for a general improvement in number. That number doesn't translate to absolute progress since the score for standard goes up each year. We are encouraging them to reach the next performance band only.

[Goal Setting Activity Guide]

IMPROVING ACCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH GOAL SETTING: IMPLEMENTATION TOOL

- **Standardize Tools**: Use the Goal Setting Template and Goal Setting Activity Guide to ensure consistent student conversations and data entry across sites.
- **Train and Support Staff:** Provide coaching on how to interpret reports and facilitate effective student conversations.
- **Centralize Data Tracking:** Use a shared database to monitor implementation and outcomes across sites.
- **Integrate Reflection into Routine:** Build goal-setting and data review into annual testing preparation cycles.
- **Align Departments:** Connect Special Education, Instructional Services, and LCAP teams to use data collaboratively.

Created in partnership with Morongo Unified School District and the Open Access Project.

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OPEN ACCESS Learning & Participation for ALL
MORONGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT