

STUDENTS' FIVE CONSENSUS

PERSONAL GOALS PROCESS

Rationale

Expected Results

Implementation and Forms

Steven D. Bell

4SuccessInSchools.org

Students' Five Consensus Personal Goals Process Rationale

Students need to be empowered, confident, and happy, to achieve their best.

Students achieve their best when:

- They are not defeated by challenges. (They can't be defeated, if they don't give up.)
- They are among friends who will be helpful if help is needed.
- They are accepted as a member of a team, because teamwork enhances their success.
- They are not being bullied, or punished.
- They self-initiate, instead of waiting to be told what to do.

Systemic issues in schools, nationwide, leave many students disempowered with diminished confidence that they can succeed and excel.

- a. Between 25% and 30% of students are bullied in school, some with effects lasting into adulthood, and some with effects that cause youth suicide.¹
- b. Young people of color, in schools that serve low-income communities, are punished more² and achieve less,³ than their peers in schools serving more affluent communities.
- c. Fifty-five years after ESEA Title I Compensatory Education began funding efforts to reduce student achievement gaps correlated with family income, those gaps remain.⁴
- d. A systemic absence of student teamwork for peer excellence in personal and academic achievement, leaves teachers to struggle to settle student conflicts, and to create and sustain student motivation; in fact, Student Teachers are taught that motivating students is the teacher's job.

Students need consensus personal goals.

- a. Without clarity about what their personal goals are, students may exhibit a lack of focus and purpose.
- b. Being able to articulate what one's goals are, helps sustain an individual's efforts to achieve them.
- c. Without knowing that they share goals with their peers, students may feel isolated, and may create or succumb to negative peer pressure in ways that diminish their success, or cause their punishment.
- e. Knowing that one shares goals with others creates a sense of belonging and teamwork that produces the friendships, support and encouragement which discourage "giving up".

Students will promote peer striving to achieve their consensus goals.

- a. Students want to succeed, and to be surrounded by successful friends.
- b. Students don't like bullying, punishment, or underachievement.
- c. The teamwork students produce in striving to achieve their consensus personal goals brings an end to bullying, punishment, and underachievement.

¹ "Facts About Bullying," <https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/facts>

² "How Black Girls Get Pushed Out of School," <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/04/us/politics/black-girls-school-racism.html>

³ "Have We Made Progress on Achievement Gaps?" (See the last paragraph) <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/04/17/have-we-made-progress-on-achievement-gaps-looking-at-evidence-from-the-new-naep-results/>

⁴ "Why Federal Spending on Disadvantaged Students (Title I) Doesn't Work," 11/20/2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/why-federal-spending-on-disadvantaged-students-title-i-doesnt-work/> (Establishes the need to do something more.)

Students' Consensus Personal Goals Reflect Research Findings

Total Quality Management Research

The Students' Five Consensus Personal Goals Process utilizes the principles of W. Edwards Deming's theory of Total Quality Management (TQM), to produce enhanced student productivity results:

Deming created TQM to empower teams of employees to establish consensus goals for how they would work together to improve results, and then self-evaluate their progress toward achieving their goals.

From the end of World War II, to the current day, TQM has enabled major corporations to dramatically improve the quality and quantity of their output; proving that workplace success is enhanced when "top down" management is replaced by workers taking the lead in setting goals and monitoring their progress toward continual improvement -- avoiding blame, and viewing mistakes not as reasons for punishment, but as opportunities for improvement.

The Students' Consensus Personal Goals Process, like Deming's TQM process, proves that Workers (Students) aren't lazy or selfish, but when respected by Management (Teachers and Principals) as caring, intelligent, and responsible people, they will do what they need to do for their company's (School's and Class') good -- understanding that doing so promotes their own good. See <https://www.bl.uk/people/w-edwards-deming#>

Infant Morality Research

The Students' Five Consensus Personal Goals Process is facilitated by young people's moral character, documented in the "Infant Morality Research" conducted at Yale University's Infant Cognition Center. Even the youngest children showed an understanding of the differences between, and a preference for: Right over Wrong, Good over Bad, and Fair over Unfair. Regardless of their race or the economic status of their families, the young people consistently made the good, right, and fair interpersonal relationship choice, without being coached or instructed.

