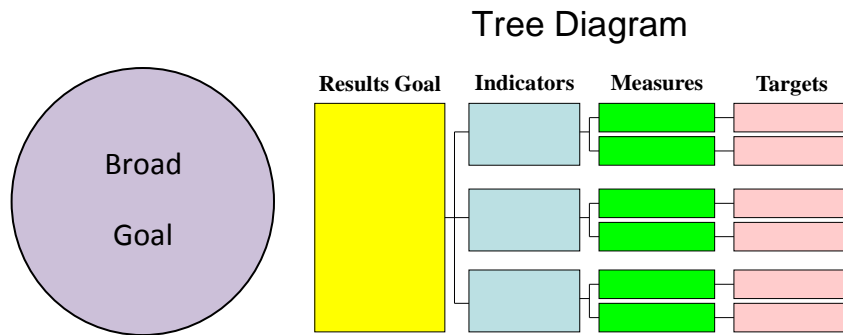


How to Create SMART Goals Using a Tree Diagram



What is a tree diagram and why use it?

A tree diagram is a graphic organizer that can help you make your goals SMARTer—more strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound. We use graphic organizers every day – e.g., calendars, planners, PDA’s, agendas. They help us organize our thinking, create and monitor plans, connect isolated pieces of knowledge, and make meaning. In addition, they’re especially powerful when used by teams because they help distribute everyone’s individual knowledge, making thinking visible by creating a powerful picture of what we are all thinking together. Teams that use the tree diagram to create SMART goals often discover their collaboration becomes more focused and concrete.

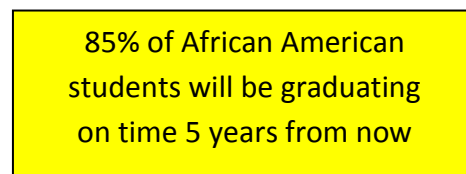
How do you use it to create SMART goals?

1. Let’s walk through the tree diagram’s components using a broad educational goal as depicted in the circle below: *close the achievement gap in our community*.
2. In the first (yellow) box in the Tree Diagram, we would put a results-based, more specific goal focused on closing the distance between today and our long-term goal of closing the achievement gap. First, review the data to see where the largest discrepancies are (e.g., African American students) and then set a level that is both attainable *and* challenging enough to motivate us to work hard on it (e.g., if only 50% are graduating now, try for 85%). Establish a time frame; if, for example, our long-term goal is a 10 year time horizon, set specific goals that are 5 years out.

BROAD (long-term) GOAL (1.)

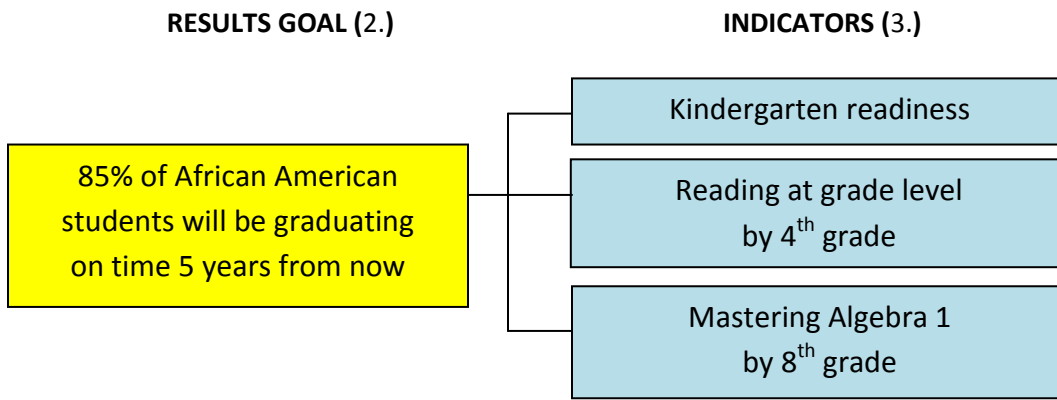


(more specific, interim) RESULTS GOAL (2.)



