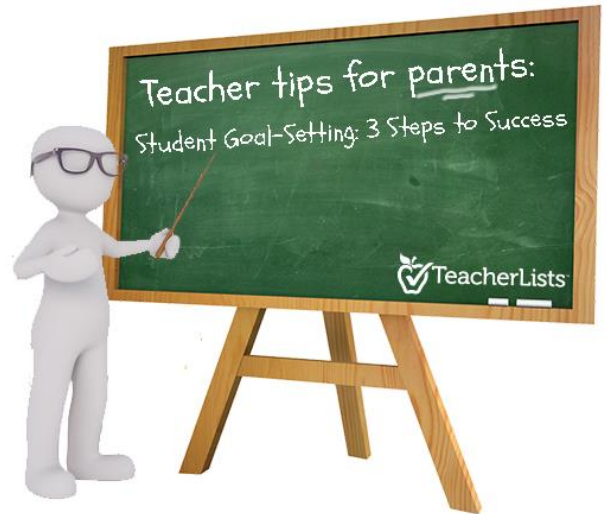




Student Goal-Setting: 3 Steps to Success

Students need to learn how to set reasonable goals for themselves. In school, it's common for teachers to witness students seeming disappointed in themselves and upset about their grades. Their reactions may range from tears to anger to blaming someone else. But if you sit down and talk to your students, you might find that the real problem is that they set unrealistic goals.

Use the following steps to help your students determine, set, and reach more reasonable goals, and share them with your classroom parents, as well.



1. Simplify Student Goals

In many cases, students think success means being the best at everything. Even if a student knows there are certain subjects and activities that he excels at and others that he tends to struggle with, he might still try to be number one in everything. Encourage such students to focus on lifting a grade (getting a B instead of a C in science) or continuing to do well in a strong area (keeping an A average in math).

2. Measuring Student Goals

It's hard to tell if a student is reaching her goal if there's no way to measure it—as such, make sure the goals are not only realistic and specific, but also measurable. If her goal is to ask more questions in class so she gains a clearer understanding of the material, then have her write down questions she has that she didn't get answers to. Hopefully over time the questions will decrease, which will show the student that she's better understanding the topic.

3. Make Goals Relevant

Encourage students to ask themselves which goals are really important to them. If a student is in band and enjoys playing the violin but his real interest is in performing arts, then there's no reason he should set a goal of winning first chair in the band. Instead, it would be more relevant to set a goal of trying out for the spring musical—and perhaps, for example, practicing the violin a certain number of times each day so he can master the music he'll play at the end-of-year concert.

Successful student goal-setting doesn't have to be complicated. With parents' and teachers' support, students can learn to set reasonable and attainable goals that, when reached, will raise their confidence in their schoolwork and activities!