Getting Started with myFolio's New Features:

Themes

Goal-Setting

Community Feed

Mindful Minute

Goals Check-in

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Themes

In the new version of the myFolio experience, aspects of the professional growth process are driven by your school's strategic priorities, which we call Themes. Once established, Themes serve as the guiding focus for posts on the new Community Feed as well as the Goals process.

Why are Themes important? Research shows us that employees are more effective when they can see how their individual goals fit into the big picture (McKinsey, 2017). Faculty and staff who believe that they are working toward something meaningful and larger than themselves will be more productive and engaged than those who do not understand or connect with the "bigger picture." Daniel Pink has termed this purpose, the sense that what we do as individuals produces something transcendent or serves something meaningful beyond ourselves (see Daniel Pink's Drive or watch his TED talk for a more in-depth analysis of intrinsic motivation). Themes connect faculty and staff to your school's strategic priorities, thereby tapping into this need for a larger purpose while also moving everyone in your community in a common direction.

What's the process for identifying your school's myFolio Themes? Considering the strategic role Themes will play in your myFolio implementation this year, we recommend working together as a leadership team to determine your Themes for the year. The prioritization process outlined on the next page is a helpful tool to guide those group conversations.

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Process Step	Example
1 Identify your school's strategic priorities for this school year.	• ensuring equitable experiences for all students across all aspects of their school experience; • developing a financial model that reduces dependence on tuition; • improving the distance learning experience for students, families, and faculty/staff.
2 Consider how the school's strategic priorities align with the school's work with faculty and staff around professional growth. **OR** Consider how you can align your school's strategy for professional growth with your strategic priorities in order to advance your school's mission and vision.	If our school is focused on increasing equitable experiences for all students across all aspects of their school experience, then... • our teachers' classroom work will need to be focused on providing equitable instruction for all students; • school leadership will need to provide professional support and tools to teachers support their own learning on providing equitable instruction; • conversations between teachers and administrators will need to include a focus on examining how classroom environments promote equitable experiences; • teachers will need to reflect on their own learning and efforts to increase equitable opportunities for all students.
3 Identify any additional priorities for myFolio work After determining which of the school's strategic priorities directly align with your professional growth work, identify any additional priorities that you want your faculty and staff to consider. This might be an initiative from the Dean of Faculty, Associate Head of School — anything that is a shared goal for faculty and staff that is not otherwise captured in the school's broader strategic goals.	Our school's strategic priorities that align with our professional growth work include equity in the classroom and distance learning. We are also focused on increasing collaboration among our faculty and staff.
4 Use these priorities to establish your school's Folio Themes.	• Equity in the Classroom • Distance Learning • Faculty and Staff Collaboration

5 Define 2-3 specific focus areas for each Theme to give them more clarity and definition. While not meant to be all-encompassing, these look-fors can help create a shared understanding of each Theme.	• Equity in the Classroom: this year, we're focusing on ensuring...
	  – equitable engagement opportunities for all students
	  – the use of instructional materials that reflect diverse perspectives
	• Distance Learning: this year, we're focusing on distance learning that:
	  – prioritizes social-emotional learning and community building
	  – provides additional support and differentiated learning opportunities for the students who need them most.
	• Faculty and Staff Collaboration: this year, our focus on collaboration includes:
	  – cross-departmental workgroups
	  – shared planning time to foster interdisciplinary instructional design.

Goal-Setting

The new Goal wizard in myFolio facilitates a guided goal-setting process for faculty and staff. Drawing on behavioral economics principles around habit formation and goal attainment, this newly redesigned feature walks users through a five-step goal-setting process in order to:
- Align their individual work with the school's broader priorities (called Themes),
- Narrow their focus to a few specific challenges related to those Themes;
- Deepen their understanding of their "starting point" in relation to each Challenge;
- Articulate their approach to addressing each challenge (Goals);
- Plan specific short and longer term actions needed to reach each goal.

Why is goal-setting important?
myFolio is built upon the belief that the more clearly we articulate our plan for something, the more likely we are to achieve it. The research supports this: faculty and staff who set clear goals and are provided consistent feedback have been shown to have higher levels of motivation and higher levels of performance than those who do not set goals (see Locke and Latham). In turn, these employees are more likely to adopt a growth mindset, more likely to be self-driven, and more likely to demonstrate resilience and innovation when faced with new or challenging scenarios (see this article for a quick primer on the psychology of goal-setting).

