

# Improving IEP Goal Quality:

## IEP Goal Quality Rubric



### THE CHALLENGE

IEP goals are essential for student success, but many IEP teams struggle to develop high-quality goals. In the fall of 2022, SIL launched a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) to investigate this problem.

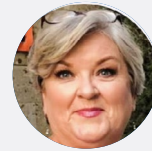
### THE SOLUTION

As part of SIL's Innovating for Student Excellence (ISE) NIC, 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 SMART: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound.

Irvine Unified School District, a member of the network, carefully tested and refined the rubric to ensure its efficacy in supporting students with disabilities.

### THE IMPACT

Irvine USD reported that using the rubric significantly improved the quality of IEP goals. They shared their refined rubric with 10 other districts in the network, and 100% of users reported improved IEP goal quality as a result of its use.



“If we received IEPs with all goals written using this rubric, we could easily focus instruction and close the learning gaps.”

#### **Vicki Gill**

*Program Specialist and  
ISE NIC Member,  
Coachella Valley USD*



*Irvine USD Staff*

## IMPROVING IEP GOAL QUALITY: IMPLEMENTATION TOOL

### Directions for Using The IEP Goal Quality Rubric

This rubric assesses the compliance and quality of Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. It can be used as both a **compliance checkpoint** and a **quality assurance tool** to ensure IEP goals are legally compliant, measurable, and instructionally meaningful. To complete the rubric:

#### 1. Complete Documentation:

- Fill in the Student Name, IEP Goal, Date, and Scored By sections at the top of the form.

#### 2. Evaluate Compliance (Top Section):

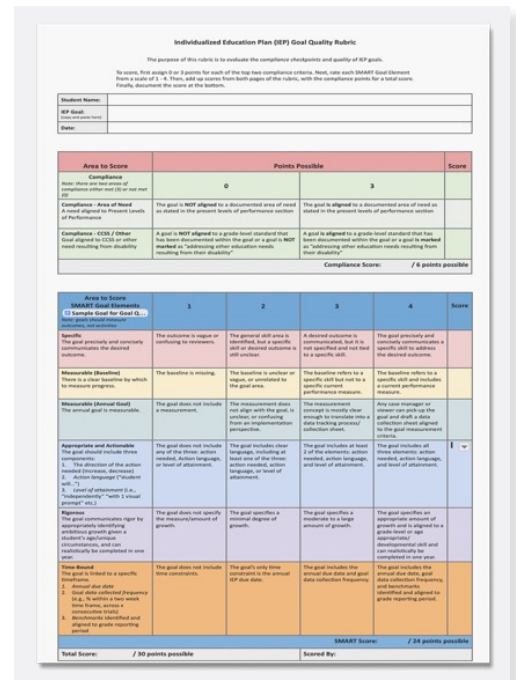
- For each of the two compliance areas, assign either:
- 3 points** if the criterion is met, or
- 0 points** if it is not met.
- Record the total **Compliance Score** (maximum of 6 points).

#### 3. Rate SMART Goal Elements (Bottom Section):

- Use the descriptors provided to assign a score from **1 to 4** for each SMART element (Specific, Measurable, etc.).
- Record the total **SMART Score** (maximum of 24 points).

#### 4. Calculate the Total Score:

- Add the Compliance Score and the SMART Score for a final **Total Score out of 30**.



The IEP Goal Quality Rubric is a tool used to evaluate the compliance and quality of Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. It consists of two main sections: Compliance and SMART Goal Elements.

**Compliance Section:** This section evaluates the goal against two criteria: "Area to Score" and "Points Possible". The "Area to Score" includes "Compliance - Area of Need" and "Compliance - CCR or Other Goal aligned to CCS or other goal resulting from disability". The "Points Possible" are 0 or 3. The "Score" is 0 or 3.

**SMART Goal Elements Section:** This section evaluates the goal against five criteria: Specific, Measurable, Action-Oriented, Results-Oriented, and Time-Bound. Each criterion is evaluated on a scale of 1 to 4. The "Total Score" is the sum of the scores for all five criteria, ranging from 5 to 20.

**SMART Goal Elements Descriptors:**

- Specific:** The goal includes clear language, including at least one of the three action verbs, action language, or level of attainment.
- Measurable:** The goal does not include any of the three action verbs, action language, or level of attainment.
- Action-Oriented:** The goal includes clear language, including at least one of the three action verbs, action language, or level of attainment.
- Results-Oriented:** The goal includes clear language, including at least one of the three action verbs, action language, or level of attainment.
- Time-Bound:** The goal includes clear language, including at least one of the three action verbs, action language, or level of attainment.



[Download the IEP Goal Quality Rubric](#)

Scan here to access the IEP Goal Quality Rubric shown above.



[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.

Updated: 5/12/25