Setting ambitious, yet realistic goals is the first step toward ensuring that all our students are successful throughout school and become proficient adult readers. High expectations should be established for all students. To quote Henry Ford, “whether you think you can or you think you can’t... you’re right!”
The importance of setting student outcome goals in reading:

- Goals represent desired outcomes or targets toward which to strive.
- Goals shape our instructional effort and guide us toward our intended outcomes.
- Attainment of strong reading goals makes future school success more likely.
- Failure to attain reading goals puts students at-risk for future struggles in both school and work.

More specifically, setting student outcome goals in reading is important for the following reasons: Goals represent desired outcomes or targets toward which the students and schools can constantly strive. Goals shape our instructional effort and guide us toward our intended outcomes. Attainment of strong reading goals makes future school success more likely. And, failure to attain reading goals puts students at-risk for future problems and struggles in both school and the workplace.
Types of student reading goals: Summative and Formative Goals

• Summative goals address reading outcomes:
  - All students will read at grade level or higher each year, no later than grade 3, as measured by the OAKS assessment.
  - All students in grades 4-12 will be proficient readers of grade level content across the instructional areas.

There are two types of student reading goals: Summative goals and Formative goals. This module focuses on summative reading goals. **Summative goals address reading outcomes.** For example, the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework sets these broad summative goals: **All students will read at grade level or higher each year, no later than grade 3, as measured by the OAKS assessment. All students in grades 4 through 12 will be proficient readers of grade level content across the instructional areas.**
Formative goals address progress toward the longer term goal of reading at grade level or above:

- Formative goals should be set for the skills that need to be achieved by a certain point in time (e.g., by the end of a grade).
- Thus, formative goals and the benchmarks that define them will differ by grade.

Formative goals address progress toward the long-term goal of reading at grade level or above. Such goals should be set for the skills that must be achieved by a certain point in time (for example, by the end of a grade). Formative goals, and the benchmarks which define them, differ by grade level but are applicable across grades.
It is crucially important that goals be clearly specified. Such clear goals include who; will do what; at what level; and by when.

Clear goals include...

- **Who** (e.g., a group of students at a given grade level)
- **Will do** **what**
  - score at a given level or above on an achievement measure
  - make a certain amount of progress over previous period
- **At what level** (level of achievement or amount of progress should be clearly stated)
- **By when** (usually by the end of the school year)

Including each of these components in a goal statement operationally defines the goal and makes it easier to measure progress toward its attainment.
Examples of clear goals:

- At the spring benchmark assessment, all kindergarten students will be able to read randomly-presented CVC pseudo-words at a rate of 25 correctly-produced letter sounds per minute.

- In the fall of grade 2, all students will be able to orally read grade-level text at a rate of 44 correctly-read words per minute.

- At the spring screening assessment, grade 6 students will be able to orally read grade-level text at the rate of 160 correctly-read words per minute.

Some examples of clear goals include...

At the spring benchmark assessment, all kindergarten students will be able to read randomly-presented CVC pseudo-words at a rate of 25 correctly-produced phonemic segments per minute. In the fall of grade 2, all students will be able to orally read grade-level text at a rate of 44 correctly-read words per minute. At the spring screening assessment, grade 6 students will be able to orally read grade-level text at the rate of 160 correctly-read words per minute.
“Strong” Goals

- Goals are “mission-focused” (not trivial).
- Goals are derived from the school’s vision for success.
- Goals focus on valued **outcomes** (not just processes).
- Goals are prioritized and remain in focus over time.

Goals should be “strong” as well as clear. In other words, they should be “mission-focused” derived from the school’s vision for success, focused on valued **outcomes**, *prioritized* and kept clearly in focus over time.
“Strong” Goals (continued)

- Ambitious, yet attainable
- Clearly defined and measureable
- Easily understood and transparent to all stakeholders
- Differentiated
  - Grade level differences in goal-setting
  - Student’s varying skill levels in goal-setting
  - School-wide similarities in goal-setting

Strong goals must be **ambitious, yet attainable**. For example, the stated goal may be to bring all students to grade level by third grade, but we also need to take into consideration students’ current instructional levels. How to handle individual students’ situations will be addressed later in the presentation.

