2022-23 Student Learning Objectives (SLO) Guidebook

SLO Guidebook
SCDE SLO Toolkit Training Resources

About the SLO Toolkit Guidebook

Version (4) May 2022

The South Carolina Department of Education has designed this SLO Guidebook in response to local district's needs for teacher training resources related to developing high quality Student Learning Objectives for use as a student growth measure within teacher evaluation.

This guidebook and related SLO Toolkit resources are available on the Office of Educator Effectiveness webpage and are subject to change as new curriculum is developed. Resources within the toolkit may be reproduced and disseminated for non-profit, educational purposes without prior permission.

Contents

Introduction

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is dedicated to ensuring that all students in South Carolina have great teachers in every classroom. Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) are essential elements in our commitment to reach this goal. It is our hope that through the South Carolina Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System we will be better able to meaningfully assist, develop, and evaluate teachers and enable leaders to better provide teachers with the feedback, support and professional learning needed to improve their practice. Student learning is the ultimate measure of teacher effectiveness.

Student learning objectives (SLOs) are teacher-driven, student-centered, data-informed, standards-based goals that measure an educator's impact on student learning within a given interval of instruction. The use of SLOs promotes collaboration among teachers, administrators, and support staff to make data- informed academic decisions about students. SLO development is an iterative process that encourages teachers to identify the most important learning standard(s) for the year or semester, review and analyze available student data, make informed decisions about instructional strategies, set academic goals for students and evaluate student progress toward those goals. It also supports a shift from focus solely on student proficiency towards focus and emphasis on student growth.

SLOs, as a measure of student growth and teacher effectiveness, have been used in a number of states and districts around the country beginning in Denver, Colorado, in 1999. Research studies suggest that SLOs have a positive effect on student learning and educator collaboration. For example, in Denver, rigorous and high-quality growth objectives were associated with higher levels of student achievement. Additionally, in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina, students in classrooms where teachers developed and implemented SLOs demonstrated more academic growth than students who were in classes where SLOs were not developed and implemented (Community Training and Assistance Center, 2013).

SLO implementation also encourages educator collaboration and gives teachers a degree of ownership in their evaluations.

Establishing a system for development and implementation is paramount in ensuring that educators get the most out of the SLO process. The purpose of this guidebook is to support teachers

> *Many teachers already follow an informal SLO process: they determine students' baseline for learning through data analysis, set academic goals for students, assess student progress, and adjust their instruction on the basis of progress monitoring.*

in the development and implementation of quality SLOs.

Additionally, this guidebook outlines educators' roles in the process at every level—district, school, and classroom. While a consistent framework helps ensure the impact of SLOs, local education agencies (LEAs) will have the flexibility to make decisions and manage the process in ways that best meet their needs.

South Carolina Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System

South Carolina's Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System, in compliance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver awarded to the State of South Carolina in 2012, incorporated student growth measures into teacher evaluations beginning in 2015–2016. ESEA was reauthorized in December, 2015. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives states greater flexibility in determining the approach to teacher evaluation. In response, Superintendent Molly Spearman requested SC Board of Education (BOE) approval to make modifications to the 2015 Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System to include removing the requirement of test-score based measures in teacher evaluation with more emphasis on the SLO process and local measures. Additionally, the BOE approved exploring methods to align the SLO with professional practice domains and using it as an artifact to inform ratings within the practice domains rather than continue using student growth as an isolated, weighted measure. This 2016-17 guidebook reflects adjustments to the SLO process in response to ESSA related, board-approved modifications.

THE PURPOSE OF STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Even though SLOs are within a teacher's evaluation, the true benefits of SLOs are to
- *enhance* student learning in every classroom;
- provide evidence of the educator's instructional impact on student learning; and
- provide educators with a systematic process for good teaching practices using data and assessment.

Teachers engaged in the SLO process can better formalize and account for their success with students, while using the information gathered through the process to improve their practice. SLOs provide an opportunity for teachers to inform the way in which their practice is evaluated. Teachers may work together in teams alongside their evaluators to determine priorities around content and to establish expectations around how learning is measured. By setting growth targets based on student data, teachers

are linking the evaluation of their practice directly to the impact they have on their students. The SLO process encourages collaboration between educators at various levels—teachers, administrators, and support staff. Through this process, educators engage in professional conversations around professional practice, student performance data, root causes, continuous improvement, and efforts to positively impact student learning outcomes.

Who Writes SLOs?

Measuring student growth through Student Learning Objectives is appropriate for classroom-based teachers who have direct interaction with students. This includes certified teachers of core academic subjects, related subjects, (e.g. physical education, career and technology education) and special education. The term classroom-based teacher applies to an educator who is responsible for planning, delivering and assessing student instruction over time. It does not include special area personnel (e.g. school counselors, library media specialists, and speech-language therapists). All classroom-based teachers must collect student growth measures annually.

SLOs and Special Educators

SLO goals are different than IEP goals. IEP goals are highly personalized for individual students, whereas SLOs are long-term academic goals for groups of students. Though there may be overlap in the content, assessments, or evidence used for SLOs, IEP goals should not replace SLO goals. The academic goals within a student's IEP may inform the teacher's SLOs and may align to the instructional strategies identified within the SLO. However, it is important to keep the two systems and related goals distinct.