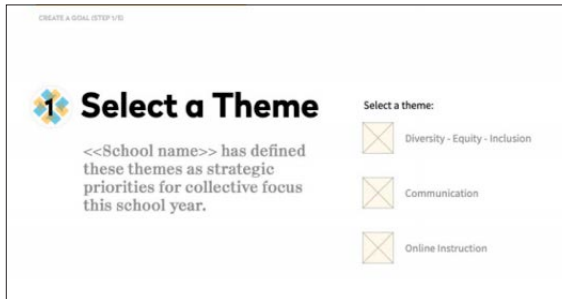**Why are myFolio Goals now aligned with Themes?**
Themes in myFolio serve as the guiding focus for each school's professional growth process. By aligning each user's individual goals with the school's broader strategic goals, faculty and staff/employees are more likely to see their work as connected to the "bigger picture," or what Daniel Pink has termed as "purpose." This alignment, in turn, increases motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction, all of which have positive and lasting impacts for your school community.
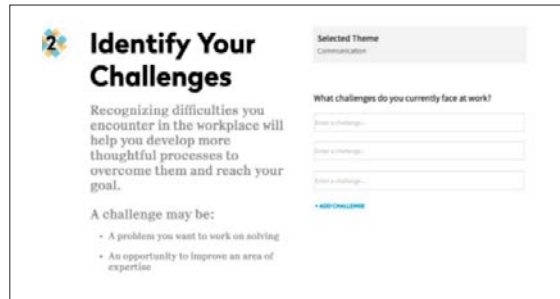
Why questions?
Folio Collaborative's goal-setting framework is built upon the idea that "beautiful questions" (see Warren Berger's work) have the power to shift our thinking, challenge our perspective, help us imagine, and help us solve problems. As Hal Gregersen tells us,"The bottom line is that question-based goals deliver more than statement-based goals…we're programmed to start solving."

Once a Goal is created in myFolio, users then shift their attention to "solving those questions" through intentional action planning, ongoing reflection, and consistent conversation with other members of their school community.

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What's the process for setting goals in myFolio?
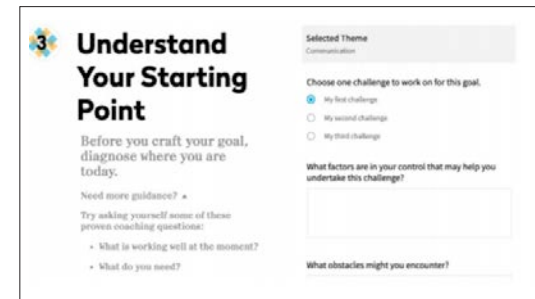

The individual goal-setting process begins with aligning each professional growth goal with one of the school's Themes.
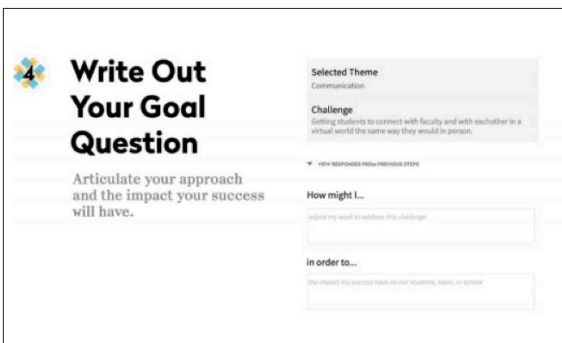

A series of prompts guides faculty and staff through a thoughtful process of defining intentional, meaningful goals.

First, users identify their challenges. These can include problems they are trying to solve, an area of expertise that they want to explore further, or something that isn't working quite as well as it could be.
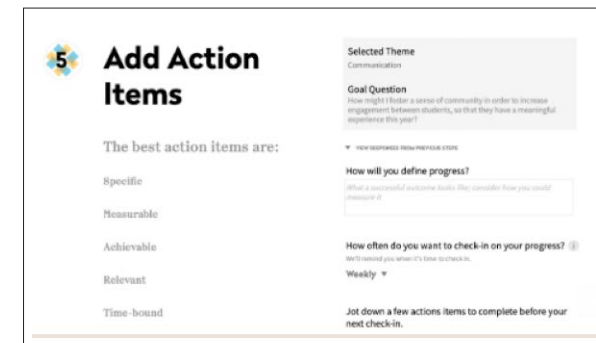

