

# Initiative Priorities

Goal prioritization should be an inclusive process in which all participants are encouraged to voice ideas and reservations. Many methods can be used to set TQI priorities; the *Initiative Priorities* tool takes you through a sample prioritization process.

- Who:** The proposed TQI team
- Time to complete:** 2 hours
- Resources needed:**
  - Flipcharts and markers
  - Quiet room to work in
  - Facilitator
  - Recorder

**STEP 1: Pre-Planning.** Make sure all participants have background information on the reasons behind the teacher quality initiative; everyone should have details on the processes that will be used to select initiative goals. The Introduction to this guide is a good starting point for your pre-planning activities.

**STEP 2: Brainstorming.** Select a facilitator to lead the group discussion, and then brainstorm the TQI goals that have been proposed. This part of the process can be time consuming since participants usually want to offer reasons for choosing a particular goal; a good facilitator, however, can keep the discussion on a productive track. As ideas are proposed, they should be captured on a flipchart.

The following grid provides a sample of goals discussed in Chapter One of the Action Guide.

<b>TEACHER QUALITY GOALS</b> <i>What you hope to change about teacher quality</i>	<b>COMMUNITY CAPACITY GOALS</b> <i>What strengths you hope the community will develop</i>	<b>COMMUNITY ACCESS GOALS</b> <i>How you hope to make decision-making channels more accessible to all residents</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Forge a community definition of high-quality teaching.</li> <li>■ Strengthen standards for high-quality teaching.</li> <li>■ Increase the pool of well-qualified teachers.</li> <li>■ Increase the percentage of well-qualified teachers at low-performing schools.</li> <li>■ Increase the capacity of current teachers.</li> <li>■ Reduce the turnover of well-qualified teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase community knowledge about the state of TQ in the district; build a database of information.</li> <li>■ Increase community interest and understanding of how the political process works.</li> <li>■ Increase the number and effectiveness of grassroots organizing efforts.</li> <li>■ Increase policymaker understanding of teacher quality issues.</li> <li>■ Engage traditionally under-represented segments of the community.</li> <li>■ Increase the knowledge and skills of citizens running for elected office.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase voter participation rates in school board and other local elections.</li> <li>■ Increase the number/effectiveness of citizen advisory councils.</li> <li>■ Increase the number/type of governance meetings open to the public.</li> <li>■ Have greater diversity in the pool of citizens running for public office.</li> </ul>

**STEP 3: Goal Prioritization.** Ask each participant to write down 3–5 priority goals. The facilitator will ask members to share their goals and then identify the goals cited most frequently. After the initial tally, participants should have an opportunity to petition for a particular goal to be included in the top 3–5 goals. Once explanations as to why a particular goal should join or replace a prioritized goal have been aired, the facilitator should take another vote and record the top 3–5 goals.

3–5 HIGH-PRIORITY TQI GOALS
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The facilitator will then guide discussion on areas of action/focus needed to achieve each goal, the possible long-term impact of reaching each goal, and considerations that can help identify a smaller subset of the goals. An example is provided below. **Note:** The goals can be any combination of teacher quality, community capacity, and community access goals—though every group should come up with at least one teacher quality goal. At this stage, teacher quality goals should be broadly defined; specificity will come after community input and research.

GOAL	FOCUS AREAS/ACTIONS	DESIRED LONG-TERM IMPACT	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
Increase policymaker understanding of TQ issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lobbying</li> <li>▪ Media relations</li> <li>▪ Public information campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More effective education policy</li> <li>▪ Greater, more equitable, more effective use of resources on education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need partners to help lobby policymakers</li> <li>▪ Possibility policymakers will make TQ an issue only after voters do; thus efforts should focus on community members</li> </ul>

**STEP 4: Building Agreement.** After each goal is discussed, the facilitator will help the group come to consensus on up to 3 TQI goals. Participants should be encouraged to voice comments and concerns, but after a short period of discussion, the top 1–3 goals should be recorded.

1–3 TQI GOALS
▪
▪
▪

**STEP 5: Reflection.** Participants should be encouraged to reflect upon the goals for a brief period of time. Next, the facilitator should query the group, either via e-mail or at another short meeting, to ensure that everyone can “live” with the goals. After a round of e-mail or verbal discussion, participants should sign off on the goals and agree to work toward their attainment. Remember that any teacher quality goals decided upon at this point are likely to be revised in the future to reflect additional research and community input.