Similarly, SLO goals for special education students must be academic in nature, rather than behavioral. Behavioral goals are allowable only to the extent that they are integrated with and support clearly defined academic goals for the growth of special education students.

Benefits of Using SLOs

Establishes the practice of setting rigorous learning goals and targets for all students

Fosters a data-rich, data-driven culture of learning

Encourages a practice of using data to inform instruction

Encourages teachers to analyze content standards, research most effective teaching strategies, and develop assessments that are aligned with the content standards

Ensures that teachers have an in-depth knowledge of their content standards

Provides teachers with opportunities to be intentional and deliberate about what they

teach Ensures that teachers examine outcomes to determine next steps

Promotes reflection, collaboration, and improvement of teacher practice

SLOs as a Best Practice

Setting goals for students, assessing student progress, and incorporating data to make adjustments to instructional strategies are good teaching practices (Hamilton, Halverson, Jackson, Mandinach, Eupovitz, & Wayman, 2009).

The SLO process formalizes those best practices and helps to focus conversations around student results, which ultimately benefits both professional practice and student learning (Lachlan-Haché, Cushing, & Bivona, 2012).

SLO Components and Alignment to Practice Measures

To assist teachers in the development of high-quality SLOs, the SCDE has created an SLO Planning Template (Appendix A). Individual districts may create their own templates; so it's important to check on the format the district is using prior to completing the SLO.

A teacher's SLO planning template is a blueprint or work plan that will include, but is not limited to, components identified in Table 1. The components included here are similar to SLO components in other states that have adopted SLOs as part of their evaluation systems. In addition, the South Carolina template adds elements required of all educators under state law to streamline the processes for educators.

Components of the SLO

I. Student Population and Baseline

Information could include the number of students, a description of students with exceptionalities (e.g., learning disability, gifted and talented, and/or language learner status), easily accessible reports of last year's performance, information from the Rally Analytics platform, etc. This should require reflection, not extensive research.

II. Priority Standard and Learning Objective

Educators should consider using math or English priority standards. Other content areas may consider a skill- or practice-based standard that spirals back multiple times. The Learning Objective should be aligned with course- or grade-level content standards or the Competencies for the Profile of a SC Graduate The goal should be broad enough to capture essential skills but focused enough to be measurable. Alternatively, educators may set a growth goal using existing data team structures or the Rally platform. Educators should consider what formative and summative assessment data is already collected as part of a course that can be used to measure this objective. Multiple measures and incorporation of existing assessments are encouraged. This evidence can be connected to existing data team/PLC structures or work with the Rally platform.

III. Instructional Strategies and Inclusive Learning Environment

When looking at professional practice and growth, educators should identify one instructional practice that will be the focus connected to the professional goal. Educators should identify which SCTS 4.0 Rubric Indicator(s) is most connected to the instructional practice of the SLO. Educators should also select which inclusive learning practice is most connected to the planning for a positive learning environment. Lastly educators should indicate in this section how this strategy will help to intentionally create a positive classroom community that helps all students take risks and grow as independent learners.

IV. Mid-Course Progress Monitoring

This conference and reflection may be incorporated into a department, grade-level, PLC, or other collaborative meeting**.**

V. End of Year Conference Reflection

At this meeting there should be **e**vidence that students showed growth as established by the SLO goal and conferences. Educators also have the opportunity to reflect on the data to describe how the data informed instructional practice, goal setting, or professional development plan for next year. During this meeting the SLO Rating is shared with the educator by the SLO evaluator.

Teacher Professional Growth and Development Plan

Completion of the SLO Planning Template satisfies the statutory requirement (S.C. Code Ann. Section 59-26-30) that all educators have a professional growth and development plan. The Professional Growth and Development Plan is the basis of a Goals-Based Evaluation (GBE) under the South Carolina ADEPT evaluation system for teachers who have been issued a continuing contract. Any educator required to complete a Professional Growth and Development Plan is satisfying the requirement through the completion of an SLO.

When approved by the evaluator, the teacher's professional learning may be directly aligned to the student growth goals that are set in the SLO. In some instances, one student growth-oriented goal may be all that is required of a teacher. In this case they would complete only Section I of the SLO Planning Template. In instances where additional goals are to be developed within a teacher's Professional Growth and Development Plan, Section II of the SLO Planning Template is to be completed. Teachers are encouraged to establish no more than three goals or areas of focus.

The teacher and the reviewer(s) must agree upon the teacher professional learning goal(s) during the Preliminary Conference. Once the SLO/professional learning goal(s) have been approved, the teacher may implement the plan. The teacher and reviewer(s) will review the evidence of student progress toward meeting the growth goals and the teacher's progress toward achieving their Professional Growth and Development/SLO goal(s) within the mid-course and summative conferences. The approval and related progress monitoring conferences are a required part of the Expanded ADEPT Evaluation system

The (optional) Teacher Leadership Goal

Guidance on Creating Teacher Leadership Goals (TLGs) How does the Student Learning Objective (SLO) fit into a teacher's Professional Growth and Development Plan (PGDP)?