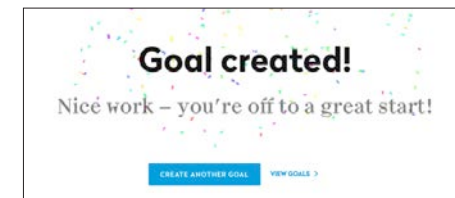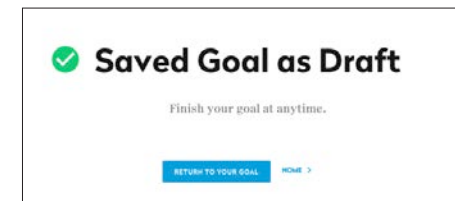Next, users reflect on their starting point in relation to each challenge:

After brainstorming possible options, users identify the challenge that they want to convert into a goal. Next, myFolio prompts users to examine their challenge from different perspectives in order to help clarify and shape the goal.

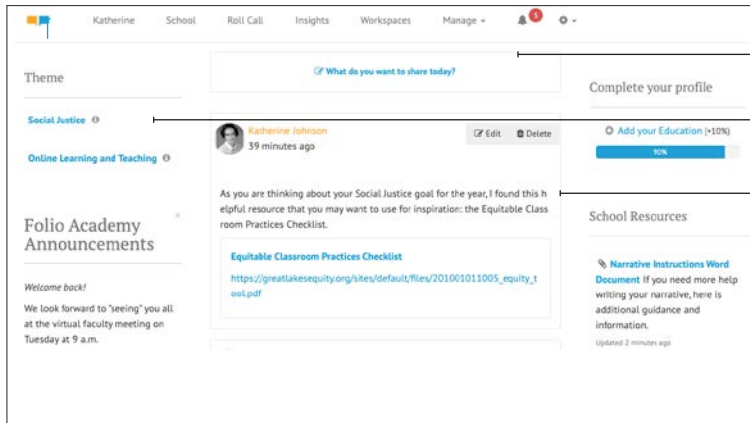Users then create their Goal Question, using the "How might I...in order to..." framework.

The final step in the Goal Setting process includes identifying specific actions and measurable steps that will create frequent successes and motivation for faculty and staff.

And repeat! After completing Step 5, users are given the option of "Save Goal as Draft" or "Create Goal." Once the Goal has been created, users can choose to "Create another Goal."

Community Feed

POST: Click here to start sharing ideas in your school community.

THEMES: School administrators will identify school-wide goals and priorities - called Themes - for the year so that as faculty and staff develop their professional growth goals, their plans will be aligned with those priorities and what matters most at your school.

COMMUNITY FEED: The new School Community Feed is the place for everyone at your school to share ideas and best practices, ask questions and provide answers, celebrate achievements, and stay connected.

The new Community Feed feature in myFolio is a place where faculty and staff can share insights and best practices, ask questions, provide resources and ideas, and celebrate together. Designed to be interactive, the Community Feed meets the adult learner's need for professional growth that is purposeful, collaborative, and "just-in-time." More than simply a filing system for resources, the Community Feed will:

- Connect posts with the school's Themes, which can then be browsed by topic or searched as an archive;

- Promote increased engagement with myFolio as users can comment, like, and share posts and resources (coming soon);

- Connect schools with each other. Standard Folio-defined Categories (e.g. "Distance Learning," "Technology," "Professional Development Opportunities") will enable Folio to open up cross-school communication (future myFolio capability).

Why does the new myFolio include a Community Feed?
We know - from the literature, from extensive member feedback, and from our work with applied behavioral economists - how important collaborative peer relationships are for educator growth and development. Adults learn best in cooperative, purpose-driven, and real-time environments (TEAL, 2011)

The Community Feed was thus designed as a way to encourage:
- Connection among colleagues as a way to develop more effective practices;
- Teacher-driven learning and conversation;
- The development of a community of learners growing together instead of in isolation.

Why is the Community Feed especially important now?
The COVID pandemic has created new challenges for school leaders, particularly relating to the ways in which they communicate with faculty and staff, monitor faculty and staff morale, and promote a growth-focused culture in the midst of such rapid change.

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Instead of introducing new systems, myFolio 's Community Feed can be utilized to streamline and simplify communication with faculty and staff, as a way to build community morale, as a way to share school announcements, as a way to spur growth-focused conversation...the list goes on. School leaders can use myFolio as a way to respond adaptively and creatively in these times of uncertainty and rapid change.

The Community Feed also addresses a growing need among teachers to connect, share learnings, and serve as a sounding board for each other. Whereas many educators have sought out this type of professional collaboration on external sites like Twitter and Facebook, myFolio's Community Feed creates a space for this sort of dialogue to occur within the school community, in turn strengthening faculty morale and increasing teachers' sense of belonging.

