# DC MODEL TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

## SLO QUICK GUIDEBOOK

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE GUIDEBOOK FOR ADMINISTRATORS, INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS, AND TEACHERS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION**

OSSE

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# What is a Student Learning Objective?

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) present an alternative approach to measuring student learning in untested grades and subjects. The Student Learning Objectives process provides an opportunity for teachers to collaborate with other teachers and their school administration to set meaningful academic goals for their students. Student Learning Objectives are long-term, measurable, academic goals set for students to accomplish at the end of a course. Developing Student Learning Objectives is an iterative process of identifying the most important learning content for the year alongside teachers of the same content area, reviewing student academic and social data, setting long term goals for students, measuring those long term goals along the way and evaluating student attainment of those goals at the end of the school year. In short, the Student Learning Objectives process trusts teachers to set goals for their own students and facilitates deep collaboration between teachers and evaluators to ensure that students reach those goals.



The chart on the following page demonstrates the Student Learning Objective process and the steps an LEA could follow to ensure the fidelity of the process across classrooms.

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) PROCESS

| STEP 1:<br>Set and Approve Student Learning Objectives | STEP 2:<br>Monitor Student Learning Objectives | STEP 3:<br>Evaluate Attainment of Sudent Learning Objective |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher teams (where applicable) review course objectives and standards. Teams identify most important learning for the year. | Teacher plans and delivers instruction, and monitors student learning throughout the year. Quizzes, interim assessments, benchmarks and other measures of student learning can and should be used to monitor student progress.<br><br>Teacher adapts instructional plans based on student data collected. | Teacher distributes end-of-year assessment to students to measure student learning. |
| Teacher teams identify the assessment(s) they plan to use to measure student learning at the end of the course.<br><br>Teacher teams can opt to use Framework for Selecting Assessments for guidance. | Teacher discusses progress with teacher teams and evaluator(s). | Teacher collects, analyzes, and reports final evidence of student learning.<br><br>Teacher reviews student performance data (e.g. quizzes, benchmarks) and student social data (e.g. attendance records) to contextualuze the school year. |
| Teacher collects and reviews student baseline data (e.g. diagnostic data, historical performance data, behavioral data). | Teacher and evaluator revise supports and interventions if students are not progressing as expected. | Teacher and evaluator review outcomes.<br><br>Teacher provides outcome data and supporting evidence based on the level of standardization of the assessment.<br><br>Evaluator reviews individual SLO attainment and evaluates the set (if an educator developed two SLOs) of objectives before assigning an attainment rating. |
| Teacher drafts Student Learning Objective(s) for their class and sets performance targets based on student baseline data. | Teacher and evaluator make adjustments to SLOs by mid-year (if necessary). | Teacher and evaluator reflect on outcomes to improve implementation and practice. |
| Primary evaluator and/or contributing evaluator review SLOs. Student Learning Objective Approval Checklist can assist with SLO quality control across classrooms. | | |

# Requirements for LEAs Implementing Student Learning Objectives

**E**ach LEA is unique in terms of its leadership, capacity, and overall design to improve student achievement. Despite this diversity, the SLO process presents an opportunity for all LEAs to formalize good teaching practices, and to deepen the connection between these teaching practices and the mechanisms with which we evaluate teacher performance. While many of the teachers at LEAs across the District of Columbia collect student data, set ambitious goals, adjust instruction for students and measure student progress to the goals, the SLO process described in the pages that follow holds teachers and administrators accountable for that process. The key role of the LEA is to create an environment conducive to supporting the ongoing cycle of data collection and analysis, reflection, goal setting and feedback between teachers and administrators.

Specifically, OSSE requires that all LEAs implementing the SLO process will:

▶ **Train evaluators to analyze data, draw conclusions about student and teacher performance based on various data points, recognize and support the development of high quality SLOs, approve SLOs, assist in mid-course check-ins (if applicable) and assign accurate ratings for teacher performance.**

▶ **Implement and / or monitor the SLO process with fidelity across the school(s) by reviewing SLO goals, supporting data, and the overall implementation of the SLO process across the school(s) with the use of an established rubric, framework or checklist to ensure consistent reviews.**

▶ **Provide procedural safeguards to ensure the integrity of the process, including evaluation appeals, mid-course adjustments, assessment documentation and quality control for target setting.**

We recognize that the diversity among LEAs requires that the SLO process maintain a high degree of flexibility, yet it cannot be so flexible that LEAs feel that they are left without resources. The sections that follow are intended to provide readers with suggestions around best practices. The goal of the sections that follow is to share resources and notes based on the invaluable experience of those who have been engaged in this work. To that end we want to highlight the key steps that all teachers and administrators practicing SLOs must follow for successful implementation.

