
Frequently Asked Questions: Student Learning Objectives

UPDATED January 18, 2017

Background:

1Q: What is a Student Learning Objective (“SLO”)?

A: An SLO is a measure of student growth. NYS provides common branch teachers of mathematics and ELA in grades 4 – 8 with a Growth Score based on the NYS Math and ELA assessments. However, all RCSD teachers, including grades 4-8 ELA and Math teachers, must have SLOs for the 2016-2017 school year. An SLO identifies students’ goal for *growth* for the year. It must be specific and measurable, based upon available prior student data, and aligned to Common Core, State, or national standards.

2Q: Who will have SLOs for 2016-2017?

A: **K-12 classroom teachers generally will have an SLO.**

Full time classroom teachers need to have SLOs. Special subject teachers also need to have SLOs.

Classroom teachers who teach less than 0.4 FTE do not have to be evaluated under APPR and, therefore, would not require an SLO.

When a teacher has students attached to the teacher in PowerSchool and the teacher will be giving those students a grade, the teacher is a teacher of record for those students. Resource teachers, ICOT, consultant teachers, and Ramp-Up teachers are also teachers of record.

Teachers of record do not include Pre-Kindergarten teachers, Adult Education teachers, School Counselors, School Psychologists, School Social Workers, Speech Teachers, Instructional Coaches (unless they also teach 0.4 FTE or more), Teachers on Assignment/TOAs (unless they also teach 0.4 FTE or more), and Librarians.

3Q: What if I co-teach?

A: If a teacher co-teaches with a classroom teacher who has an SLO, both teachers will have SLOs for the same students as the classroom teacher. The co-teacher and classroom teacher should work together to develop targets for the students, but each teacher will need to complete their own individual SLO document (in consultation with the school principal).

4Q: What are the elements of an SLO?

A: SLOs contain the following elements:

- Student population – the students whose growth will be used to determine the growth score
- Learning content – Describes what is taught/covered and which standards are met by the course. This will be populated by teachers in eDoctrina and is the description of the course. Learning content for each course can be cut and pasted from the RCSD Course Catalog, or, from the APPR website for teachers in the primary grades)
- Interval of instructional time – length of course, e.g., full year, semester, marking period. This will be prepopulated in eDoctrina.
- Evidence – what assessment or student work product will be used to measure the goal. This will be prepopulated for teachers in eDoctrina.
- Baseline – Describes the starting level of learning for the students based on historical data.
- Target – what is the expected outcome for student score on the post assessment at the end of the instructional period
- HEDI criteria – Highly effective, effective, developing, or ineffective ratings are determined based upon a range of student performance. The HEDI guidance for APPR is also copied in eDoctrina for teacher and administrator reference.
- Rationale – Teachers will need to explain how the baseline data relates to the growth target they are setting. The target must be intentional, meaningful, and reasonable. Teachers will create their rationale and enter this into eDoctrina in the field labeled “rationale.”

5Q: For which subjects do I need an SLO?

A: 50% RULE: The SLOs will be attached to the course(s) that comprise 50% or more of a teachers’ full student roster, starting with the largest course and proceeding (in descending order of course enrollment count) until a minimum of 50% of the teacher’s full student population is included in the SLOs. Once a course is selected for SLOs, ALL students enrolled in the course must be included in the

SLOs. This means that a teacher must assess ALL students in the course(s) that comprises their SLO(s). See below for specific examples.

6Q: Will teachers need to write more than one SLO?

A: It is possible that one teacher may have to write multiple SLOs. Here are some common scenarios for Rochester teachers.

1. Grades K-6: Common branch teachers in K-6 must write one SLO for Math and one SLO for ELA.
2. Subject area teachers must write an SLO for each of their courses for which an SLO is required. Based on the following logic:
If a teacher teaches one grade and subject, all of their classes and students will be covered by an SLO. The teacher must assess all of the students that he/she instructs under this SLO.

If a teacher teaches multiple grades and/or subjects, the “50% rule” applies. (See below)

7Q: How does a teacher determine which courses and students should be covered by an SLO using the 50% rule?

A: eDoctrina will now calculate this for teachers. Listed below are the steps that eDoctrina will take to create the SLO.

Step 1 – eDoctrina will determine the total number of students that a teacher teaches by viewing the teacher’s student load on or about BEDS day.

Step 2- eDoctrina will determine the course that has the same grade level and course/subject that contains the most students. Itinerant teachers who teach the same course in multiple buildings will need to assess the students in this course in both buildings. (Example: Third Grade Art in two different buildings)

Step 3 – The teacher will write an SLO for that course with all students in the course covered by the SLO. If the number of students in that course is 50% or more of the teacher’s total students, the teacher can stop. If not...

Step 4 – eDoctrina will determine the teacher’s next largest course and create an additional SLO for that course. If the number of students now included in the teacher’s SLOs is 50% or more of the teacher’s students, then no additional SLOs will be required. If not, this step will repeat until at least 50% are covered.

See NYSED guidance on the 50% rule here:

<http://www.engageny.org/resource/student-learning-objectives-the-50-rule-for-teachers>

Baseline:

8Q: What is a baseline?

A: The baseline is a student's current knowledge of the learning content for the course that is being taught. Teachers will establish a baseline using students' prior academic history. During the 2016-2017 school year, pre-assessments were provided for all Grades 3-8 ELA and Math courses to assist with determining baseline in those courses.