Regulation 43-205.1 and § 59-26-40 establish that teachers must complete "individualized professional growth plans" that must "be supportive of district strategic plans and school renewal plans." For most teachers, the SLO serves as the PGDP, an individualized goal that measures the impact of teaching performance on student growth. The simplified SLO attempts to focus that goal setting on one group of students and one high priority standard or competency. Most districts require teachers to set an additional professional goal to address specific areas of weakness and some districts ask teachers to set additional professional goals based on their specific interests or needs.

What is a Teacher Leadership Goal?

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) received feedback that teacher leaders neglect their growth as leaders when they are focused on student centered SLO goals. We recommend that districts and school leaders allow teachers to substitute the TLG for the SLO when appropriate. Districts also have the flexibility to allow educators to use a TLG as an additional PGDP goal. TLGs are measurable, rooted in data, connected to SC teaching standards, and appropriate for teachers seeking to gain expertise or seeking to grow the expertise of other teachers.

When is a Teacher Leadership Goal Appropriate?

- A TLG is appropriate when a teacher wants to incorporate reflection on leadership into his or her PGDP.
- A TLG is an appropriate substitute for the SLO in two cases.

    1. The Lead Teacher, a teacher who is accountable for the growth of other teachers. Teachers who coach pre-service or in-service teachers as a cooperating teacher, mentor, coach, or hybrid teacher leader would qualify as lead teachers.

    2. The Master Teacher, a teacher who is actively seeking recognition of their expertise in teaching. Teachers who are pursuing National Board certification, a stack of instructional micro-credentials, or another formal certification or recognition that is assessed externally would qualify as aspiring master teachers.

Why might my school or district allow some teachers to set a TLG instead of an SLO?

The SCDE supports districts in allowing teacher leaders to set TLGs as a professional growth measure. The TLG gives teachers an opportunity to grow in areas of leading other teachers and growing their own expertise. Teacher types that might complete a TLG in the place of an SLO could be interventionists, instructional coaches, cooperating teachers, mentor teachers, and hybrid teacher leaders.

How do we document the TLG in SCLead?

In SCLead, the "Skip SLOs" feature should be used to document the TLG. Select "Evaluator Approved Teacher Leadership Goal" from the drop down menu as the reason for skipping the SLO. The TLG online template is accessible in the Professional Goals section of Student and Professional Goals page by clicking "Add Goal." The evaluator and educator will both be able to sign for the required TLG conferences in SCLead.

What business rules apply to substituting a TLG for the SLO?

TLG development:

　• An administrator can support teachers in developing an individual TLG in place of the SLO when both the teacher and evaluator agree it is appropriate. The TLG should be determined by the individual teacher's needs, teaching circumstances, and leadership role.

Required TLG conferences:

　• Each TLG must be approved (prior to implementation) by the principal or his or her designee at the preliminary conference. Over the course of the TLG interval, the principal or designee will also conduct a mid-course conference and summative conference. These required conferences provide opportunity for feedback to the teacher related to the implementation of the TLG.

TLG Interval:

　• The TLG interval happens over the course of a semester or an entire year.

Content Focus:

　• TLGs must be measurable, aligned to the district strategic plan, school renewal plan, or student growth, and aligned to at least one SC teaching standard. Teachers should set goals that measure their growth as coaches, teacher leaders, or reflective practitioners. TLGs should fall into one of two categories: how a teacher gains expertise or how a teacher is growing the expertise of other educators.

Minimum number of students/coachees:

　•Although SLO Business Rules require a minimum of six students, a TLG is more flexible and does not require a certain number of students or coachees. The TLG is based on the needs of the Master teacher or Lead teacher.

The SLO Development Process for Teachers

Step 1. Gather and analyze student baseline data

Step 2. Collaborate with colleagues to establish goals and collect data

Step 3. Write SLOs

Step 4. Gather and analyze end-of-cycle data

Step 5. Discuss and reflect on outcomes of the SLO with evaluator

SLO development is an iterative process rooted in best practices for educators. The cornerstone of the student learning objective process is that it begins with the educator. The process is rich and grounded in data analysis, reflective practice, and ongoing, formative feedback around student data, which drives instruction. The steps outlined in the chart above reflect the recommended process for the first step in establishing high-quality SLOs in South Carolina.

The development of a high-quality SLO focuses on these underlying concepts: Learning Goal, Targets, and Assessments and Scoring.