Goals should be **clearly defined and measureable** so that the goal itself, **progress** toward the goal, and the **criteria** for goal attainment are clear. Goals should be **easily understood and transparent to all stakeholders** (since stakeholders should be involved and/or holding educators accountable for goal attainment). And finally, goals should be **differentiated**. There should be different goals for different grades, but with cohesiveness and similarity of goal purpose throughout the school.
Student reading goals should be based on one or more of the following:

- Norms on a measure of reading achievement
- Criteria or benchmark scores
- Progress made toward a standard (e.g., AYP)
- Level reached by a higher-performing group of students with comparable demographics
- Curriculum content mastered (curriculum maps)

Student reading goals should be based on one or more of the following:
Norms on a measure of reading achievement; the criteria or benchmark scores; progress made toward a standard (for example, Adequate Yearly Progress); the level reached by a higher-performing group of students with comparable demographics; and what curriculum content is to be mastered (most evident when curriculum maps are used).
The foundation for goals will vary a little across the grades. Using the goals specified in the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework as an example:

In **Kindergarten through 2nd grade**, goals will most likely be based on a standardized achievement test (if used), or a progress monitoring measure. For example, the percent of students performing at benchmark levels or percent of students demonstrating mastery on skills from reading curriculum maps. In **3rd through 12th grade**, goals will mostly likely be based on a standardized achievement test.
This is a sample curriculum map for second grade students. Component reading skills for the alphabetic principle appear on the left. Time appears across the top. An X represents that skill being covered during that time. A number or range represents the target performance (in the case of 4a) or minutes of practice per day (in the case of 4c).
This is a sample progress monitoring graph. Again, **time appears on the horizontal axis** and **score on a given measure appears on the y-axis.**
These are sample benchmark goals for second grade DIBELS. There are separate columns for each time point - beginning, middle, and end of the year. Rows represent measures. For each time point, a range of scores is associated with at-risk, some-risk, and low-risk status.
An important thing to keep in mind while setting goals is the difference between achievement levels and achievement growth. Achievement levels may differ from school to school as a function of “academic challenges.” However...

• Achievement growth should not be limited or excused by academic challenges.
  • All students can reach ambitious reading goals.
Goal setting is an important component of any successful reading program. To quote author Gertrude Stein, “You have to know what you want to get it.” There are many questions to consider when setting goals. For example:

Where do we want all students to be by the end of the year? In other words, what kind of outcomes are we working toward?

What are our goals for adequate progress? For example, we might answer the questions, “What percentage of our some risk students can we move to proficiency by the end of the year . . . by mid-year . . . in the first quarter?” We should think about these questions at both the grade level and the group level.

What types of progress monitoring goals are appropriate? For whom do we set individual goals regarding progress? What should these goals be? We will discuss these three main types of goals in upcoming slides.
Setting Goals at the Beginning of the Year

- **Outcome Goals**
  - Summative
- **Adequate Progress Goals**
  - Summative (if at end of year)
  - Formative (if during year)
- **Progress Monitoring Goals**
  - Formative

Keep in mind that *outcome goals are always summative, adequate progress goals are either summative or formative* (depending on the time at which progress is examined), and *progress monitoring goals are always formative*. 
Outcome Goals

- Schoolwide (not individual) goals
- Outcome measurements vary from state to state.
- Outcome goals are generally established by minimum state expectations.
- Outcomes measured by performance relative to normative or criterion standards.
- Outcome goals should be set for all skills considered critical for each grade level.

Outcome goals (or summative goals) are determined for the school as a whole. Outcome measures are chosen at the state-level, thus they vary from state to state. For example, some states use non-state specific outcome measurements, such as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, whereas others use state-developed tests such as the FCAT in Florida, the TEKS in Texas, and the Idaho Standardized Achievement Test in Idaho. Generally, minimum outcome goals are set by individual states. These goals are often connected to Adequate Yearly Progress goals established in each state. However, many schools set goals which go beyond the minimum targets established within states. Outcome measures assess performance against either normative standards (which is the student's position relative to others in the same group) or criteria (which scores are determined according to specific predetermined criteria). At a schoolwide level, summative goals should be set for all skills considered essential for each grade level.
Adequate Progress goals are also determined for the school as a whole. Again, these goals may be summative (if progress by the end of the year is measured), or formative (if progress to some interim point is measured). The term “Adequate Progress” is used to describe groups of students’ progress along the achievement continuum. By achievement continuum, we mean moving from High Risk or Some Risk status to Grade Level. Obviously, we want Grade Level students to remain at grade level throughout the school year. Adequate progress goals can be set for each grade level and for each performance level (Grade Level students, Some Risk students, and High Risk students).
Progress Monitoring Goals

For grade level and some-risk students:
- Schoolwide goals are set once group performance is compared to school standards as well as established benchmark scores.

Progress Monitoring Goals are set at both the school level and the student level, as needed. These are formative measures and are addressed more fully in Module 2. For Grade Level students and Some Risk students, decisions are made at a schoolwide level based on the progress monitoring screener. Goals are set by comparing student performance to school standards and established grade level expectations.
Progress Monitoring Goals cont’d.

