Greenfield Goal Teams provide students with space to set weekly goals and receive support from peers and a caring adult to build their confidence and motivation as they work to achieve those goals.

OVERVIEW

The Greenfield Goal Team structure aims to accelerate student success and development by bringing teams of 8–12 students together regularly—often daily—to set and reflect on academic goals or work on developing life habits. Similar to an advisory or crew, the Goal Team helps students develop a sense of purpose and build deep, meaningful relationships both with their teammates and with at least one trusted adult in the school—their Goal Coach. In addition to leading a Goal Team, the Goal Coach serves as the main connector between students and families, ensuring ongoing partnership and two-way dialogue between school and home. In the comprehensive Greenfield School Design, Goal Teams involve an added layer of support called “running partners,” where pairs of students offer one another support throughout the day between Goal Team meetings. Ultimately, this structure provides students with a powerful set of habits that are essential to their future success.

Greenfield Goal Teams are implemented across several Achievement First schools, often in conjunction with Greenfield Dream Teams. An extensive toolkit is available to support schools who wish to adopt the practice.
What Makes This Model Innovative?

Connection & Community
Greenfield Goal Teams ensure that every student has deep and trusting relationships in school, both with an adult who pushes them to be their best self and with a mini-network of peers who provide them with ongoing support. Goal Coaches also forge connections with families, often serving as their primary contact at school.

Affirmation of Self & Others
Greenfield Goal Teams support students to develop a sense of purpose through goal setting aligned both to academics and to life habits. Goal Teams also provide space for students to learn about and support one another, ensuring that everyone has a group of people celebrating and uplifting them.

Active Self-Direction
Goal Teams allow students to drive their learning through consistent opportunities to consider their personal strengths and areas for growth, to set goals, to reflect on their progress toward reaching them, and to advocate for the support they need along the way.

**DESIGN**

**Goals**
Greenfield Goal Teams are designed to provide students with the support, confidence, and motivation they need to persist through challenges, both in academics and in life. Why Goal Teams?

| **Academic Independence** | Goal Teams support students to develop academic independence by teaching them how to connect effort to achievement; how to chunk larger, more complex goals into smaller achievable parts; how to reflect on challenges and apply learnings to future obstacles; and how to advocate for themselves when they need support. |
| **Academic Preparation** | Through Goal Teams, students learn how to set and reflect on goals aligned to important academic and life habits. Students also learn to present their progress to their Goal Team, which builds their confidence and presentation skills. |
**Personal Why**

Learning to set purposeful goals and reflect on progress toward those goals helps students self-direct and see themselves as capable of shaping their personal why.

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**Social-Emotional Strength**

Students develop crucial life habits with the support of their Goal Team and Goal Coach. In addition, Goal Teams foster interpersonal competencies as members support one another to achieve academic and personal goals.

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**Experience**

Goal Teams are malleable and can be adapted to meet schools’ unique needs. Choice points include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Schools may choose to focus on both goal setting and habit development, or they may focus exclusively on goal setting, leaving habit development for another part of the day.
- Schools may choose to facilitate running partners as part of Goal Teams to offer students 1:1 peer support throughout the school day, or they may opt to focus exclusively on the Goal Team structure.
- Schools can pair Goal Teams with a sister structure from the comprehensive Greenfield School Design called Greenfield Dream Teams in order to link weekly goals to longer-term goals, or they might choose to execute either practice in isolation.
- Schools can facilitate Goal Teams every day, or they can intersperse meetings with Community Circles or other Life Habit Development Protocols.

Regardless of these choice points, Goal Teams always involve goal setting and reflection during Goal Team meetings as well as ongoing communication between the Goal Coach and team members’ families. See below for more detail about the primary student experiences of the model.

