Benchmarking Definitions and Distinctions

Term	Definition (as used in webinar)
Goal	Long-term objective. Example: The goal of all children being able to read grade-level material with comprehension by the end of grade 3.
Benchmark	A milestone used to evaluate progress toward attaining the long-term goal; a desired level of performance for students in a specific skill area. Example: Decoding nonwords at a rate of 23 correct words per minute (cwpm).
Performance Levels	Another way to establish benchmarks, with different performance levels corresponding to different specific levels of achievement in a skill area. For example, a "proficient" reader may be a student who reaches an oral reading fluency (ORF) level of 45 cwpm. An "emergent" reader may be a student who has an ORF rate of at least 20 cwpm, and up to 45 cwpm. A "struggling" reader may be a student who scores below 20 cwpm, and a "nonreader" may be a student who scores zero.
Metric	A valid, reliable unit of measure. Benchmarks are expressed in terms of a specific metric, such as number of correct words per minute a child can read orally.
Target	The percentage of students who would be able to meet the benchmark (or performance level) by a given period of time. For example, at baseline, perhaps 10% of students meet the benchmark for ORF. In two years' time, the target may be double that percentage, or 20% of students meeting the benchmark.