**Frequently Asked Questions**

**about**

**Student Learning Objectives**

**\*\*UPDATED October 9, 2013\*\***

**Background:**

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

A: An SLO is the method by which the District is required to derive teachers’ State Growth score when the State does not provide a score. 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, as well as any other school and District priorities.

**Q: Who will have SLOs for 2013-2014?**

A: **All teachers of record who DO NOT teach 4 – 8 math or ELA need to create an at least one SLO.** If you are not a 4-6 Common Branch teacher or a 7th and/or 8th grade Math or ELA teacher, you will have an SLO.

Additionally, teachers who teach 4 – 8 math and/or ELA who are at risk of not having at least 16 total student scores (such as self-contained special education teachers), should create SLOs to ensure that they have a State Growth Score at the end of the year.

**Q: What if I co-teach? \*\*New\*\***

A: If you co-teach with a classroom teacher who has an SLO, you will share the SLO with the classroom teacher. The co-teacher and classroom teacher should develop the SLO together.

**Q: What are the elements of an SLO?**

A: SLOs contain four elements:

* Student population – the students whose growth will be used to determine the growth score
* Learning content – what is being taught (this will be prepopulated for you on the SLO document)
* Interval of instructional time – length of course, e.g., full year, semester, marking period (this will be prepopulated for you on the SLO document)
* Evidence – what assessment or student work product will be used to measure the goal (this will be prepopulated for you on the SLO document)
* Baseline – what is the starting level of learning for the students
* Target – what is the expected outcome by the end of the instructional period
* HEDI criteria – how will evaluators determine what range of student performance will result in each of the HEDI ratings (this will be prepopulated for you on the SLO document)
* Rationale – why choose this learning content, evidence and target

**Q: For which subjects do I need an SLO? \*\*New – 10/9/13\*\***

A: Common branch teachers in K-2 must write one SLO for Math and one SLO for ELA.

4-8 ELA and/or Math teachers who do not reasonably expect to have a combined total of 16 NYS assessment scores (total scores, not total students) must write an SLO. If the teacher teaches both ELA and Math, an SLO must be written for both subjects.

Subject area teachers must write an SLO for each of their courses (not each of their classes – all classes of the same course would fall under the same SLO) for which an SLO is required. Based on the following:

If a teacher teaches one grade and subject, all of their classes and students will be covered by an SLO.

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

**Q: How do I determine which courses and students should be covered by an SLO using the 50% rule? \*\*New – 10/9/13\*\***

A: Step 1 - determine the total number of students that you teach.

Step 2- determine the course that has the same grade and subject that contains the most students (this could be in more than one building, e.g. Third Grade Art in two different buildings).

Step 3 – 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 your total students, you can stop. If not…

Step 4 – determine your next largest course in the same grade and subject. Write an SLO for that course with all the students in the course covered by the SLO. If the number of students in these two courses is 50% or more of your students, you can stop. If not, repeat until 50% are covered.

**Baseline:**

**Q: What is a baseline?**

A**:** The baselineis 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.

**Q: What constitutes a student’s prior academic history?**

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

* Teacher generated pretest information. Teachers may choose to give the students in a course pretests or tasks to determine the students’ starting point
* 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 AIMSWEBB assessments given this fall.
* Prior regents examinations not associated with current course (Global 2’s impact on ELA 3)
* Teacher tasks given in class
* Screening tools given to students (Kindergarten screening – COR screening).
* Other assessment data (dibbles, DRA’s etc.)
* Prior year pretest and post-test data

Other relevant factors may be considered as well, such as ELL Status, SWD status, etc.

**Q: 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 example may include:

* If a student is a second time Regents taker, using the prior Regents score, adjusted for potential learning loss
* Using a student’s grade level equivalent from available assessments (NWEA, AIMSWEBB, 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:**

**Q: What is the student target growth for 2013-2014?**

A: Teachers will set a growth target for each of their students. 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 learn by the end of the year (or semester or marking period, as applicable), as evidenced by their performance on the post-test.

For the SLOs based upon the Third Grade ELA and Math and the 8th Grade Science, the SLO target will be based upon the Level sub-band (e.g. Level 2 low, mid, high), in which you expect a student to fall. Targets for all other courses should be in the form of the percentage score the student is expected to receive on the post-test.

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

**Q: 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 this link:

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

Additionally, the District has created curriculum maps for courses. You can look at curriculum maps here: <http://www.rcsdk12.org/domain/8502>

**Q: Will attendance be considered when calculating teachers’ State Growth scores based upon SLOs?**

**A:** Attendance will not be factored into the calculation of SLO based, State Growth scores. However, teachers may consider a students’ prior attendance history when setting a growth target for that student.

**Q: How will my State Growth 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** | 0-20 |
| **1** | 21-30 |
| **2** | 31-40 |
| **Developing** | |
| **3** | 41-45 |
| **4** | 46-50 |
| **5** | 51-55 |
| **6** | 56-58 |
| **7** | 59-60 |
| **8** | 61-64 |
| **Effective** | |
| **9** | 65-67 |
| **10** | 68-69 |
| **11** | 70-71 |
| **12** | 72-73 |
| **13** | 74-75 |
| **14** | 76-77 |
| **15** | 78-79 |
| **16** | 80-81 |
| **17** | 82-84 |
| **Highly Effective** | |
| **18** | 85-90 |
| **19** | 91-95 |
| **20** | 96-100 |

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 based upon the number of students covered by each SLO.

**Q: What documentation needs to be completed for SLOs for 2013-2014?**

A: The State requires that SLOs be written on a State-approved form. The required State form will need to be completed for each SLO. The District has created SLO forms based upon the courses. A copy of SLO forms can be found at:

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

**Q: What information must be included in the SLO form?**

A: An SLO must include the student population covered (the students in the classes for which you create the SLO), the learning content (what will be taught in the class), the time interval (length of course), the evidence (what will be used will be used), baseline data (students’ prior academic history), target (to be developed in consultation between the teacher and principal), HEDI criteria (set by the Agreement), and teacher rationale.

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

For 2013-2014, Central Office will prepopulate the learning content, time interval, evidence, and HEDI criteria fields in the SLO forms. Pre-populated forms for each grade/subject area are available at the link above.

Teachers will be responsible for populating the student population, evidence, baseline data, target, and teacher rationale.

The teacher’s targets for each student will be stored in LinkIT. If a teacher establishes a single data point for students’ baseline (i.e. my student knows 20% of the content), this may also be input into LinkIt. The teacher should print out a copy of the information from LinkIT and attach it to the SLO. Instructions on how to input target data into LinkIT will be published separately.

**Q: 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.

**Q: Where will SLOs be stored?**

A: The teacher’s baseline (if entered) and targets (must be entered) for each student will be stored in LinkIT. The teacher should print out a copy of the information from LinkIT and attach it to the SLO. The SLOs should be scanned and attached to final teacher evaluations. This can be scanned in to the final evaluation during the beginning of the school year, before the evaluation is completed.

There is separate guidance showing teachers how to add information for each students’ baseline and target into LinkIt.

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

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