Frequently Asked Questions

Student Learning Objectives

UPDATED September 19, 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 2017-2018 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: 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. This will be pre-populated in eDoctrina.
- Learning content – Describes what is taught/covered and which standards are met by the course; essentially the course description. Teachers will enter this information into their SLO document(s) in eDoctrina. Learning content for courses can be cut and pasted from the course description in the RCSD Course Catalog where it exists, 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 pre-populated in eDoctrina.
- Evidence – The assessment or student work product will be used to measure student growth. This will be pre-populated in eDoctrina.
- Baseline – Describes the starting level of learning for the students based on historical data. Teachers will enter this information into their SLO document(s) in eDoctrina.
- Target – The expected outcome for student score on the post-assessment at the end of the instructional period. The target must be intentional, meaningful, and reasonable. Teachers will enter targets for each student in their SLO roster(s) in eDoctrina.
- HEDI criteria – Highly effective, Effective, Developing, or Ineffective rating determined by student performance. The HEDI chart for Student Performance subcomponent scores is displayed on each SLO document in eDoctrina.
- Rationale – An explanation of how the baseline data relates to the learning content and growth targets teachers are entering in the SLO. Teachers will enter this information into their SLO document(s) in eDoctrina.

3Q: **What information are teachers responsible for completing on the SLO form?**

A: Teachers are responsible for populating four text boxes and setting a numeric target for each student. The four text boxes are: <u>Rationale</u>, <u>Learning Content</u>, <u>Baseline Data</u>, and <u>Population and Target Description</u>. Learning content can be cut and pasted from the RCSD course catalogue or course descriptions located on the APPR website (A link to the APPR website is available on each teacher's eDoctrina homepage and the address is www.rcsdk12.org/appr. Another helpful website is www.rcsdk12.org/slo).

4Q: **What is the rationale?**

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

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

5Q: **Who will have SLOs for 2017-2018?**

A: K-12 classroom teachers will generally have SLOs.

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 SMS 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.

6Q: **What SLOs will be required for grades 3-8 ELA and Math teachers?**

A: Due to new State regulations, all grades 3-8 ELA and Math teachers will be required to complete SLOs this year. The post assessments used for these SLOs will be District-created exams, NOT the State Common Core assessments that were used in the past. Teachers will be setting targets for those District-created exams on a 1-100% scale. Blueprints for the exams can be found on the SLO Guidance site (www.rcsdk12.org/SLO). These SLOs are not optional or to be considered 'backups' as they may have been in the past, they are required by State education law and must be completed.

7Q: For which subjects will a teacher need to complete 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 comprise their SLOs. Note that in some instances this means a teacher may have more than 50% of their total students in their SLOs, up to 100% for teachers who only teach a single course.

8Q: 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 complete one SLO for Math and one SLO for ELA.
2. Subject area teachers must complete 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 a single 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 6Q and 11Q for details.

9Q: 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. 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.

10Q: What documentation needs to be completed for SLOs for 2017-2018?

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

11Q: Where will SLOs be stored?

A: SLOs will be stored in eDoctrina (www.edoctrina.org).

12Q: **How does a teacher determine which courses and students should be covered by SLOs according to the 50% rule?**

A: eDoctrina calculates this for teachers. Listed below are the steps that eDoctrina follows to create SLOs:

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 select the course/subject that contains the largest number of students. Note that for itinerant teachers who teach the same course in multiple schools all students from the course are included in this step regardless of school. (Example: For an itinerant teacher teaching Third Grade Art in two different schools eDoctrina would combine the 3rd grade students into a single count for the course in this step).

Step 3 – eDoctrina will create an SLO for the selected course with all students in the course covered by the SLO (itinerant teachers will receive separate SLO documents at each school at which they teach the selected course). If the number of students in the course is 50% or more of the teacher's total students, the SLO creation process stops. 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/st udent-learning-objectives-the-50-rule-for-teachers

Additionally, if the students assigned to a teacher's schedule change by more than 40% over the course of a school year the teacher may be required to complete additional SLOs to cover the new students.

13Q: **What is the process for verification of the data pre-populated in eDoctrina?**

A: eDoctrina pulls data from PowerSchool SMS. If you believe there are problems with the data in eDoctrina please e-mail the details regarding your concerns to APPR@rcsdk12.org.

14Q: **Who should a teacher contact if the teacher has a question while completing SLOs?**

A: Teachers should contact their building principal or administrator. Questions that cannot be answered at the school level should be emailed to the APPR team at (APPR@rcsdk12.org). The APPR team will research and respond in a timely manner.

15Q: **Where can teachers find additional information about SLOs?**

A: Additional information, guidance, and sample student learning objectives can be found on the engageNY website: http://www.engageny.org/resource/student-learning-objectives/

Baseline Data

16Q: **What is the 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 2017-2018 school year, pre-assessments were provided for all grades 3-8 ELA and Math courses to assist with determining baseline in those courses.

17Q: **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

18Q: **How is a student's baseline determined?**

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.

Student Targets

19Q: What is the student growth target for 2017-2018?

A: Teachers will set a growth target for each of the students in their SLO roster(s). Growth targets are subject to school administrator and District review. Essentially, in setting a target the teacher is determining, based upon where the students are at the beginning of the year (their baseline) and their past academic history, how much of the learning content the teacher believes the student will acquire by the end of the course as evidenced by the student's performance on the post-assessment. 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 arrive at the target.

20Q: 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 additional guidance.

21Q: What numeric scale will be used for Targets?