- Learning Objective: The content standards, goals, and objectives identified in the SLO
- Targets: The use of all available student data (assessment, observations, student records) to establish a baseline for learning and to determine rigorous, yet attainable growth targets for students
- Assessments and Scoring: The quality of the assessment(s) used to determine a baseline for learning and the growth that students have attained as a result of the classroom instruction during the identified interval
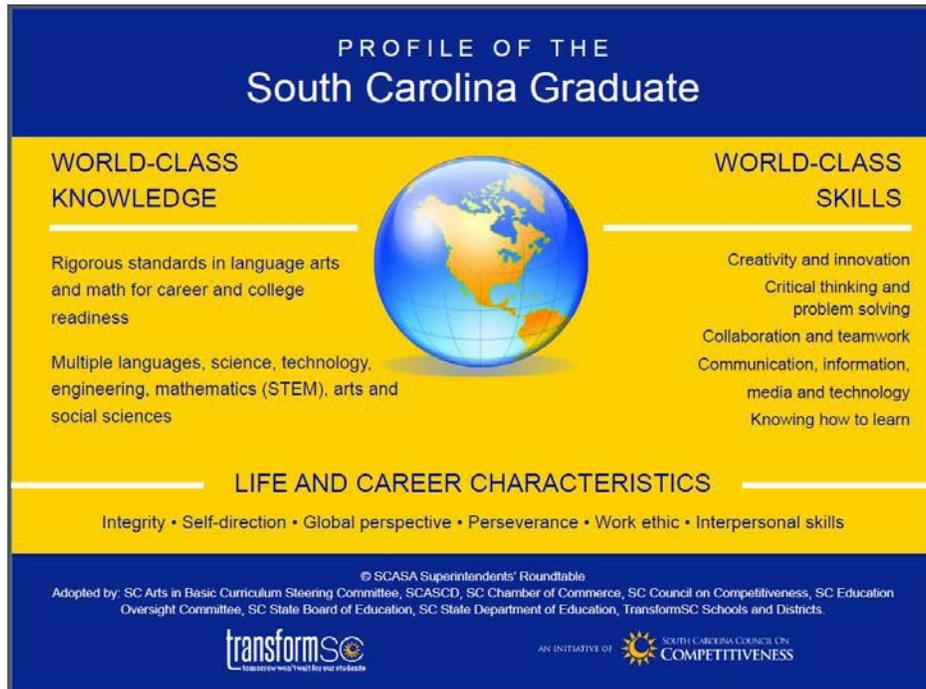
To assist teachers with the development of high-quality SLOs, a Rubric for Rating the Quality of SLOs (Appendix B) has been included. This tool is for use by teachers, school administration and district administration in assessing different aspects of the SLO to make sure it meets "acceptable quality" for classroom implementation. Note: This is not an SLO scoring rubric. The scoring rubric determines the degree to which students have met the Learning Objective.

Identifying Key Concepts and Standards

SLOs should be aligned to the current state standards, appropriate for that grade level, content area, and (where appropriate) aligned to the academic priorities of the school, district, and State. When possible, teachers should work in grade-level or content teams to review the appropriate standards and determine the most important standards for students to master to be successful in the course. The standards that align to the SLO goal should represent the "big ideas" or domains of the content taught over the duration of the SLO interval of instruction whenever possible. It is important that the standards selected will not exclude subgroups of students who may have difficulty meeting growth targets. In some instances, the focus of the SLO goal may be determined at the district level to address specific academic needs within a particular area. Teachers are encouraged to assume much of the responsibility for developing rigorous, achievable SLOs.

Aligning to the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate

The State Board of Education, the Education Oversight Committee and the SCDE have joined the Superintendents' Roundtable, the State Chamber of Commerce, and Transform SC in adopting the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate as the vision for all graduates. In selecting key concepts and standards, it is appropriate to ask how mastery of those "big ideas" propels students along a trajectory towards being ready for college and careers.

PROFILE OF THE
South Carolina Graduate

WORLD-CLASS KNOWLEDGE

Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness

Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

WORLD-CLASS SKILLS

Creativity and innovation
Critical thinking and problem solving
Collaboration and teamwork
Communication, information, media and technology
Knowing how to learn

LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

Integrity • Self-direction • Global perspective • Perseverance • Work ethic • Interpersonal skills

© SCASA Superintendents' Roundtable
Adopted by: SC Arts in Basic Curriculum Steering Committee, SCASCD, SC Chamber of Commerce, SC Council on Competitiveness, SC Education Oversight Committee, SC State Board of Education, SC State Department of Education, TransformSC Schools and Districts.

Student Population and Baseline

The goal for SLOs is to measure the academic growth of students. As such, no students should be excluded from an SLO based on academic, behavioral, or language acquisition challenges. Teachers are encouraged to include all students within the SLO student population whenever possible, and are required to include all students if using a class approach (Table 3) to their SLO. It is recommended a teacher have six or more students within their student population in order to write an SLO. Teachers with less than six students should consult with their building principal on how to proceed.

Reviewing baseline student data is critical in the development of SLOs and necessary for setting appropriately rigorous growth targets for students. Baseline data is useful for developing a deep understanding of students' beginning skills and abilities related to the SLO content. While academic data is important, reviewing as much relevant student data as possible is useful in developing an understanding of the student population's baseline skills and abilities. Behavioral and attendance trends, for example, may provide insight about how much time a teacher can expect a student to spend in his or her classroom over the course of the year. Attendance impacts a student's ability to reach the targets set within the SLO. Data around student behavior and attendance are useful for consideration but are not a justification for lower expectations. These data may provide context for interpreting student data.

Baseline data that are useful for understanding students' beginning skills and abilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Beginning-of-course assessments (standardized or teacher-created),
- Performance tasks assessed with a rubric,
- Student-teacher academic conferences,
- Prior year assessments,
- Assessments in other subjects,
- Teacher-, school-, district-generated assessments,
- Student grades in previous courses,
- Student transiency rates,
- Student attendance data,
- Student behavior data, and
- Individualized education plans (IEPs).