Community Feed Guidelines
As with any online community, it's important to establish and communicate clear expectations for use. We suggest creating a "myFolio Community Feed Netiquette" policy document (something like this can be modified for adult users) and then sharing the document with all users at the start of the academic year. Folio Admins can post these guidelines as a Resource and notify users via the Announcement feature.

Looking for fun ways to get started?
Try using one (or all) of the following Community Feed posts with your faculty and staff!

- "What worked today? Share one little win with our community - whether it's about a class activity that went well, a student who shone, a personal victory over technology, or a successful balancing of work/life tensions." **[School theme: celebrating teacher wins]**

- "One of our growth themes for the year is anti-racism. Have you read any inspiring articles, books, tweets, or blogs this week related to this theme? Share them with our faculty here!" **[School theme: anti-racism]**

- "Focus on purpose: share with us by posting a quote, anecdote, or link that captures why you teach." **[School theme: purpose]**

- "Many of us are working to integrate more community-building into our virtual classes (one of our goals for the year). Do you have an article, video, or other resource that could help your colleagues? Share it here!" **[School theme: high-quality virtual instruction]**

- What is one concept you want to put into practice (and how are you going to do it) after hearing our professional day speaker?

- Here is the pre-reading for our PLC meeting next week. Please read it in advance and post a phrase or sentence that you want to remember or that stands out for you in the comments below.

- Use the Community Feed as a backchannel during a presentation.

- We are looking forward to learning from _____ during tomorrow's faculty meeting, please submit your questions in advance by commenting in the box below so that we can organize them in advance.

Mindful Minute

The Mindful Minute provides myFolio faculty and staff with a quick way to reflect on their recent experiences at work by responding to two prompts and selecting a corresponding face that best represents how they are doing that day. Using the Mindful Minute Insights page, Folio admins and Supervisors can then review these responses, at both the individual and aggregate level, and determine appropriate follow-up.

Why is this important?

Research tells us that our emotions and intuitive impulses can get in the way of our ability to make rational decisions. By pausing to reflect objectively on what's working and what's not working, and then articulating a strategy to overcome that obstacle, users are more likely to make a wise and informed decision when the challenge arises again.

What's the process for using the Mindful Minute in myFolio?

The Mindful Minute feature asks users to reflect on two coaching prompts:

▶ What are one or two successful strategies or ideas that you want to capture from today/this week?

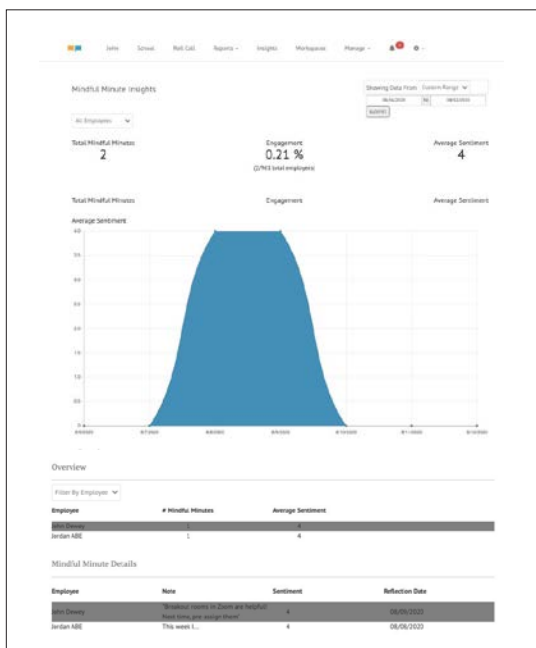▶ What challenge did you navigate today/this week, and how might you approach it differently next time?

After responding to these prompts in the text field, users are asked "How are you feeling today?" and then shown a series of emoticons, from which they will select one that best represents their current state. Once an emoticon is selected, users then submit their Mindful Minute response.

Using the Mindful Minute Insights page

The Mindful Minute Insights page allows Folio Admins to see aggregated responses, drill down to view individual Mindful Minute responses, and export data to CSV. From this page, FolioAdmins are also able to use the "reach-out" function to generate an email to specific users who report a sentiment of 3 or below.