See "The Moral Life of Babies" <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/magazine/09babies-t.html>

Expected Results Of Students' Consensus Personal Goals

In an environment of student developed and adopted consensus goals, even students with records of poor behavior demonstrate a preference for the good, right, and fair choice in their relationships with others. They self-evaluate their progress toward achieving their Consensus Goals. They improve the quality of their schoolwork, their interpersonal relationships, and dramatically reduce, to near elimination, occurrences of bullying and punishment.

See James' and Kevin's stories at: <https://www.facebook.com/4SuccessInSchools>

Within days of being empowered to develop, adopt, pursue and evaluate their progress toward achieving their own five Consensus Personal Goals, for what they believe they can do to

- a. Enjoy school,
- b. Learn as much as possible,
- c. Make and keep as many friends as possible, and
- d. Keep themselves safe,

students with Consensus Personal Goals will produce the following results:

1. Take their goals seriously, and work consistently to achieve them.
2. Markedly diminish bullying and fighting in their school and neighborhood.
3. Not produce or tolerate classroom disruptions.
4. Encourage each other to remember their goals, to persist in trying to do better, and to not give up.
5. Focus and improve their behaviors, interpersonal relationships, and achievement.
6. Diminish punishment to its elimination.

Students' Five Consensus Personal Goals Implementation Process

Guiding Principles

For Students' Consensus Personal Goals to be effective drivers of student behavior and achievement, students must perceive that:

- The Personal Goals are theirs, and belong to them.
- The Goals validate them as intelligent people of good character.
- They hold these Goals in common with their peers.
- Their Goals will be useful to them wherever they are, in or outside of school.
- The pursuit of their Goals will assure their success.
- Teachers and school staff value their students' Goals.

The following Implementation Steps enable students to develop and sustain these perceptions.

Students' Five Consensus Personal Goals Implementation Steps

1. Teachers Voluntarily Test The Students' Consensus Personal Goals Process

Teachers aren't mandated to use the Students' Consensus Personal Goals process.

If not satisfied with student behaviors and persistence in working through learning challenges, teachers may enjoy reading James' story, which describes what happened during the first six weeks of school, when a self-contained sixth grade class substituted its consensus goals for traditional classroom rules.

See James' Story at www.facebook.com/4SuccessInSchools

After reading this story, teachers may wish to test the impact of students' consensus personal goals on their students' behaviors and achievement. Teachers making this decision will find that behavior and achievement challenged students, like James, have innate character and aspirations similar to students who exhibit positive behaviors.

Using students' consensus personal goals instead of rules, as drivers of student behavior and achievement, is a cultural shift that succeeds only if teachers are comfortable with testing this process.

2. Students Provide the Ideas That Evolve Into Their Five Consensus Personal Goals

Without mentioning the words *personal*, *consensus*, or *goals*, a teachers ask students to answer the following question with a few "I will" statements:

**"What can you do to enjoy school, to learn as much as possible,
to make and keep as many friends as possible,
and to keep yourself safe?"**

Teachers provide no clues, approval, or disapproval as students formulate their responses.

3. Students Volunteer to Share Their "I will" Statement(s) With The Class

The teacher records student responses on a classroom writing surface, combining answers if students wish, and checking recorded answers if they are mentioned more than once.

Students then discuss what their "I will" statements would mean in situations they encounter in the classroom, on the playground, in the cafeteria, and in the neighborhood.

4. Students Vote For Five "I will statements" to Create Consensus On Their Future Personal Goals

The teacher explains that the winning five statements will become the students' Personal Goals for the year, and will take the place of classroom rules.*

If an entire student body participates, each class submits its five chosen Goal Statements to a school committee of students, teachers, and parents. The committee will prepare a ballot of possible Goals for a student body vote.

* In the Forms Section below, see "Comparing Consensus Student Personal Goals and Agreed Upon Rules".

5. Teacher and Students Chart The Students' Adopted Personal Goals

The teacher charts students' five Personal Goals for posting near the Flag.
Students copy their goals from the classroom writing surface.