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**Goal Team Meetings**

Goal Teams are a group of 8–12 students who meet with their coach to reflect on goals, growth, and well-being. Teams meet regularly, either daily or several times each week. To provide meaningful and predictable support, meetings often utilize standard protocols that guide student goal setting and habit development over the course of the week. Example protocols include:

- **Goal Setting**: Goal setting often occurs at the start of the week. Goal Coaches facilitate a meeting involving a combination of data celebrations, goal planning, 1:1 conferencing, and feedback. Students use goal-setting templates to guide their planning. © Transcend Inc., 2022
Community Circle Life Habit Development Protocols: Some schools decide to reserve 1–2 days per week for Team Circles, which are proactive experiences intended to build relationships and community among the team. In Circle, students generally discuss life habits or personal narratives as prompted by the Goal Coach. 

Goal Progress Reflection: Toward the end of the week, students engage in a protocol to check in on whether they are on track to meet their weekly goals and why. They also plan what actions to take before the following week's goal-setting meeting, including what help to solicit.

Conferencing

Every day that Goal Teams meet, Goal Coaches carve out time to talk 1:1 with students, either to help them set top-quality goals or discuss their progress toward the goals they have already set.

Running Partners (optional)

In the comprehensive Greenfield School Design, each student on the Goal Team is in dyad with another student referred to as their “running partner.” The pair can offer one another support throughout the day and can work together to set and reflect on goals during regular Goal Team meetings.

Goal Coach & Family Communication

Each Goal Coach engages in regular communication with families. While Goal Coaches aim to check in with families at least once every two weeks, they may communicate more frequently if they have fewer students on their Goal Team or if specific students require more support. Schools often rely on a specific Family Communication Routine.
Supporting Structures

Despite being one of several key elements of the Achievement First Greenfield School Design, Goal Teams can be implemented as a standalone model. Schools interested in implementing Goal Teams may wish to pilot them with 1–2 groups of students before scaling the practice to include the entire school.

**Schools must develop or adapt goal-setting and reflection tools and protocols to guide student planning and growth.**

**Instructional Tools and Protocols:** Greenfield Goal Teams focus on helping students develop goals as well as the skills to plan how to meet those goals. This relies on strong student-facing goal-setting and progress-monitoring tools. Teachers should also plan to use consistent goal-setting and goal-reflection protocols.

- [Weekly Goal-Setting & Reflection Template](#)
- [Monday Goal-Setting Fundamentals of Instruction](#)
- [Thursday Goal-Setting Fundamentals of Instruction](#)

Goal Teams also support students to develop life habits, often through Circle protocols. Schools might choose to borrow and adapt habits used by other schools, or they might select their own. Here is an example of Greenfield habits that are adapted from the Valor Collegiate Compass Framework.

- [Habits: Compass Overview](#)

**Student Support:** Goal Teams are naturally differentiated since goals are individualized based on student needs, and Goal Coaches provide targeted support during 1:1 conferences, which occur at nearly every meeting.

**Assessment:** While Goal Teams are ungraded, Goal Coaches keep anecdotal records on student progress, monitoring which students are meeting or struggling to meet goals each week and using their records to support students accordingly.

**Goal Teams function best in an environment that fosters vulnerability, sharing, and peer-to-peer support.**

Goal Teams are a key way to reinforce, magnify, and strengthen school culture and community. While this structure functions best within an environment that fosters vulnerability, sharing, and peer-to-peer support, when these conditions do not already exist Goal Teams can be leveraged to help develop them through proactive relationship-building, celebrations of student progress, and more.
Strong Goal Teams rely on Goal Coaches who believe that this role holds equal importance to their role as teacher or staff member.

**Goal Coach:** The success of any Goal Team hinges on the Goal Coach. While typically a teacher, a Goal Coach can be any staff person who has the skills and mindset needed to run a Goal Team. Those who see themselves as having a dual role—being both school staff and a Goal Coach—have students who reach goals at a higher rate, have families who feel more involved and connected, and have students who are happier and more successful.

Successful Goal Coaching involves planning for and facilitating frequent Goal Team meetings involving goal setting, goal reflection, 1:1 conferencing with students, relationship-building, and life habit development. It also requires Goal Coaches to forge relationships with students’ families.

**Goal Team Support:** For Goal Teams to thrive, someone at the school needs to own their successful implementation. Goal Teams are most likely to receive the expertise and attention they deserve when this person is a member of the school leadership team, although the role might also be filled by a veteran educator with strong social-emotional knowledge who is seeking additional responsibility. If coaching Goal Teams must be decentralized, it is helpful for the support to be provided by a teacher’s academic coach, as this prevents Goal Coaches from receiving feedback from multiple sources.