In addition to these individual reach-outs, Folio also recommends using the Mindful Minute Insight data as a way to identify and analyze trends over time.
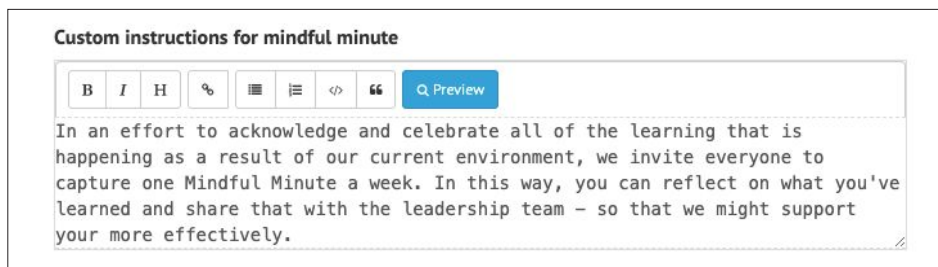
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For example, when reviewing the average sentiment chart, first ask "Has a change occurred in the scores users are reporting over time?" If so, ask:

◆ Why has this change occurred?

◆ Are the variations to be expected or are they related to a particular event? (think about the specific response date)

◆ If the change (either positive or negative) appears to be related to a particular event, is here a need to follow-up?

◆ If there is a need to address the change, what does our follow-up look like?

Customizing the Mindful Minute Header

Folio Admins have the option of customizing the Mindful Minute to include specific instructions to help frame this reflection exercise for faculty and staff.

• Using "Manage -→ Customizations," Folio Admins can detail specific framing language for users.

Custom instructions for mindful minute

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In an effort to acknowledge and celebrate all of the learning that is happening as a result of our current environment, we invite everyone to capture one Mindful Minute a week. In this way, you can reflect on what you've learned and share that with the leadership team — so that we might support your more effectively.

Tips for getting the most out of the Mindful Minute

The Mindful Minute encourages reflection and active problem solving, both of which are particularly important skills for faculty and staff to develop this Fall. In order to get the most out of this feature, we recommend that school leaders establish routines for using the Mindful Minute with faculty and staff and are intentional about reflecting and acting on the data.

◆ **School admins should encourage faculty and staff to complete the Mindful Minute regularly, on a predictable schedule. This might look like:**

  • **Having users complete a weekly Mindful Minute - use the Task List to remind users to complete!**

  • **Using the Mindful Minute as an "do now" or "exit ticket" for faculty and staff before or following staff meetings.**

  • **Having users complete a daily Mindful Minute, especially for the first few weeks of school.**

  • **For a more interactive change-of-pace, and as a way to build trust, consider having pairs "interview" each other with the Mindful Minute questions before filling out their own responses.**

◆ **School leadership team should make time to regularly review and action plan around the Mindful Minute data.**

  • **Set aside time at the beginning of each School Leadership meeting to dig into the data.**

  • **Export the data as a .csv file or save as a PDF file, share with your leadership team, and have everyone respond using the "notice and wonder" framework.**

  • **Consider using a similar "teacher support" protocol to whatever structure your student support team uses, applying to teacher well-being the same tried-and-true tactics you use to look out for student social and emotional health.**

Goals Check-in

The new Goals Check-in feature in myFolio encourages active reflection and real-time iteration for faculty and staff. Grounded in psychological principles that tell us that "small wins" and ongoing accountability have the power to keep us motivated and on-track toward reaching longer-term goals, this new feature facilitates a monthly reflective practice during which users:

• Review each of their individual Goals;

• Update the associated Action Items by adding comments, marking as complete, or adding additional Action items;

• Detail their learnings in relation to each Goal since the last check-in.

Why is this important?

myFolio is built upon the belief that growth matters. Research shows us that one of the best ways to encourage a growth mindset is to encourage faculty and staff to set meaningful, challenging Goals - and to provide opportunities along the way for folks to pause, reflect, and adjust their approach toward reaching these Goals. In this way, Goal-Setting moves away from a fixed or binary "I met my Goal or I didn't meet my Goal" experience and toward a true learning process in which challenges spur growth and nurture resilience. As **Angela Duckworth's work** shows us, challenging goals — coupled with intentional reflection — help us develop grit and persistence, both of which are particularly important for faculty and staff this year. When embedded within the Goals process, consistent reflection also allows us to "generate breadcrumbs" for ourselves. Using the Goals Check-in, faculty and staff are able to chronicle and refer back to those learnings over time, which becomes particularly important when faced with similar scenarios going forward. These breadcrumbs empower folks to "**trust their wise selves**" rather than relying on others' to solve their problems for them. And with increasing self-empowerment comes increasing self-confidence and self-efficacy, all of which are key determinants of performance and retention.