Sample Personal Goals Chart*

My Personal Goals

To be proud of myself and my class, I will: (my school if Student Body Goals)

- 1. Respect all people and their property.**
- 2. Keep my hands and my feet to myself.**
- 3. Listen and follow directions given by adults.**
- 4. Leave gum, candy, and toys at home.**
- 5. Put forth my best effort in all that I do.**

** These Personal Goals developed by an elementary school student body,
were nearly identical to the Goals developed years earlier by the sixth grade class in James' Story. (Step 1)*

Though these student adopted Personal Goals resemble rules, but they're called goals, because failing to fulfill a Goal is treated differently, than violating a rule. Reprimands and punishments aren't a consequence of failing to achieve a goal. The failure is treated as an opportunity to self-evaluate and rededicate one's self to the goal. Students encourage each other to keep trying to achieve their goals, when they fall short of that objective.

If not fulfilling a goal causes harm to someone, the student who caused the harm is asked to decide what she/he would like to do to remedy the harm they caused.

Step 8 is an accountability process for students' self-evaluation, and rededication to achieve their Personal Goals.

6. Students, Teachers, and Staff Give Students' Personal Goals The Importance They Deserve

- a. Teachers (and the Principal if the Student Body has adopted Consensus Personal Goals) explain that students' Personal Goals are so important; they will replace the rules (except game rules) unless students believe that an important rule is not covered by their Personal Goals.
- b. Students discuss whether there's a rule (other than a game rule) that their Personal Goals would not cover.

The purpose of this conversation is to encourage students to think broadly about the meanings of their adopted goals, so they can find that there are no situations in which their goals would not apply.

If students determine that a non-game rule isn't covered by one of their consensus personal goals, they may decide to keep that rule in place, but it's preferable that nothing take precedence over the students' Personal Goals.

- c. Teachers and staff reinforce students' Personal Goals by saying:
"Nothing is more important to us than that you succeed in achieving your Personal Goals."
- d. Students' improved social behaviors and academic performance will prove that their Personal Goals are more effective than rules, for consistently motivating them to do their best.

In Forms see: Comparing Consensus Student Personal Goals and Agreed Upon Rules

7. Focusing On The Personal Goals

- a. Students chorally recite their Personal Goals after the Flag Salute, at the beginning of each school day.
- b. Students take home a letter from their Teacher, explaining how the goals came to be, how they will be used, and encouraging parents to ask their children how they are doing in working toward their Goals.
(In Forms, see **Letter to Parents**)
- c. Students practice writing their Personal Goals, at home, to prepare for a Spelling Dictation Test to show that they can write their Personal Goals correctly.

Some students may need two weeks' practice, to successfully spell their Goals from dictation.

8. Students Use Their Personal Goals To Assess The Quality Of Their Performance

Students' Personal Goals represent what students agreed they could do to enjoy school, to learn as much as possible, to make and keep as many friends as possible, and to keep themselves safe.

Supportive, non-accusatory questions will assist students' goals focused self-assessments:

Does this reflect your Personal Goals?

What Personal Goal applies to this situation?

What could you do to better reflect your Goals?

What would you like to do to resolve this situation, or to repair the harm done?

In a Personal Goals focused environment, anyone can ask these questions.

Students' answers provide them the self-empowerment to improve, that criticism won't provide.

This discussion may be paused and later resumed, to provide students the time they may need to accept ownership of a problem, to identify the goal involved, or to decide what they would like to do to resolve an issue.

9. Students Use Their Personal Goals To Assist In Resolving Disagreements

Students' Consensus Personal Goals provide a shared, agreed upon language for responding to disagreements. This language makes disagreements less likely, and easier to resolve when they occur.

Personal Goals based accountability empowers students to self-evaluate, and to assume responsibility for their own performance and progress.

- a. If a student complains about another student not working toward his/her goals, teachers or students encourage both students to identify the goal that is involved in that situation.
- b. Then the problem is resolved by students discussing what might be done to more closely match the involved goal -- making the conversation about a goal to achieve, instead of about a person to criticize.

This process is about accountability, friendship, and cooperation – not punishment.

The teacher's objective is to empower students to hold themselves accountable to their Personal Goals. Students respect this process, take pride in it, and support each other in honoring their Personal Goals.

10. Students Use Their Personal Goals To Celebrate

Celebrating With Commendations

Teachers provide time, at the end of the school day, for students to complement peers, if they noticed someone doing something good to achieve a Goal.

Students may or may not have someone to commend on any given day.