Time must be set aside for Goal Teams to meet, as well as regular planning time for Goal Coaches.

**Scheduling:** In the comprehensive Greenfield School Design, Goal Teams take place every day at a consistent time and last for approximately 45 minutes. However, schools can have Goal Teams meet 2–3 times per week instead, provided the meeting times remain consistent. Some schools elect to hold Goal Teams at the start of the day, but those with late-arrival challenges might consider a schedule buffer (e.g., breakfast or homeroom) or a midday Goal Team meeting to encourage attendance and maximize impact.

**Planning Time:** Goal Coaches require time in their day to prepare for Goal Teams as well as time to maintain family communication.

**Student Grouping:** A key factor influencing scheduling is how schools wish to group students. Schools must ensure that groups remain consistent for the duration of the year to promote long-lasting, supportive relationships. Otherwise, how students are grouped can vary depending on a school’s needs or philosophies. For instance, some schools create single-gender
teams and allow students to choose which they feel best aligns with their identity, while others create mixed-gender teams. Some schools group students across multiple grades to encourage peer mentorship, while others maintain single-grade groupings so that students in Goal Teams see one another more often throughout the day.

Goal Teams require clear communication protocols for Goal Coaches to connect with parents.

Goal Coaches are the bridge between families and schools. Ideally, they communicate with families weekly, but if they have larger teams, they may communicate once every two weeks instead.

Goal Coaches enhance regular school communication, following up with families about successes, challenges, and students’ progress toward goals. They should make a concerted effort to send positive messages to parents and to ensure that the number of positive messages is higher than the number of negative messages.

Goal Coaches might choose to implement one or all of the following communication methods:

- weekly school newsletter containing school-wide updates
- weekly progress report on student academic progress
- weekly or biweekly personalized updates via phone or text.

Goal Teams require space for multiple groups to meet concurrently with enough privacy so that team members can share without disruption.

Ideally, each Goal Team will have a private space in which to meet each day to allow its members to speak openly and vulnerably with their group. If this is not possible on a daily basis, schools might consider having Goal Teams share spaces on goal-setting days and find ways to provide private spaces on team-building or reflection days.

Appropriate meeting locations will depend on the size of the Goal Teams, which in turn is based on the space available in the school and the number of skilled facilitators.

Finally, some schools choose to create Goal Team boards, where each team posts a picture, a record of their goals, and has flexible space where they can post shoutouts for other group members. This requires an equal amount of space for each group.
Technology & Infrastructure

Goal Teams can operate with or without technology based on a school’s preferences.

Schools should determine whether technology will enhance or detract from the Goal Team experience. Students can record and track their goals on computers or personal devices, or they can record them in a journal. Teachers can use PowerPoint slides or smart boards to guide meetings but should avoid them if they impede relationship-building and open communication.

Budget & Operations

Goal Teams can be run without a budget; their primary cost comes in staff capacity.

Staffing Goal Teams typically adds to the instructional and planning load carried by teachers and school staff, which should be considered when planning their schedules.

While forming students into teams, assigning Goal Coaches, and finding space for each group requires a large operational lift on the front end, there is little maintenance throughout the school year.

Goal Teams do not require any financial expenditure, but schools with flexible money might consider purchasing or printing journals or weekly planners for students to capture and reflect on their progress toward achieving their goals. Additionally, they might consider providing Goal Coaches small budgets to purchase incentives celebrating individual or team progress and important milestones.

Continuous Improvement

School leaders should develop simple tools to assess the strength of Goal Teams and to ground ongoing coaching and development.

Ideally, Goal Team support can be integrated into regular teacher coaching and professional development so that Goal Teams feel like an equally important and integrated part of a Goal Coach's roles.
Implementation

Supports Offered
Transcend supported the design of Greenfield Goal Teams and created a toolkit where users can access various resources to pilot, adopt, and adapt the model.

