

■ **Module 3: Developing a Grow
Your Own Strategic Action Plan**

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Grow Your Own: A Systemic Approach to Securing an Effective Educator Talent Pool

Developing a Grow Your Own Strategic Action Plan

Module 3 develops a common understanding of a strategic action plan, reviews the importance of setting Grow Your Own (GYO) goals, and supports listeners in monitoring their progress toward their GYO goals.

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LEARNING MODULE



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The learning series, ***Grow Your Own: A Systemic Approach to Securing an Effective Educator Talent Pool***, was developed through a collaboration among six federally funded technical assistance centers, including two content centers: the College and Career Readiness and Success Center, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders and four regional comprehensive centers including the Great Lakes Comprehensive Center, the Midwest Comprehensive Center, the Southeast Comprehensive Center, and the Texas Comprehensive Center. The learning series is divided into four short modules focused on critical Grow Your Own (GYO) topics.

SLIDE 2: This module is the third in a series and will build on the previous session in which we reviewed the Talent Development Framework and discussed sources of data to inform the development of Grow Your Own (GYO) programs that are based on local needs and context. Next, we will learn about how to create a strategic action plan towards these goals, identifying the stakeholders, activities, and indicators of success on the pathway towards these long-term goals.

SLIDE 4: In Module 2, you learned about the Talent Development Framework, shown here, and dove into the objectives about understanding how GYO fits into a comprehensive talent development framework. You identified sources of data to inform the development of GYO programs that are based on local needs and context, and you discussed how GYO programs address equity gaps and improve workforce diversity.

At this moment, take a second to reflect on:

- What are your specific needs - and how do you know? (That is, what is the data telling you?)
- How did those translate into your specific goals around GYO?

SLIDE 6: Remember, you started in the last Module to reflect upon those questions. But now you need to dig deeper and do two things.

First, ask yourself, what are the conditions you want in your state or district? Do these goals align with this?

- For example: a condition might be that there is no teacher shortage in Special Education positions. Your related goal might be, “By 2025, our state has at least 320 unique applicants for the 160 vacancies we have on average each year.”
- Another example is that you seek the condition of high first-year teacher retention. The related goal there would be, “By the 2021-2022 school year, our first-year teacher attrition rate is at or below the 11% national average – and below our current rate of 20% attrition.”
- One more example is that you seek increased interest in and respect for the teaching profession in your high school students – that’s the condition you’re looking for. It can be measured by setting one goal around, for instance, “Ten percent of Harrison County ACT takers indicate an interest in pursuing an education degree, as compared to the national average of 4-5%.”

It’s important to set goals because you need to know the minimum impact you’d want to see when you go through all this effort of implementing a new Grow Your Own program. You need to know what would make it worth it and ensure your goals align with that.

If that is all true, then you can move forward with this work. If not, you need to revisit the goals you’re looking at.

SLIDE 7: The next thing you need to do is assess where your goal is SMART. SMART is just an acronym to help you assess the rigor of your goal and is likely something you've seen before.

SMART stands for:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Actionable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound

Really, you should be asking yourself the questions of whether your goals are talking about a specific problem or opportunity. Can you measure it? Can you use it the goal to change a behavior and therefore, causes you to take an action? Does your goal matter to people? And have you set a time period on it?

A strong example within GYO is to “increase enrollment in the Education and Training courses in district high schools by 25% from SY2018-19 to SY2019-2020.” It has all the characteristics required and can be used to drive actions of those involved with this goal

If all of these things are true of your goal (goals), then you have likely set a goal that is worthy of being pursued by you and your stakeholders.

SLIDE 9: Yes, a strategic action plan can have many names...a logic model, a theory of action, a theory of change, a high-level strategic plan. But when it all comes down to it, it's just your plan. Your plan to get to and achieve your goal.

You don't need to be overwhelmed by the names or anything else that is thrown at you. But you do need to sure you map out where you're going, so that you have a plan to get there.

The purpose of a Strategic Action Plan it to organize your work and begins to assign ownership to the various stakeholders involved. It also allows you to communicate your work internally and externally and ensure that there's alignment in how it's being communicated. It also allows you to see missteps and reconfigure as necessary when you're off-track moving from the plan to your goals.

SLIDE 10: So what are the big pieces of a Strategic Action Plan?

You want to start with YOUR very own GYO goal/outcome that you're looking for. Then, what would you – and your stakeholders and partners - like to do to get to those outcomes? Those are your activities and inputs. Then your desired results are the outcomes. The outputs are what are directly created by the actions.

The inputs are who is taking action. The activities are what actions are they taking. The outputs are what will be created by these actions. And the outcomes are possibly the same as goals, but they're what you'd ultimately like to achieve through your GYO Program. They include the components that indicate you are making progress toward your goal, short, middle, and long-term outcomes.

Don't be overwhelmed by the terminology. It's not the most important thing – the PLAN is!

Ideally, the outputs created by the actions taken will lead to your outcomes or goals that you intended.

However, one of the biggest pieces of doing this and putting together your plan is that if you aren't seeing this lead to the outcomes and goals that you want to, you need to go back and adjust your plan. Where does your logic break down? And who do you need to involve in conversations to figure this out?

There isn't just one right way to go about this.

SLIDE 11: For instance, this is an example logic model from Texas and how they put together a GYO plan based on statewide implementation. Remember, the specific design is less important than having the pieces themselves. The plan should have inputs and activities that allow one to gather the specific data that leads to clear decisions about continuing down paths towards the outcomes.

And speaking of data, I want to emphasize that it's important to use your data – what you learned about in Module 2 – and partners and other stakeholders to help you make this plan.

SLIDE 12: Here's one more example from CCSO, slightly modified for a rural context. It starts with the goal – as one should – and then goes into the planning of who, what, when, indicators of progress, and resources required. As with any plan, the format is less important than the plan itself.

The plan should allow you to draw a map towards your goal and have benchmarks – or indicators – along the way to note how you are or aren't progressing towards those goals, so you can edit the plan as needed.

SLIDE 14: We need to monitor progress along the way. By using data, we can see the indicators of progress or non-progress along the way.

What would tell you that you are moving in the right direction? More people signing up for ETC classes? Fewer people dropping out of ETC classes? Other changes in behavior? That's really what you are looking for!

These pieces can help us evaluate if we're on track to the long-term outcomes we're looking for. It can also help us improve our plan in real time – and not wait until 5 years in to adjust! For example, if we've added a new community-focused program to recruit paraprofessionals to the classroom, we want to ensure things are on track.

We can find out that 95% of our enrollees have successfully completed their first semester of coursework at the local IHE. That indicates we are moving in the right direction and we should keep going. Or we could find that our information session was only attended by 5 people, and we need to recruit 12 to get the program going. That tells us that we need to adjust our recruitment strategy slightly. Or maybe we have limited data or success, like there haven't been any STEM recruits yet and that's our real need, and we need to proceed with caution on a certain activity before going all in.

This level of progress monitoring or evaluation is helpful as it keeps your Strategic Action Plan a working, or living, document that tells the story of (and guides) your work – and adjusts when necessary, based on monitoring that you and your partner stakeholders are actively doing.

SLIDE 16: Now what, since you've all of this?

Well, it's important to bring your goals together with a plan to get there. Who needs to be involved in that planning? And what will happen to get there?

This process should be collaborative with the right stakeholders at the table. If you need some assistance kicking it off, reach out. There are experts here to help.