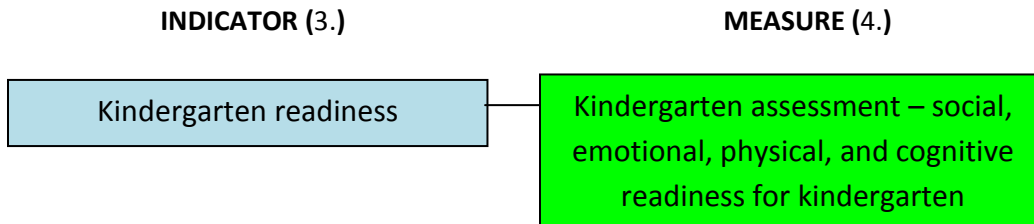
3. Indicators

Indicators are the evidence we look for to see if the specific, results goal is being achieved. In reviewing our data and talking with educational experts, we discover that “kindergarten readiness,” “reading at grade level by 4th grade,” and “mastering algebra 1 by 8th grade” are important to achieving success. (Using systems thinking, this change theory asserts that while elementary age African American students won’t graduate until years later, the work that needs to happen to align around these indicators will strategically focus the system toward helping all students graduate on time.)



4. Measures

Measures are the tools we’ll use to gauge progress on each of the indicators. We’ll use multiple measures for each indicator, but in this example, we’ll show just one “kindergarten readiness” measure.

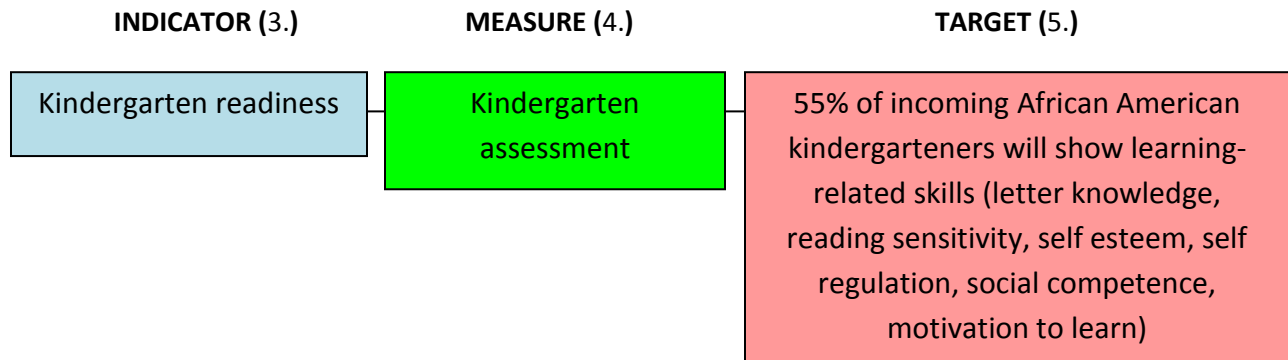


5. Targets

Establishing improvement targets for each measure allows you to track improvements not only by overall averages but by sub-populations. Targets can be defined on a year-by-year basis as more incremental steps toward the longer-term goal. In our example, we looked at the data and

discovered that over the past years only 50% of incoming African American kindergarteners have demonstrated learning readiness on the kindergarten assessment, so we set a target of 55% by next year.

The ACTIONS we take to make this target a reality belong in our ACTION PLAN (e.g., one action might be to pass a pre-K policy so that all children have an opportunity to learn critical skills; another might be to implement a parent education program so that from birth children have high-quality language experiences).



Use the separate blank Tree Diagram to create your SMART goals.

A much larger discussion on SMART Goals and the use of the Tree Diagram can be found in the Introduction and Chapter 9 of *The Handbook for SMART School Teams (Second Edition): Revitalizing Best Practices for Collaboration*.