For some teachers who write SLOs, sufficient baseline data will not be readily available. In such cases, teachers will need to administer a baseline assessment at the beginning of the interval of instruction to identify students' beginning skills and abilities and set goals based on this data. Baseline assessments may be teacher-created and will need to align to the teacher's post-assessment to appropriately measure student growth. Teacher-created baseline assessments may include, but are not limited to, performance rubrics and teacher-created pretests. When possible, ensuring a high level of quality for the baseline assessment tool can be done by collaborating with content specialists and other educators in the creation of the pre-assessment tool. The assessment(s) used to monitor student growth related to the SLO goal should be reviewed and approved by the evaluator as part of the Preliminary Conference.

Selecting or Developing an Assessment

Selecting or developing high-quality assessments is an integral component of the SLO process. Because assessments should measure what students are expected to learn over their time in a course, a quality assessment provides an indication of the degree to which a teacher has impacted his or her students' learning in the course. The assessment(s) used to monitor student growth must be approved by the principal or evaluator(s) as part of the SLO approval discussion within the Preliminary Conference.

When selecting an assessment, teachers and evaluators must be confident that the assessment is valid, reliable,

comparable, rigorous, and timely. Educators must also determine whether the assessment can measure growth over time. Whenever possible, it is best practice for two to three measures to be used to determine outcomes. Table 4 presents considerations for determining the strength of an assessment.

Determining the Strength of Assessments

Valid: The assessment items are representative of the actual skills/concepts learned.

Reliable: The assesment provides consistent results across different administrations, thus yielding similar results.

Comparable: The pre- and post-assessments are aligned in content, complexity, form, and scoring.

Rigorous: The assessment requires students to demonstrate the appropriate level of skill, understanding, and knowledge.

Timely: The data are available at relevant points during the SLO cycle.

Stretch: The assessment can provide measures for both low- and high- performing students.

Additionally, it is advisable for those who teach the same course or grade to use a common assessment wherever available. This helps ensure fairness, consistency, and comparability across classes within the district. It also encourages teachers to collaborate around student learning.

To ensure that the assessments are well constructed, aligned to content standards, rigorous, and comparable across the district, it is encouraged that teachers use district-level assessments, when appropriate and available. Vendor-prepared, commercial assessments can be used to assess student learning. Furthermore, teacher-created assessments can also be used to assess the focus of the SLO. To assist educators with determining the quality of assessments, SCDE has developed an Assessment Checklist (Appendix C). To assist educators with understanding how commonly used assessments fit into a strong assessment framework, the SCDE has developed a table outlining examples of formative, benchmark, and summative assessments (Appendix D).

Learning Objective

Teachers should use student baseline data to inform SLO Learning Objective. Learning Objectives should be rigorous, yet attainable for the students included in the SLO student population. The end-of-year target should be one that adequately "stretches" students regardless of their starting point at the beginning of the year.

As a reminder, no students should be excluded from an SLO based on academic, behavioral, or language acquisition challenges. If any students are being excluded, appropriate data must support the reason for the exclusion and must be addressed within the Student Population and Baseline section.

Learning Objectives will need to be adjusted for the interval and amount of instruction (e.g., some commercial assessment growth targets are based upon assumptions of a certain number of weeks of instruction, which may not be applicable to your class). Teachers should take into account student background data in order to anticipate expected performance. While past attendance may cause uncertainty in a growth projection, students should not be excluded from SLO goals based on past attendance patterns. Students with inconsistent attendance will be removed at the end of the SLO cycle from the student population as a part of the South Carolina SLO business rule that states that students must attend for 75% of the interval of instruction to be included in the SLO.

There are multiple approaches to setting Learning Objectives. Student Learning Objectives are set by analyzing the baseline evidence, determining what post-assessment score is an appropriate year's growth goal for students beginning at that level (looking at prior assessment data and other evidence), and reaching agreement with the evaluator on the growth target.

Monitoring the Progress of a Student Learning Objective

The SLO goal process is an ongoing process that lasts the entire interval of instruction. This ongoing review process creates the opportunity for classroom teachers and an administrator or designated reviewer(s) to discuss current student data, review selected assessments to ensure that they are of appropriate quality, and review the progress toward growth targets to allow for changes in instructional practice or allocation of resources to ensure that all students meet their growth targets. In an effort to support school principals, the assistant principal or administrator, instructional coaches, department chairpersons, and teacher leaders, may be designated by the principal to review and coach teachers through the SLO process.

Ongoing Review of Student Data:
Evidence related to the growth of students within the SLO interval of instruction should not be left to the pre- and post-assessment. Formative data should be collected and reviewed often and used as a guide to change or modify instructional practices to support students in their growth goals. The teacher should collect ongoing evidence

toward the progress of the SLO student population throughout the SLO interval of instruction. The following images (created by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and used with permission) depict the approach to assessment and evidence collection recommended within the SLO process.

Preliminary Conference:

It is recommended the educator submit the SLO Planning Template to the evaluator ahead of the Preliminary Conference so that a thorough review may be conducted. During the Preliminary Conference, the educator and evaluator or team discuss and review a) any baseline and trend data, b)assessments used, c) plan for monitoring and formatively assessing students, and d) the growth targets. The evaluator(s) is encouraged to give feedback using the SLO Rubric for Rating Quality as the basis for feedback to ensure that the plan is of high quality and ready for implementation. The Rubric for Rating Quality focuses on three key areas of the SLO plan, one of which is the growth targets. The evaluator and teacher must establish growth targets that are rigorous, yet attainable. While there are circumstances that may warrant an adjustment at the Mid-Course conference, those are limited and goals should not be adjusted arbitrarily.