9Q: What constitutes a student's prior academic history?

A: Prior academic history can include many things. The following are some examples:

- Teacher's knowledge of student performance and classroom observation year to date.
- Prior performance on NYS assessments (Regents or 3 – 8 math and ELA tests scores and growth scores)
- Previous NWEA or AIMSWEB data; or NWEA and/or AIMSWEB assessments given this fall.
- Prior Regents examinations not associated with current course (Global Regents score may help predict ELA or USHG Regents score)
- Screening tools given to students (Kindergarten screening – COR screening, Brigance Assessment).
- Other assessment data (DIBELS, DRA's etc.)
- Prior year post-assessment data

10Q: How do I determine a student's baseline?

A: How a baseline will be determined will vary depending upon what is utilized for that purpose. Some examples may include:

- RCSD student historical data is available on SPA, and additional information is available on the District's APPR website:
<http://www.rcsdk12.org/Page/32645>
- Using a student's grade level equivalent from available assessments (NWEA, AIMSWEB, etc.) given either at the end of last year or, if the teacher chooses, this year
- Setting an overall baseline, using a student's learning history in other subjects

A link to the State's webinar on establishing targets using historical student data can be found at, <http://www.engageny.org/resource/slo-103-for-teachers>. **This webinar provides an excellent example of how to establish baseline data and targets for a course.**

Growth Targets:

11Q: What is the student target growth for 2016-2017?

A: Teachers will set a growth target for each of their students, which is subject to school administrator and District review. Essentially, the teacher is determining, based upon where the students are at the beginning of the year (the baseline) and their past academic history, how much of the learning content s/he believes each of his or her students will grow in their learning by the end of the year (or semester or marking period, as applicable), as evidenced by their performance on the post assessment.

eDoctrina will indicate the target type aligned to the course. (1-4, 1-9, % of 100)
This will be pre-populated for each course.

Growth targets must be reasonable. The teacher should be clear about why s/he set individual student targets, including what data s/he used as baseline data to identify the target.

12Q: How do I know what students should be learning for my course?

A: Post assessments will be based upon the New York State Learning Standards and Core Curriculum, which can be found at this link:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/cores.html>

Additionally, the District has created curriculum maps for courses. Teachers can look at curriculum maps here:

<http://intranet/departments/Teaching%20and%20Learning/Student%20Learning%20Objectives/Pages/Default.aspx>

13Q: What should I enter for my growth target?

A: Growth targets should be reasonable and informed by the data available for each individual student and must reflect one year of growth. Teachers are encouraged to consult with their principal and the content area director of the discipline/content area for guidance.

14Q: How will my Student Performance score be calculated using an SLO?

A: The teacher’s HEDI score will be determined based upon the percentage of individual students who meet their targets. The 20-point score is based upon the following point scale:

HEDI Points	% Students Meeting Targets
Ineffective	
0	0-4
1	5-8
2	9-12
3	13-16
4	17-20
5	21-24
6	25-28
7	29-33
8	34-38
9	39-43
10	44-48
11	49-54
12	55-59
Developing	
13	60-66
14	67-74
Effective	
15	75-79
16	80-84
17	85-89
Highly Effective	
18	90-92
19	93-96
20	97-100

If a teacher has more than one SLO, a point value for each of the SLOs will be calculated based upon the chart above and those point values will be given proportional weight in the final Student Performance calculation based upon the number of students covered by each SLO.

15Q: What documentation needs to be completed for SLOs for 2016-2017?

A: eDoctrina will provide the necessary forms for SLO completion.

16Q: What information are teachers responsible for completing on the SLO form?

Teachers will be responsible for populating four text boxes and setting a target for each student. The four text boxes are: rationale, learning content, baseline data, and population and target description. Learning content can be cut and pasted from the RCSD course catalogue or course descriptions located for teachers on the APPR website which can be linked to from the eDoctrina website.

17Q: What happens if my administrator does not agree with my targets?

A: State Law mandates that targets be reasonable and project one year of growth in learning for each student. Administrators cannot agree with unreasonable targets that do not accurately reflect a student's actual abilities and likely growth. Unapproved targets cannot be used to determine State Growth. We encourage teachers and administrators to discuss the data used to set targets and collaboratively support growth for each student. In the event targets cannot be agreed upon, the information will be sent to the Superintendent for review. At that time, targets will be set by the District.

18Q: What is the rationale?

A: The rationale is an explanation of how the teacher will use the learning content and baseline to reach the growth target. An example of a rationale that can be used for any grade/subject matter is as follows:

I will use the learning content described above during instruction to enable my students to increase their knowledge of the content to allow them to reach their targeted growth.

19Q: Where will SLOs be stored?

A: SLOs will be stored in eDoctrina.

Additional information, guidance, and samples for setting student learning objectives can be found at:

<http://www.engageny.org/resource/student-learning-objectives/>

20Q: What is the process for verification of the data pre-populating in eDoctrina?

A: eDoctrina pulls data from Power School. If student counts change more than 40% over the course of a school year, eDoctrina will reconfigure the student list.

Follow Up: Who do I speak to if I have a question while writing my SLO?

A: Questions may be emailed to the APPR mailbox (APPR@rcsdk12.org) and the APPR team will research and answer and respond in a timely manner.