What does this look like in myFolio?

First, users must enable check-ins for their Goals.

• For existing Goals, they need to edit the Goal which will take them to the "Add Action Items" step of the Goal Wizard, where they can select "Monthly" from the Progress Check-In drop-down.

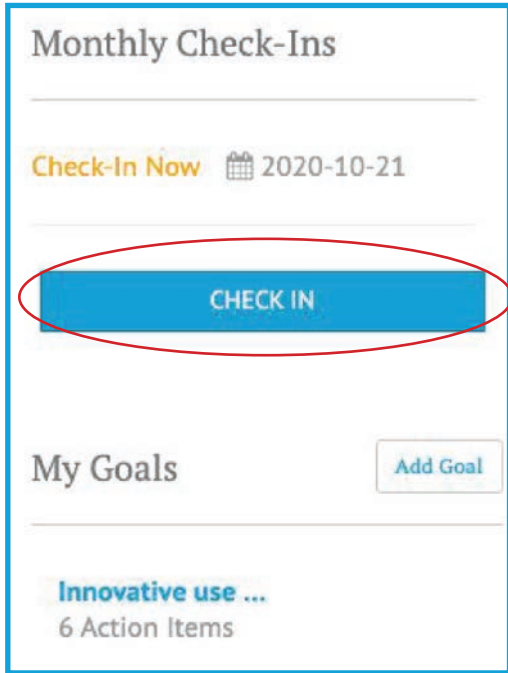• For new Goals, on step 5 of the Goal Wizard - where users can add Action Items — users simply need to select "Monthly" from the Progress Check-In drop-down.
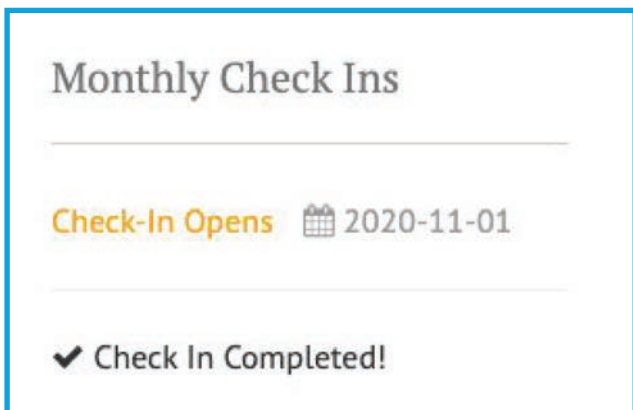
Next, once the Goals Check-in has been enabled, the Monthly Check-in widget will be visible on the right hand side of the myFolio Home Page; users will be able to check-in once per month, beginning on the first day of every month.

• Users will click on the "Check In" button and be taken to a Check-in page to complete the Goals Check-in process.

• By clicking on the "Next Goal" button, users will be able to complete Check-ins for each existing Goal, one at a time. Each Check-in includes opportunities to mark any completed Action Items, leave notes pertaining to your progress on those items, add New Action Items, and leave an overall reflection on your progress toward each individual Goal.

On the last Goal there is a Complete button; once the Check-in is completed, the user is taken back to their Home Page.

Try this!

The new Goals Wizard and the Goals Check-in feature in myFolio allow users a greater degree of flexibility over their Goal-Setting process than ever before. Here are a couple of ways to take advantage of this flexibility!

• Instead of planning out action items for the entire year, start small: keep a running list of "action items" to plan out the work for the next month or so. Check these action items off as completed and add more "bite-sized" steps along the way:

• Who says that Goals need to span the entire school year? Think about setting semester or cycle Goals instead; once completed, be sure to add new Goals, aligned with your school's big picture priorities or Themes.

Want to share your school's great Goal-Setting work with the Folio community? We'd love to hear from you! Email us at members@foliocollaborative.org.

Interested in learning more about Goal Setting in my Folio? Check out these great pieces from the Folio Insights and Tools collection:

• **Why Goal-Setting Matters More Than Ever**

• **Facilitating a Goal-Setting Faculty/Staff Meeting Using the myFolio Goal Wizard**

• **Racial Equity and Inclusion Goal-Setting Tool**

The Folio Collaborative team understands the number of plans you have had to design this summer. We are here to do this work alongside you. Let us help you create a concrete roadmap for strengthening your school's approach toward professional learning. To discuss the new myFolio features, email us at members@foliocollaborative.org.