At the beginning of the SLO cycle, the educator and evaluator should reach agreement on how student performance will translate into a rating on the growth targets portion of the SLO based on the SLO Feedback Rubric or district-created rubric. The SLO Feedback Rubric (Appendix E) measures both progress related to student academic growth and the degree to which the educator engaged in the process. Whatever the method, it is important for the educator to know upfront what the expectations are for reaching each rating level. SCDE encourages teachers to set growth targets that are rigorous, but achievable, and comparable within the district. During the school year 2016–17, the SCDE encourages districts to operate under a presumption that educators will reach the "Proficient" rating. Evidence should be collected to support any determination that performance is above or below that level. As assessment evidence and performance data are collected over time, goal-setting will continuously improve.

If it is determined (in the Preliminary Conference) that revisions are necessary, the teacher will submit the SLO/PGDP plan again for approval before implementation.

Mid-Course Conference:

This conference is conducted at a time near the middle of the interval of instruction. For example, for most teachers, this

Best Practice: Schools may wish to encourage professional learning communities to conduct pre- reviews of their members' SLOs to promote intellectual discussion, monitor expectations, encourage rigor, and provide more comparability.
Some schools also find it beneficial to have designated staff (for example, a department chair) review the SLOs before submission at the approval conference.

will occur in January, midway through the full year interval. For teachers of semester- and quarter-long courses, the mid-course conference time will need to be adjusted accordingly. Before meeting with an evaluator(s), teachers should gather evidence of student progress and be prepared to review data and identify which students are progressing toward their growth targets and which are struggling. The teacher also gathers information on progress under the professional growth and development plan, including the results of any action research. Teachers and evaluator(s) can work together to consider potential strategies that the teacher might implement or how instruction can be adjusted for students who do not appear on track to meet their growth goals.

Teachers should bring to the conference reflections on how they identified root causes for off-track performance, strategies that have been attempted for addressing those needs, and plans for addressing learning needs in the future. The evaluator also may use this time to learn more about the teacher's methods of monitoring and assessing students and provide feedback and additional ideas. The teacher and the evaluator may determine that the professional growth and development plan needs adjustment to provide additional support in key areas. If it is determined that a student target must be revised, then the revisions must take place with full adherence to the administrator's or evaluator's expectations and district policy.

Summative Conference:
This conference is conducted at the end of the interval of instruction and after the final assessment data has been collected, scored, and analyzed. For teachers in yearlong courses, this will likely take place in March. For those teachers in semester-long classes, this conference may take place in January or March, depending on the semester selected and the district's evaluation-contract cycle. If writing a semester SLO, it is recommended a teacher write one in the first semester to include as much instructional time as possible within the interval.

At this summative conference, the growth targets section of the SLO is rated using the SLO Feedback Rubric (Appendix E) or district-created scoring rubric. The teacher will present evidence of students' progress and attainment of the growth targets. The teacher should come prepared with a self-evaluation of both the progress and process components of the SLO Feedback Rubric. The self-score and related evidence to support it becomes the basis for the discussion in the summative conference. Together, the teacher and evaluator reflect on the evidence collected and discuss the teacher's SLO growth target rating. In addition, when appropriate the evaluator and the teacher discuss preliminary ideas for the next iteration of SLO and professional growth and development plan. They may discuss suggestions for summer professional development and certification course requirements. If the SLO has uncovered areas in which students are not performing well, the evaluator and

teacher may discuss making this area a second, targeted focus for the next term's SLOs. Evaluators must follow district procedures for recording teachers' annual SLO growth targets ratings.

The SLO Interval

The SLO interval of instruction should be considered when establishing the focus of the SLO. The SLO interval reflects the duration the teacher is responsible for delivering instruction to the students. The interval takes into account the time needed to disseminate a summative assessment, score the assessment, score the SLO, and combine the SLO score with any other performance measures. For most teachers, the SLO interval will last the duration of the school year. For teachers of semester- or quarter-long courses, the interval and SLO timeline will need to be adjusted accordingly. Note: SCDE only requires one SLO per teacher, per year. If a teacher completes a first semester SLO, he/she is not required by the state to complete one for the second semester. Districts have flexibility to require more than one SLO annually.

Evaluating and Scoring SLOs

At the end of the SLO interval, the evaluator and teacher will prepare for the SLO Summative Conference. After the post-assessment is administered, the teacher will determine the extent to which the student population achieved its growth targets. If multiple measures were used, the teacher will apply district- developed business rules for determining achievement of targets. The teacher will review any additional evidence collected during the SLO interval and determine a score for the SLO using SLO Feedback Rubric (Appendix E) or the district-developed, multi-level rubric. To facilitate the conference, it is recommended that the teacher collect relevant information and compile it in a useful way. Submitting SLO data to the evaluator ahead of time provides time for the evaluator to review the SLO documentation.

The teacher will present the SLO evidence and the score assigned to the SLO to the evaluator during the Summative Conference. This is an opportunity for the teacher to reflect on the SLO process and to articulate the degree to which instructional strategies impacted student growth.

