

Measure and Report Achievement of Schoolwide Objectives

You're serving at a K-12 Christian school that has three divisions on one campus. You like how your school increases accountability and mission achievement by measuring and reporting progress on key objectives. Here's what's happening:

You're at the Friday morning Curriculum Team meeting.

The curriculum coordinator starts the meeting by connecting team tasks, team objectives, and school mission: "Our task is getting text inputted into curriculum maps for all K-12 units. Mapping helps us achieve our objectives of developing an articulated, Christ-centered curriculum and increasing student learning.

"A couple of teachers have commented that their students are doing better on unit assessments than last year. These teachers think this is because mapping helped them plan their instruction more effectively. Mapping units is helping us equip our students to impact the world for Christ."

The curriculum coordinator then reviews the first-semester goal of having 40% of units with inputted text. He asks each principal to give a status report. The elementary principal reports that 18% of maps have inputted text, the middle school principal reports "21%," and the high school principal reports "17%." All the principals indicate that they'll be providing release time in the coming week for teachers to work on maps.

The curriculum coordinator closes the meeting by asking teacher representatives to update percentages on the charts in the staff lounge and on the Web.

You're at the monthly middle school staff meeting.

Following devotions, your principal uses a video projector to display a Web page containing a chart. She says, "We're here to equip students to impact the world for Christ. To do this, we want 90% of students at or above standard on applying a Biblical perspective to course content.

"At the end of first quarter, schoolwide we had 81% of students at or above standard. In middle school we had 79%—and we need 90%.

"I've talked with department chairs. We want to focus on getting 90% of middle schoolers at or above standard on applying a Biblical perspective by the end of second quarter. We're going to focus in three ways. First, next Wednesday there will be a training session on how to more effectively help students apply a Biblical perspective. Second, department chairs will be meeting with teachers to review and revise Biblical perspective assessments. And third, you'll have time in monthly staff meetings to talk with others about how you're working to increase student performance."

You're at the December all-staff meeting.

On the screen is a Web page with a chart entitled, "Mission Achievement Progress Report." Underneath the mission statement is a list of eight annual objectives that define mission achievement. Each objective has a rating.

Your school head says, "I'm glad I can work with you to equip students to impact the world for Christ. This is a challenging task. I'm glad the board holds me accountable by asking me to report annually on each of our eight objectives.

"At yesterday's board meeting, I reported on our values objective. We want to be 'above standard' on all five of our values. At the meeting, I shared the values ratings developed by the School Improvement Team. The team used data from the October survey and evidence collected by staff to determine the ratings.

"The board approved the proposed ratings. So, we're 'above standard' on four of our five values. We're 'above standard' on faithfulness, caring, excellence and stewardship. We're 'at standard' on collaboration.

"We're aiming to be 'above standard' on collaboration by June. To do this, we need to increasingly practice encouraging others to succeed through listening and asking questions. On our March professional development day, we're going to have training on this. In the meantime, keep asking, "How can we, the body of Christ, collaborate more effectively?"

“We’ll continue posting progress updates on the Web. In January, we’ll publish our semester progress report in our school newsletter. Let’s keep working together to achieve our eight annual objectives.”

You’re sitting in the staff lounge, reading the January edition of your school newsletter.

It contains the first-semester “Mission Achievement Progress Report.” The progress report identifies achievement levels on your eight annual objectives, including:

- Students experiencing an ‘above standard’ Christ-centered curriculum that is articulated, challenging, and coherent: At Standard
- 90% of students at or above standard on applying a Biblical perspective to course content: 92%
- 5 of 5 board-approved organizational values reflected at ‘above standard’ in the organizational culture: 4 of 5

The newsletter says that explanations for each rating can be found on the school’s Web site and that parents are invited to a meeting about the progress report. The meeting will be led by the school’s administration.

A colleague sits down and says, “I’m glad we have a mission achievement progress report. It helps me be accountable for mission and objectives. And it helps our administration be accountable to us and to parents.”

You reply, “I’m glad, too. It’s been a challenge to map curriculum and get my middle school students to do better on applying a Biblical perspective. Tracking progress has helped me stay motivated and on task.”

Bottom line?

Measuring and reporting progress on schoolwide objectives helps. Among other things, it focuses work, promotes collaboration and accountability, and increases mission achievement.

So, what can you do to measure and report achievement of schoolwide objectives?

1. Define the schoolwide objectives you want to measure and report on. Need a place to start? Consider student learning outcomes, strategic plans, accreditation standards, and policy governance ends. As appropriate, involve board members, administration, staff, parents, and other stakeholders in defining your objectives.
2. Develop ways to collaboratively focus on achieving your objectives. For example, spend five minutes at appropriate meetings discussing one objective.
3. Develop systems for measuring achievement of your objectives. For example, use rubrics to measure values. Base rubric ratings on evidence collected by staff and on survey data.
4. Develop a progress report. An effective progress report should SCORE:
 - **S**how the level of achievement for each objective
 - **B**e **C**olorful
 - **B**e **O**rganized
 - **R**efocus attention on the objectives and mission
 - **B**e **E**asy to use and update
5. Measure the achievement of your schoolwide objectives.
6. Report achievement.

How might measuring and reporting progress help you?

Imagine. Imagine you and your colleagues understanding the mission, what it takes to achieve the mission, and how your assigned tasks contribute to achieving the mission. Imagine you and your colleagues monitoring assigned tasks, reporting task status to a team, and using team feedback to design subsequent action steps. Imagine board members, administration, parents, you, and your colleagues collaboratively holding the school accountable for the achievement of schoolwide objectives and, consequently, the mission. Just imagine.

Michael Essenburg, MA, serves as coach, consultant, and trainer with Close the Gap Now, a service of Christian Academy in Japan. Time-permitting, he provides coaching, consulting, and training for ACSI international/MK schools and members of the Japan Evangelical Missionary Association. To learn more, please visit his Web site <http://closethegapnow.org>.