For High-Risk Students:

- Individual goals are set.
- **Grades K and 1**
  - Set goals to achieve “Grade Level” status.
- **Grades 2 and 3**
  - If Grade Level status is not reasonably attainable, set goal to move to “Some-Risk” status at student’s grade level at the end of the year.

For **High-Risk students**, in contrast, individual goal-setting occurs and this should be done carefully and thoughtfully. For students in **kindergarten and first grade**, the recommendation is to set goals to achieve grade level status. Research shows that it is very difficult for students to “catch up” with peers if these students leave first grade with a High-Risk status. Therefore, all attempts should be made to see that grade level goals are met for first grade High-Risk students. **Depending on the significance of the skill gaps, it may not be reasonable to set a goal of grade level proficiency for students in grades 2 and 3.** Perhaps an ambitious yet realistic goal for these students is to move from High-Risk to Some-Risk by the end of the year. If this goal is met, the goal the following year for these previously-High-Risk students would be to achieve Grade Level status. Note that for both groups of students, this would mean setting a trajectory (or “goal line” as we’ll discuss next) that would decrease the gap with typical peers.
This slide depicts a couple of different scenarios when considering setting a goal for a high-risk student. Words read correctly per minute appears on the y-axis. Time appears on the x-axis. First, notice the baseline data, a goal, and a goal line for average peers at a third grade level. This information would have been obtained by collecting an average of student scores (baseline) and looking at the established benchmark goal at the end of the school year for whatever progress monitoring assessment a school is using. In this case, the benchmark goal for third grade students with this assessment is 110 words per minute, and the baseline is 75 words per minute.

Suppose a student enters third grade with a baseline median of 38 words per minute, and an appropriate goal has to be determined. Research shows that a typical student in third grade gains approximately one word per week in reading fluency. If we applied this average-gain goal-setting option to our High-Risk student, it would mean that his end-of-year goal would be 74 wpm. This number was calculated by adding the baseline 38 wpm and the 36 weeks in the school year. Option 1 indicates the resulting goal line for this student. But, examining these two goal lines reveals something problematic about this particular High-Risk student’s goal. The problem is that this goal (Option 1) does not decrease the gap with peers and so the student remains at High-Risk at the end of the year according to the fluency benchmarks on this assessment. In order for High-Risk students to make adequate progress, they must move to at least the Some-Risk status at the end of the school year. For this particular assessment the Some-Risk status at the end of the year is at least 80 wpm. Grade level status would be at least 110 wpm, but this goal may not be realistic for this student. Given the information we have, one option would be to select 90 wpm as the student’s end-of-year goal. This number would move the student above the 80 wpm threshold into the Some-Risk category. Option 2 indicates this alternative goal line. Whether one considers the numbers or visually examines the Average and Option 2 goal lines, it is clear this student will have somewhat closed the gap with grade level peers, although the grade level benchmark (110 wpm) has not yet been met. There is no one magic formula for setting goals for High-Risk students. What we’ve illustrated here is the type of detailed thinking process that should be used when setting High-Risk students’ goals.
Setting goals can be a long, complex process involving many revisions. It works best as a collaborative effort. As outlined throughout the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework and in Modules 55 and 56, those who have a vested interest in reading instruction and students’ reading achievement should be involved from the start of the school year or from the moment a schoolwide reading plan is conceived. Make it a priority to engage stakeholders both as you set goals and as you work to attain those goals.
Engaging stakeholders in setting, working toward, and attaining goals:

- Identify stakeholders.
- Identify messages and needs.
- Decide on communication methods and schedule.
- Deliver your messages and solicit involvement and feedback.
- Be responsive to stakeholder’s interest, questions, and suggestions.

To engage stakeholders in setting, working toward, and attaining goals, you can...

- Identify all groups with a stake in reading outcomes.

- Identify the messages you want to send and the needs you have.

- Decide the ways in which you can best communicate with the stakeholders and the schedule for those communications.

- Deliver your messages on the schedule you’ve laid out, and solicit involvement and feedback as needed – both on results and on the schedule itself.

- And, be responsive to stakeholder’s interest, questions, and suggestions.
In closing, please consider these words from the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework’s section on goals: “students able to read at grade level or higher are likely to accomplish key learning objectives in grades K-12. They are more likely to learn successfully in their classes, and they are more likely to perform well on state assessments that test how well students understand the content of the state standards. Formative goals provide valuable information about whether students are on track to meet the summative goal. When students have not met a formative reading goal, it is critical that schools use that information to improve reading instruction.” (OLF, pg. G-12)

- Goals are something for students to strive for, but they are also a means for schools to evaluate instruction and make changes that will help students succeed. **Goals motivate students to learn, but give schools something to learn from.**