**Key Steps to Follow for Successful Implementation**

**01** **Set and Approve SLOs**

**Monitor SLOs** **02**

**03** **Evaluate Attainment of SLOs**

# The Purpose of Student Learning Objectives

Student Learning Objectives provide an opportunity for teachers to inform the way in which their practice is evaluated. Educators work together in teams, and alongside their evaluators, to determine priorities around content, and to establish expectations around how learning is assessed. By setting growth targets based on data that describes their specific students, educators are linking the evaluation of their practice directly to the impact they have on their students over the course of a semester or year.

## ALIGNING STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES WITH STATE, DISTRICT, AND SCHOOL—LEVEL GOALS

Student Learning Objectives link directly with school – level priorities and, where possible, district and state level priorities. School leaders might even opt to develop school – wide learning objectives as the basis and model for the SLO process for teachers. In the cases where course-level SLOs cannot be aligned to school-level objectives, evaluators and teachers can work together to ensure that SLOs complement school priorities.

## WHY STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

OSSE recommends the use of SLOs as one option for measuring student growth for educator evaluations.

SLOs reinforce, and can help to formalize, good teaching practice. The SLO process involves interpreting data, setting goals, using data to assess progress and adjusting instruction based on data collected.

SLOs acknowledge the value of teacher knowledge and teacher skill. The development or selection of SLOs is a process uniquely aligned to teacher skills and experiences.  The writing of strong objectives is typically within the expertise of most teachers, and teachers have input on how student learning is measured.
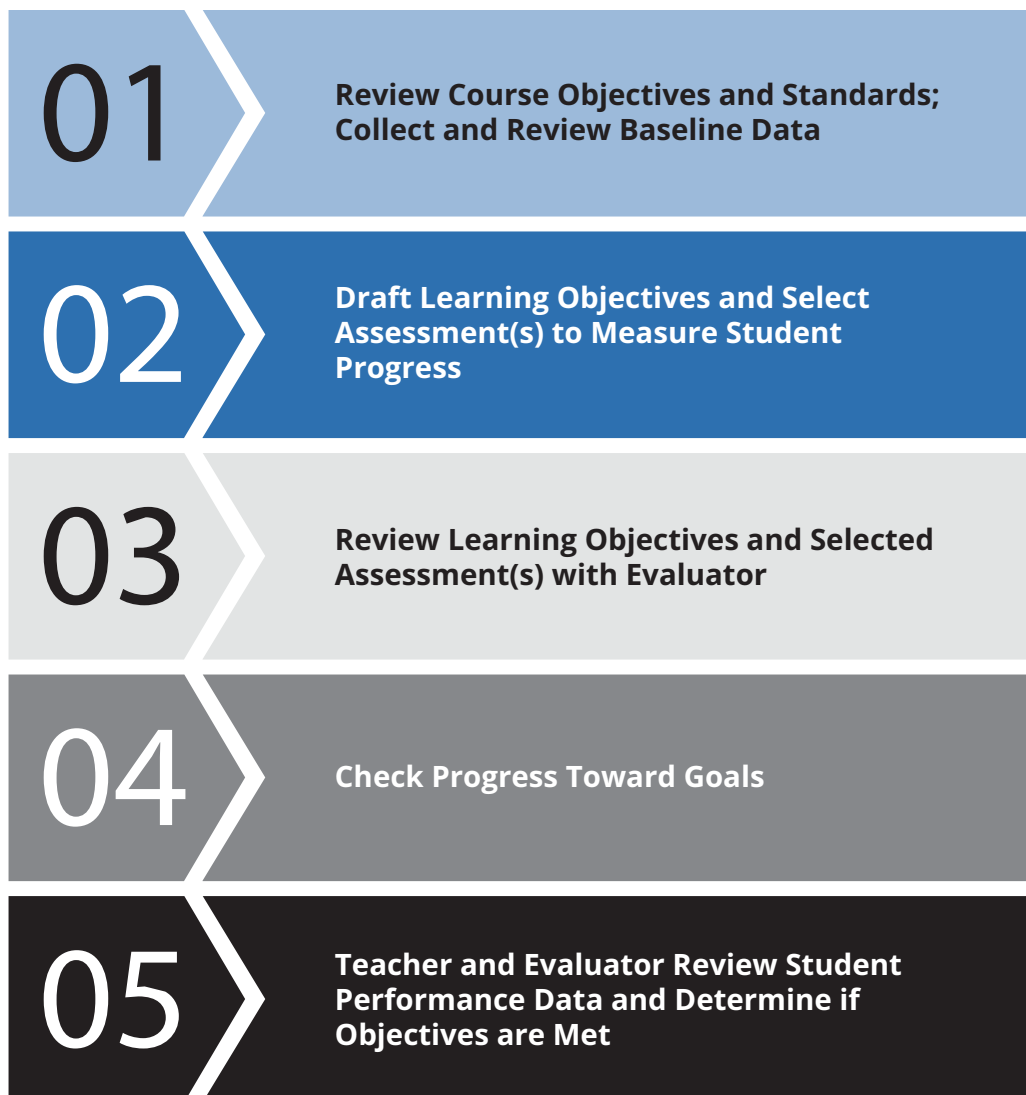
SLOs are adaptable. They are not always dependent on the availability of standardized assessment scores whose delivery typically does not happen in sync with the timeline of the school year. They can also be adjusted or revisited based on changes in standards, curriculum, student population and student need.

