



A practical, evidence-based strategy that educators can implement today!

## Success Story: IEP Goal Quality Rubric

### The Challenge

IEP goals are essential for student success, but many IEP teams struggle to develop high-quality goals.

### The Solution

As part of SIL's Innovating for Student Excellence (ISE) Networked Improvement Community, districts, SELPAs, and County Offices of Education across California **collaborated** to create the **IEP Goal Quality Rubric**—a tool designed to help educators draft **high-quality IEP goals** that are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound (SMART)

**Irvine Unified School District** refined the rubric through **iterative and rigorous testing** to ensure it effectively supports students with disabilities.



*Irvine Unified School district staff*

# The Impact

- Districts using this rubric saw a **20% increase** in the percentage of IEP goals being met.
- Educators reported improved clarity and alignment between **goals, instruction, and student progress**.

## Ready to Try It?

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Goal Quality Rubric**

The purpose of this rubric is to evaluate the compliance, relevance and quality of IEP goals.

To score, rate each goal on 3 points for each of the top two compliance criteria. Next, rate each SMART Goal Statement from a score of 1-4. Then, add up scores from both pages of the rubric, with the compliance points for a total score. Finally, document the score at the bottom.

Student Name:					
IEP Team:					
Date:					
<b>Compliance</b> Note: There are two areas of compliance either 0 or 3 are met.	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>			
<b>Compliance - Area of Need of Present Level</b> The goal is NOT aligned to a documented area of need as stated in the present levels of performance section.		The goal is aligned to a documented area of need as stated in the present levels of performance section.			
<b>Compliance - CSD / Other Goal Alignment</b> The goal is NOT aligned to a grade level standard that has been documented within the goal or a goal is NOT needed as "addressing other education needs resulting from their disability."		A goal is aligned to a grade level standard that has been documented within the goal or a goal is needed as "addressing other education needs resulting from their disability."			
<b>Compliance Score: / 6 points possible</b>					
<b>Area to Score</b> <b>SMART Goal Elements</b> (1 Sample Goal for Goal C)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Specific</b> The goal precisely and concisely communicates the desired outcome.	The outcome is vague or confusing to reviewers.	The general skill area is identified, but is specific and/or detailed outcome is not present.	A detailed outcome is communicated, but it is not specified and not tied to a specific skill.	The goal precisely and concisely communicates a specific skill to address the desired outcome.	
<b>Measurable (Baseline)</b> There is a clear baseline by which to measure progress.	The baseline is missing.	The baseline is unclear or vague, as specified by the goal area.	The baseline refers to a specific skill but not to a specific current performance measure.	The baseline refers to a specific skill and includes a current performance measure.	
<b>Measurable (Annual Goal)</b> The annual goal is measurable.	The goal does not include a measurement.	The measurement does not align with the goal, or does not include how to measure or measure frequency.	The measurement is vague or too general to measure progress.	Any term related to a concept not used in the goal and skills area definition must be defined in the goal measurement criteria.	
<b>Appropriate and Actionable</b> The goal should include three components: 1. The description of the action to be taken (verb, adverb, action, modifier, action frequency, or level of attainment) 2. Action frequency ("times per week," "3x of attainment (i.e., "times per week") or "times per month") 3. "Measurable" verb ("will," "can," "will be able to")	The goal does not include any of the three action items, including at least one of the three action items, action frequency, or level of attainment.	The goal includes three items, including at least one of the three action items, action frequency, or level of attainment.	The goal includes at least 2 of the elements, action items, action frequency, or level of attainment.	The goal includes all three elements: action items, action frequency, and level of attainment.	
<b>Appropriate</b> The goal communicates appropriate growth goals to students' capabilities, and can realistically be completed in one year.	The goal does not specify the measurement(s) of growth.	The goal specifies a minimal degree of growth.	The goal specifies a moderate to a large amount of growth.	The goal specifies an appropriate amount of growth and is aligned to a grade level or high school/college level and can realistically be completed in one year.	
<b>Time Bound</b> The goal is stated in a specific timeframe: 1. Annual (due date) 2. General (due date) 3. A number of times per week, month, or year 4. A number of times per month, or year 5. A number of times per year	The goal does not include time components.	The goal's only time component is the amount of IEP due date.	The goal includes the amount of time and goal data collection frequency.	The goal includes the amount of time, goal data collection frequency, and baseline/initial score and is aligned to grade reporting period.	
<b>Total Score:</b>	<b>/ 30 points possible</b>			<b>SMART Score:</b>	<b>/ 24 points possible</b>

## Ways to Try This in Your District

### Steps to Implement

1. **Use the rubric** when drafting IEP goals to ensure alignment with best practices.
2. **Incorporate the rubric** into PLC discussions to provide structured feedback on IEP goals.
3. **Utilize the rubric as a coaching tool** to refine previously drafted goals

**District Tip!** New and veteran teachers can use this rubric to continuously improve their practice—because **IEP goals are at the heart of student success.**



[Access the IEP Goal Quality Rubric](#)

## Looking for More? Additional Resources for Developing Strong IEPs



[HQ IEP toolkit- Special Educator Edition](#)

[Key Component #2: Present Levels \(before the IEP\)](#)

[Key Component #4: Goals](#)



Created in partnership with Irvine Unified School District as part of the SIL Innovating for Student Excellence (ISE) Networked Improvement Community.

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