Greenfield Resource Toolkit
Free

This toolkit contains a comprehensive set of resources to support the rollout and implementation of Greenfield Goal Teams, including: planning materials and templates, goal-setting and reflection materials, Circle/life habits planning and preparation materials, family communication guidance, and so much more.

You can also find information on other parts of the comprehensive Greenfield School Design including Greenfield Expeditions and Dream Teams.

Access Now

Reach

41 Schools
15,000 Students
75% Free or Reduced Lunch
97% Black & Latinx

Impact
Goals Teams are used across many schools in the Achievement First Network alongside a suite of other practices that together lead to dramatic impact on student achievement. Below are just a few examples of the excellence achieved by students in Achievement First schools.

- Since Connecticut began Common Core-aligned assessments in 2015, Achievement First students have improved their proficiency by 21% points in math and by 15% points in ELA.
- Achievement First high schools are among the best in the state of Connecticut. U.S. News & World Report named Achievement First Hartford High #3 and Achievement First Amistad High #12.
Achievement First Bushwick in Brooklyn, New York, was named a 2019 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. It is a prestigious award granted to schools showing overall academic excellence or excellent progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

Achievement First students in Rhode Island far outperformed their in-state peers and scored 5% higher in ELA and math than students in Massachusetts, which is widely considered to have the best schools in the United States.

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Resources

Why Goal Teams?
This image explains the benefits of Greenfield Goal Teams.

SDL Fundamentals of Instruction
This is another example of a goal-setting protocol involving 1:1 conferencing that Goal Coaches can use to guide their facilitating of goal-setting

Goal Team Structure & Components
This image captures who is involved in Goal Teams and how they work together, as well as the key components that make up Goal Teams.

Monday Goal-Setting Fundamentals of Instruction
This document outlines a protocol that Goal Coaches can use when facilitating Goal Team meetings focused on goal setting.

Weekly Goal-Setting & Reflection Template (Simple Version)
This is a simple template that can guide students to set and reflect on goals over the course of a week.

Simple Goal-Setting Template
This is another option for a template that can guide students to set and reflect on goals over the course of a week.
Daily Goal Team Teacher PPT (Version 2)
These slides can support Goal Coaches to walk through the various Goal Team meetings that occur during the week, including goal setting, reflection, life habit development, and celebrations.

Goal Team Daily PPT CFS
- Daily Short Data - Friday Celebrations model Sincere & Authentic: Praising (i.e. personalized to the student, specifically name the student, describe the action that led to the result)
- Identify a common gap that is connected to the daily focus (e.g. Goals or Compass wont) using evidence from rapid feedback & conferencing.
- Provide example CFS aligned to the gap to support teachers in shaping their work

Goal Team Circle Fundamentals of Instruction
This protocol can support Goal Coaches to facilitate Circles to help students build relationships with one another or develop important life habits.

Goal Team Circle
- Purpose
  - Circle is a meeting format used in the following situations to help students engage with others and reflect on their goals and progress:
  - Goal checking and setting
  - Reflection
  - Life habit development
  - Celebrations

Student Weekly Habit Journal
This worksheet can be printed and used to guide students as they complete weekly life habit reflections.

Student Personal Narrative Protocol
This is a sample journal prompt that Goal Coaches can share with their Goal Team to support relationship-building.

Thursday Goal-Setting Fundamentals of Instruction
This protocol can be used by Goal Coaches as they support their Goal Team in their weekly progress-to-goals reflection.

Goal Teams Conference Planner
This document includes both a guide for Goal Coaches to use when planning 1:1 conferences with their Goal Team and a progress tracker.

Family Communication Routines: Phone Calls and Texts
Overview
- Phone calls are an essential part of building meaningful relationships with families. They are a powerful way to ensure that families feel supported and connected. Phone calls provide a face-to-face interaction that allows for immediate feedback and support. They also serve as a reminder of the importance of communication.

Goal Coach Family Phone/Text Guide
This document provides guidance around the frequency and quality of family phone and text communication.

Greenfield Habits: Compass Overview
This document outlines example habits used in the comprehensive Greenfield School Design that schools can adapt for use with Goal Teams.