A: eDoctrina will indicate the Target Type assigned to each SLO (1-4, 1-9, 1-100, etc.). Teachers will set numeric targets corresponding to the scale shown by the Target Type and post-assessments will be scored on the same scale to allow for a direct comparison between targets and post assessment scores. Note that due to new State regulations, the post-assessments used for grades 3-8 ELA and Math SLOs will be District-created exams, NOT the State Common Core assessments that were used in the past. Teachers will set targets for those District-created exams on a 1-100% scale.

22Q: How does a teacher know what students should be learning in their 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. Curriculum maps may be found here: http://intranet/departments/Teaching%20and%20Learning/Student%20Learning%20Objectives/Pages/Default.aspx

23Q: What happens if an administrator does not agree with a teacher's 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 determine targets and work collaboratively to 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.

APPR Scores

24Q: **What are the components of APPR scores for 2017-2018?**

A: For 2017-2018, APPR scores will consist of a Student Performance Subcomponent, an Observation/School Visit Subcomponent, and an overall APPR rating. Additionally, teachers of grades 4-8 ELA and/or Math may receive a Student Performance score from NYS (their "Traditional" APPR Student Performance score) and corresponding overall rating in addition to a "Transition" Student Performance score and overall rating (calculated from SLOs as described in this document).

25Q: **How will the Student Performance subcomponent score be calculated for SLOs?**

A: The teacher's Student Performance score for each SLO will be determined based upon the percentage of individual students meeting their targets. **Only active students will have valid targets**. The percent of students meeting target is calculated by taking the count of the number of active students who met or exceeded the target and dividing that number by the total number of active students. The 20-point Student Performance score and HEDI rating is determined by the chart below (which is dictated by APPR legislation).

HEDI Points	% Students Meeting Target
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

26Q: **How will a teacher's Student Performance Subcomponent be calculated if the teacher has more than one SLO?**

If a teacher has more than one SLO a Student Performance score for each SLO will be calculated as described above. Those scores will then be combined to arrive at a teacher's final Student Performance subcomponent score. Scores are combined by weighting each individual Student Performance score proportionally based upon the number of active students included in the SLO in the final calculation.

27Q: **How will a teacher's Observation/School Visit APPR subcomponent rating be determined?**

A: The Observation/School Visit subcomponent rating will be determined by a teacher's year-end evaluation in PeopleSoft. Each element of the Danielson rubric will be rated using HEDI criteria converted to a four-point scale as follows: Highly Effective = 4 points, Effective = 3 points, Developing = 2 points and Ineffective = 1 point. The individual element scores will then be averaged to determine a rubric score, which in turn will be converted to a HEDI rating pursuant to the chart below (if ALL elements in an evaluation are rated Ineffective the resulting final rubric score for the evaluation shall be 0 per APPR legislation)

Observation/School Visit Subcomponent Rating	
Rubric Score Range	**HEDI Rating**
3.5 - 4.0	**Highly Effective (H)**
2.5 - 3.49	**Effective (E)**
1.5 - 2.49	**Developing (D)**
0 - 1.49	**Ineffective (I)**

Note: If a teacher has selected the Administrator + Independent Evaluator Rubric, 80% of the final observation score will be based on the supervisor observation and 20% of the final observation score will be based on the independent evaluator observation. If a teacher has selected the Administrator + PART Rubric, 80% of the final observation score will be based on the supervisor observation and 20% of the final observation score will be based on the PART evaluation.

28Q: How will a teacher's overall APPR rating be determined?

A: A teacher will first be assigned individual HEDI ratings for the Observation/School Visit and Student Performance subcomponents as described above. The overall APPR rating is then determined by finding the intersection of the two subcomponent ratings in the matrix below (note that this matrix was established in the State law). Note that the overall APPR rating is a HEDI rating only; numeric composite scores will not be provided. See below for examples.

Figure 1: Overall APPR Rating Matrix

		Observation/School Visit			
		Highly Effective (H)	Effective (E)	Developing (D)	Ineffective (I)
Student Performance	**Highly Effective (H)**	H	H	E	D
	Effective (E)	H	E	E	D
	Developing (D)	E	E	D	I
	Ineffective (I)	D	D	I	I

Example 1: Teacher A receives an Effective rating for her Observation subcomponent and a Highly Effective rating on her Student Performance subcomponent. These two ratings intersect in the matrix for a Highly Effective (H) overall rating.

Figure 2: Example 1 Final Determination - Highly Effective

		Observation/School Visit			
		Highly Effective (H)	Effective (E)	Developing (D)	Ineffective (I)
Student Performance	**Highly Effective (H)**	H	**H**	E	D
	Effective (E)	H	E	E	D
	Developing (D)	E	E	D	I
	Ineffective (I)	D	D	I	I

Example 2: Teacher B receives an Ineffective rating for her Observation subcomponent and an Effective rating on her Student Performance subcomponent. These two ratings intersect in the matrix for a Developing (D) overall rating.

Figure 3: Example 2 Final Determination - Developing

		Observation/School Visit			
		Highly Effective (H)	Effective (E)	Developing (D)	Ineffective (I)
Student Performance	**Highly Effective (H)**	H	H	E	D
	Effective (E)	H	E	E	**D**
	Developing (D)	E	E	D	I
	Ineffective (I)	D	D	I	I

29Q: Where can the District's approved APPR plan be found?

A: RCSD's approved APPR plan for the 2017-2018 school year can be found on NYSED's website here.

If you have any additional questions not answered here or in the remaining documentation posted on the SLO guidance site please email APPR@rcsdk12.org. Thank you.