In preparation for the Summative Conference, the evaluator (principal) should take the following steps:

- Review all available evidence submitted by the teacher, including the summary of results and any supporting documentation.
- Compare results to original targets set for students.
- Determine whether or not the data supports the teacher's SLO rating.
- Take into account the requirements for rigor and comparability within the district.

- Review the PG&D plan results and results of action research.

When looking at individual SLOs, the evaluator should ask a few questions:

1. Was the target for this SLO reached?
2. If not, was it close?
3. If so, was the target greatly surpassed? Why or why not?
4. To what extent did the educator engage in the process?
5. Were they responsive to feedback in the approval and mid-course conference?
6. Did reflective practices lead to improved instruction and student outcomes?

The evaluator should collaborate with the content specialists and coaches who provided SLO guidance and support to the teacher throughout the year, if applicable. Given the time and energy spent with the evaluated teacher, persons in these positions may be more familiar with the strategies and data presented to demonstrate SLO attainment. The evaluator may also collaborate with others across the district reviewing similar SLOs to promote comparability within the district.

At the Summative Conference, the evaluator will confirm or assign a final score or rating to the SLO. During the school year 2016-17, the SCDE encourages districts to operate under a presumption that educators will reach the "Proficient" rating. Evidence should be collected to support any determination that performance is above or below that level.

It is expected that over time sufficient data will become available to set rigorous, yet attainable, student targets at the beginning of the SLO process. SLO results should inform goals and plans for professional development for the following school year. Note: Although the SCDE may audit district records on annual student growth results, only the final summative rating (or depending upon rulings under the Freedom of Information Act, "met" or "not met") is submitted to the SCDE under the March 2015 guidelines. Districts maintain the SLO planning template and related documentation. Records should be maintained at least for the period that represents the "multiple academic years" referenced in the State Board guidelines or the recertification cycle, whichever is longer.

References

Community Training and Assistance Center. (2013, February). *It's more than money: Teacher Incentive Fund-Leadership for educators' advanced performance Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.* Boston, MA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.ctacusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/MoreThanMoney.pdf

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J., & Wayman, J. (2009). *Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making* (NCEE 2009-4067). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/dddm_pg_092909.pdf

Lachlan-Haché, L., Cushing, E., & Bivona, L. (2012, November). *Student learning objectives as measures of educator effectiveness: The basics.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.
Retrieved   from   http://www.gtlcenter.org/products-resources/student-learning-objectives-measures-   educator-effectiveness-basics

Appendix F | SLO FAQs

How many SLOs are required as part of the Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System?

SCDE is requiring one SLO be created annually as part of a teacher's evaluation. It is recommended that Elementary teachers (generalists) focus their SLO on either literacy or math. Teachers with multiple subjects would select one subject on which to focus the SLO. Districts may choose to have teachers complete more than one SLO, however no more than two SLOs should be required each year.

Who writes SLOs for use as a student growth measure?

Measuring student growth through Student Learning Objectives is appropriate for classroom- based teachers that have direct interaction with students that could noticeably improve their learning. This includes certified teachers of core academic subjects, related subjects (e.g. physical education, career and technology education) and special education. The term classroom teacher does not include special area personnel (e.g. school counselors, library media specialists, speech-language therapists).

Is it recommended that a teacher give a mid-course assessment within the SLO interval?

That depends on the amount of data the teacher will have access to within the SLO interval. The mid-course conference provides an opportunity to adjust the SLO goal provided that evidence supports an adjustment. Some teachers prefer to administer a "mini assessment" similar to the pre/post in order to complete the evidence to date. Others feel they have enough evidence through summative assignments, quizzes and unit tests, etc.

Note: any adjustment must be approved by the evaluator. SLO growth targets should not be adjusted arbitrarily, or outside of the Mid-Course Conference.

How might a teacher without access to standardized assessment measure growth for an SLO?

Districts, teacher teams or individual teachers will develop a pre/post assessment for use within the SLO process. This may be a performance assessment that is measured with a rubric.

How does a teacher without access to historical/trend data set appropriate growth targets?

This might be challenging in the beginning years of implementation. Trend data might be qualitative in nature until the teacher has data from which to draw. Talking to teachers in similar courses or teachers from previous years might provide some historical data to draw from. Additionally, specialists that support unique learning needs within a student population might be able to provide insight into expected growth.

Will the SCDE be collecting SLO templates?

No. The template is designed for use in developing and monitoring SLO progress. SCDE may audit district records on annual student growth results, but only the final summative rating (or depending upon rulings under the Freedom of Information Act, "met" or "not met") is submitted to SCDE. Districts maintain the SLO planning template and related documentation. Records should be maintained at least for the period that represents the "multiple academic years" referenced in the State Board guidelines.

How should districts approach SLO scoring in time to inform employment decisions?

It is appropriate for teachers with yearlong intervals to administer the post assessment in March- April. It is recommended that semester long SLOs be focused on first semester courses to keep as much of the interval in place in order to track student growth over time. This (suggested timeline) will allow districts to factor student growth results into their local employment decisions.

Will the state audit the assessments used within the SLO process?

No. SLO evaluators will need to approve the assessment used within the SLO as part of the SLO approval process. SCDE has provided guidance on how to determine the quality of an assessment.

Will there be one SLO scoring rubric for the state?

