

## **Goal Setting for Affiliates**

Long-range planning is of the utmost importance, even though initially it may sound intimidating. Each Affiliate should examine their mission statements and determine a set of long range goals. These goals will then be used to determine the programs and committees which will be needed. A five-year plan seems to be a reasonable length of time to start with, although the goals must be reviewed and evaluated at least yearly.

A good set of long-range goals will help to determine the budget and give direction and a sense of purpose to the organization. It is important that the membership feel a sense of accomplishment when progress is being made, and it is easier to quantify the progress if goals are set and realized.

Some possible long-term goals might be:

- To improve program quality to include acceleration, enrichment, compacting, independent study, and credit by exam. (See Guidelines for Gifted Programs, available from PDE, for more information).
- To encourage the district to improve screening, parent education, teacher inservicing, and mentoring.
- To educate parents regarding their rights, IEPs and how to use them, and generally how to advocate for the appropriate education of gifted children.
- To develop a group of parents who will volunteer to attend IEP or due process meetings as an advocate and support system.
- To help parents internalize and display the attitude that it is okay to have a gifted child.
- To research a particular area of interest.

Some possible short-term goals might be:

- To raise funds for a particular project.
- To increase membership in your Affiliate.
- To respond to immediate problems as they arise (e.g. issue of Cooperative Learning.)
- To plan a regional meeting or event.

As your Affiliate grows, it will become necessary for you to set long and short-term goals which will be tailored to your specific needs. PAGE encourages you to set these goals based on individual differences within your school district. It is also recommended that you include your school district's administration in defining the goals of your Affiliate.

Remember: One major purpose of an Affiliate is to enhance education within its school district. As a community organization the Superintendent will want to meet and work with you on an on-going basis. Change will be affected through the Superintendent. Be willing to serve on district committees. Send copies of your mailings to the Superintendent. Find ways your group can support him/her so that they will be willing to work for you.

But acknowledge that there are times when superintendents and parents of gifted have also helped to replace those superintendents who are not meeting the goals of the community. Remember that the School Board, the Superintendent, the Teachers and Principals are your public servants, salaried by the tax dollars of your community (school board members receive no compensation in Pennsylvania). Therefore it is their responsibility to give your input respect as long as your input is responsibly and courteously extended. Your goal is a pleasant, working relationship. On the other hand, through no fault of your own, that goal may not always be possible to achieve at which time you will have to find other ways for your group to succeed.