Celebrating With Weekly Progress Reports to Parents

Students who did a good job (not necessarily a perfect job) working toward their Personal Goals that week will receive a Weekly Progress Report to take home. (In Forms, see *Weekly Progress Report*)

Celebrating With Whiz Kid Cards

For students who earn three Weekly Progress Reports.
(In Forms, see *Whiz Kid Card*)

Schools might opt to do the following to make students' Whiz Kid Cards valuable.

1. Provide plastic business card "wallets" for students to safely secure and accumulate their Whiz Kid Cards.
2. Enable students to purchase items in the Student Store with their Whiz Kid Cards.
3. Enable students to purchase entry to a film or a dance for Whiz Kids, at lunchtime, or after school.

Students' Five Consensus Personal Goals Forms

Comparing Consensus Student Personal Goals and Agreed Upon Rules

Consensus Goals

Behavior aspirations

Identify achievement targets and behaviors

Justify collaboration, mutual support, and teamwork

Created and approved by each student

About self-identity and what one thinks is important

What one wants to do

About self-empowerment and self-motivation

Promote striving

Cause for celebration

Agreed Upon Rules

Behavior limits

Identify fair and acceptable behaviors

Justify penalties and punishment

Created and approved by an authority figure

About community standards and laws

What one is told to do

About the power and approval of others

Promote obedience

About survival and acceptance

As drivers of improved social and academic achievement, students' Consensus Personal Goals should make it possible to file away non-game rules. After students create and adopt five consensus personal goals for what they will do "to enjoy school, to learn as much as possible, to make and keep as many friends as possible, and to keep themselves safe," they should discuss whether any existing non-game rule will not be fully covered and made unnecessary by their goals.

School Letterhead
(Sample Letter For A Classroom or School)

Date:

Dear Parent:

Our Students Have Selected Five Personal Goals

Your child, along with all the students in our class (school) has selected five Personal Goals to help her/him enjoy school, learn as much as possible, make and keep as many friends as possible, and keep him/herself safe. These are the goals our students have agreed upon:

(The goals your students create and adopt will replace the examples, in the space below)

My Personal Goals

To be proud of myself, and my class (school) I will:

- 1. Respect all people and their property.**
- 2. Keep my hands and my feet to myself.**
- 3. Listen and follow directions given by adults.**
- 4. Leave gum, candy, and toys at home.**
- 5. Put forth my best effort in all that I do.**

These student goals replace classroom rules for behavior. (except for game rules)
Nothing is more important than that your child succeed in achieving his/her Personal Goals, because these goals will help your child succeed, and be happy in school.

Your child will bring home **A Weekly Progress Report** each Friday, if she/he did a good job in working to achieve the Personal Goals, during the week. On the attached sample **Weekly Progress Report**, you can see that it will come home only if your child did an excellent job in working to achieve the Personal Goals.

The Weekly Progress Report is an award. It will be counted toward other awards and prizes.

You can help by asking your child how he/she is doing in working to achieve the Personal Goals.

If you have any questions about the goals, or about how your child is doing in school, please call the school and leave a message for me. I'll be happy to call you, and answer your questions.

Sincerely,

Teacher's Signature

Teacher's Name, Room Number

School Name

Weekly Progress Report To Parents

Date: _____

Dear Parents:

During this week, your child

did an **excellent** job following his/her Personal Goals.

Congratulations! _____
Teacher

MY PERSONAL GOALS *

To be proud of myself and my class (school):

1. I will respect all people and their property.
2. I will keep my hands and my feet to myself.
3. I will leave gum, candy and toys at home.
4. I will listen and follow directions given by adults.
5. I will put forth my best effort in all that I do.

** Your students' goals will replace the examples provided above.*

School Name

Reporte del Progreso Seminal

Fecha: _____

Estimados Padres:

Durante este semana, su niño(a)

se portó **excelente** siguiendo Las Metas Personales.

¡Felicidades! _____
Maestro(a)

MIS METAS PERSONALES

Para ser orgulloso de mí mismo y de mi clase (escuela)

1. Yo respetaré a toda la gente y sus propiedades.
2. Yo mantendré mis manos y mis pies lejos de los demás.
3. Yo dejaré los chicles, los dulces y los juguetes en casa.
4. Yo pondré atención y seguiré las instrucciones dadas por adultos.
5. Yo me esforzaré al máximo en todo lo que haga.

School Name
Whiz Kid Card

Student

Congratulations! You did a great job working on
your Personal Goals for three weeks!

Teacher