No. Districts have local flexibility to create the criteria for a scoring rubric to use in scoring SLOs. The district developed scoring rubric will be included with the ADEPT plans that districts submit to the state.

What if I teach a subject that does not have state standards?

All courses have content that students are expected to know and be able to use in order to demonstrate proficiency. These expectations form the basis of what's taught in those courses. These enduring understandings form the basis of the content related to the SLO.

Will SLOs take the place of GBE?

The requirements for Goals-Based Evaluation (GBE) can be satisfied through the completion of the SLO Planning Template. The teacher's professional learning may be directly aligned to the student growth goals that are set in the SLO. In instances where additional goals are to be developed within a teacher's Professional Growth and Development Plan, Section II of the SLO Planning Template is to be completed as well.

What will special education teachers do for student growth as their instruction is based on IEP goals?

While IEP goals can inform SLO goals, they cannot be directly used as a student growth measure as they are specific to the individual. SLOs are academic growth goals for groups of students. In instances where IEP goals reflect academic (vs. behavior) growth, the teacher can use those goals as the basis for writing a broad SLO goal that runs the full interval of time the teacher is responsible for the instruction of that student.

Will cooperating teachers who are hosting student teachers (interns) be held accountable for student growth data if the intern is practice teaching during the SLO interval?

The coaching teacher, during this experience, is still responsible for the instructional leadership and maintains the status of teacher of record while the intern is in their classroom earning valuable field experience. The SLO process provides the opportunity for the intern to be a part of the planning and analysis of the data as the teacher sets growth targets and progress monitors. Together they will be able to collaborate and examine the data as the SLO process moves forward. The progress monitoring (which includes ongoing assessment and instructional design) associated with the SLO process allows for deep discussion between the coaching teacher and the intern, ensuring that continued student academic growth occurs while the student teacher delivers the instruction.

Glossary

APPROVAL CONFERENCE:
This conference takes place prior to the implementation of the SLO. The educator and evaluator or team discuss and review any baseline and trend data, assessments used, and plan for monitoring and formatively assessing students and the growth targets.

ASSISTING, DEVELOPING, AND EVALUATING PROFESSIONAL TEACHING (ADEPT):
A general overall term for the South Carolina system for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching as adopted from time to time by the state board of education, pursuant to S.C. Code §§ 59-26-30(B), -40. This term describes both the existing teacher evaluation system in South Carolina and the one being amended pursuant to the ESEA waiver provisions, which includes the applicable ADEPT *processes* of induction, annual- and continuing-contract teachers. ADEPT is the "system" of assistance and evaluation, not a "process."

BASELINE DATA:
Baseline data refers to the initial information available to teachers about their students' performance. This data was collected either in previous years or at the start of the new school year. Baseline data that is useful for understanding students' ability and prior performance includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Beginning-of-course diagnostics and /or performance tasks
- Prior year tests
- Tests in other subjects
- Teacher-, school-, or state-generated tests
- Grades in previous courses
- Transiency rates
- Behavior data
- Individualized education plans(IEPs)

EVIDENCE:
Any student data, assessment data, student work, conference notes, anecdotal records, etc., that are used to inform a teacher's decisions about teaching and learning in the classroom. This evidence can be presented to the evaluator during any of the three annual SLO conferences.

EXPANDED ADEPT SUPPORT AND EVALUATION SYSTEM:
The revised teacher evaluation system for South Carolina, implemented in 2015–2016.

GOALS-BASED EVALUATION (GBE):
Annual (ongoing) evaluation of continuing-contract teachers based upon collaborative goal setting. The teacher is not to work on any more than three goals at any one time during the evaluation period. (They may establish several goals but can only be required to work on *no more than three goals at one time*).

GROWTH TARGET:

Academic growth expectations a teacher sets for groups of students in a class or course. This type of goal establishes unique growth expectations for each group of students.

INTERVAL:

Specifies the period or instructional interval for which the objective is planned. The SLO intervals reflect the duration the teacher is responsible for student instruction—typically yearlong, semester-long, or quarter-long growth, depending on the length of the course.

MIDCOURSE   CHECK-IN:

This conference takes place during the midpoint of the interval of instruction.

RELIABLE ASSESSMENT:

A reliable assessment provides consistent results across different administrations, thus yielding similar results on different occasions.

RIGOR:

To teach with "rigor" is to teach accurately and completely, with the appropriate level of knowledge, so students can demonstrate their learning at high levels of complexity.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

A standards-based, data-informed set of goals, established by the teacher, to measure the teacher's progress toward achieving student growth targets.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE PROCESS:

A five-step process that guides the evaluation of student academic growth over the course of the instructional interval.

SUMMATIVE CONFERENCE:

A step in the evaluation and professional growth process in which the teacher and evaluator meet to reflect upon all evidence collected during the evaluation period and discuss the teacher's summative effectiveness rating.

TEACHER:

A certified classroom teacher who plans, delivers, and assesses instruction over time. Teachers (for purposes of SLOs) have direct interaction with students that could noticeably improve their learning. School counselors, speech and language therapists, and library media specialists will continue to be evaluated under the existing 2006 ADEPT guidelines for the 2015-16 school year.

VALID ASSESSMENT:

As assessment is valid when the test items are representative of the actual skills/concepts learned and is administered consistently.