SLOs encourage a collaborative process. The process of developing SLOs, as interpreted by a number of districts and states, involves a deep level of collaboration among teams of teachers across grade levels or subject areas to identify the "most important" content.

# The Student Learning Objective Process

Student Learning Objectives are not just about the goals that educators set for their students, they also emphasize the process educators use to set and monitor student progress towards the desired goals. The educator collaboration and analysis required for successful SLO implementation aligns with effective teaching practices more broadly. Teachers engage in a collaborative process with their teams and ultimately collaborate with their evaluator (or supporting school leadership) to establish long-term, measurable, academic goals for their students.

Below is the recommended process for setting, approving and evaluating SLOs in DC.

**01** Review Course Objectives and Standards; Collect and Review Baseline Data

**02** Draft Learning Objectives and Select Assessment(s) to Measure Student Progress

**03** Review Learning Objectives and Selected Assessment(s) with Evaluator

**04** Check Progress Toward Goals

**05** Teacher and Evaluator Review Student Performance Data and Determine if Objectives are Met

## SETTING STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

School leaders typically set school priorities and goals during the summer preceding the academic year. The school priorities should align with the State's overall vision and goals for academic success. For example, school leaders review the State's strategic plan in conjunction with their school plan and establish academic goals for their students. Additionally, school leaders finalize courses and curriculum by the summer of 2012 for implementation during the 2012-13 school year. These priorities are then shared with instructional staff during the starting weeks of school, typically in late July and early August, so that teachers can begin their long-term course planning with the school's and State's overall academic direction in mind. School leaders, evaluators, and teachers establishing SLOs should follow this sequence of events starting with the identification and sharing of school-level and State priorities and goals with teachers before the teaching staff begins its long term planning for the year. SLOs should be aligned with the school's priorities and goals for the student population. For specials teachers, it is important to align content specific goals with the school's goals and priorities. This connection may require thoughtful collaboration between these teachers and the school administration.

> **Student Learning Objectives should align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or grade-level state standards, if CCSS is not applicable.**

Student Learning Objectives should align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or grade-level state standards where CCSS are not applicable. When possible, teachers should work in grade-level or content teams to review the standards for a grade-level or content area and determine the most important standards and content for students to master. In addition to reviewing content standards and establishing grade-level or subject priorities, these teams of teachers should work together to analyze student performance trends and select a common measure for assessing student content knowledge and skills. Most LEAs already have structures in place for teams of teachers to work together, however, if an LEA does not, the evaluator or another LEA administrator should create teams of teachers to work together to review standards, identify priorities, select a common measure and establish goals.

Student Learning Objectives should be horizontally and vertically aligned, when applicable. To develop horizontally aligned Student Learning Objectives, all teachers in the same grade level and/or content area should collaborate to set Student Learning Objectives and then each teacher should set specific targets based upon his or her own students' baseline knowledge and skills. When an SLO is vertically aligned, teachers across grade levels should communicate and collaborate to ensure that students are progressing.

## UNDERSTANDING BASELINE DATA

Reviewing baseline student performance data is critical for developing Student Learning Objectives and setting numerical targets for the objectives. Baseline data is useful for developing a deep understanding of students' prior knowledge and skills for the course. While academic data is important, reviewing as expansive a data set as possible is useful in developing a comprehensive view of the student population enrolled in the course.  Behavioral and attendance trends, for example, may provide insight about how much time a teacher can expect a given student to spend in his or her class over the course of the year. Attendance, we know, impacts a student's ability to reach the targets set for the class. While behavior and attendance are useful for consideration, academic growth expectations should not be a justification for lower expectations. They should provide context for interpreting student data. For example, if a student's behavior, or attendance, is suffering, we expect that the school will follow up with the family to ensure appropriate behavior and consistent attendance.

Baseline data that is useful for understanding students' prerequisite skills and content includes, but is not limited to:

▶ **beginning of course diagnostics and/or performance tasks,**

▶ **prior year tests,**

▶ **tests in other subjects,**

▶ **teacher-, school- or state generated tests,**

▶ **student grades in previous courses,**

▶ **student transiency rates,**

▶ **student behavior data, and**

▶ **individualized education plans.**

In some cases, baseline data may not be available. For example, kindergarten teachers may not have access to data from previous years. In such a case, teachers may want to consider administering diagnostic exams at the beginning of the year, or consider the yearly performance of kindergarteners from the previous year to approximate where their current kindergarteners are starting the year and set goals accordingly.

## CHOOSING QUALITY ASSESSMENTS

Selecting high quality assessments is an integral component of the Student Learning Objective process. Because assessments measure what students are expected to learn over their time in the course, a quality assessment provides an indication of the degree to which a teacher has impacted his or her students' learning in the course.
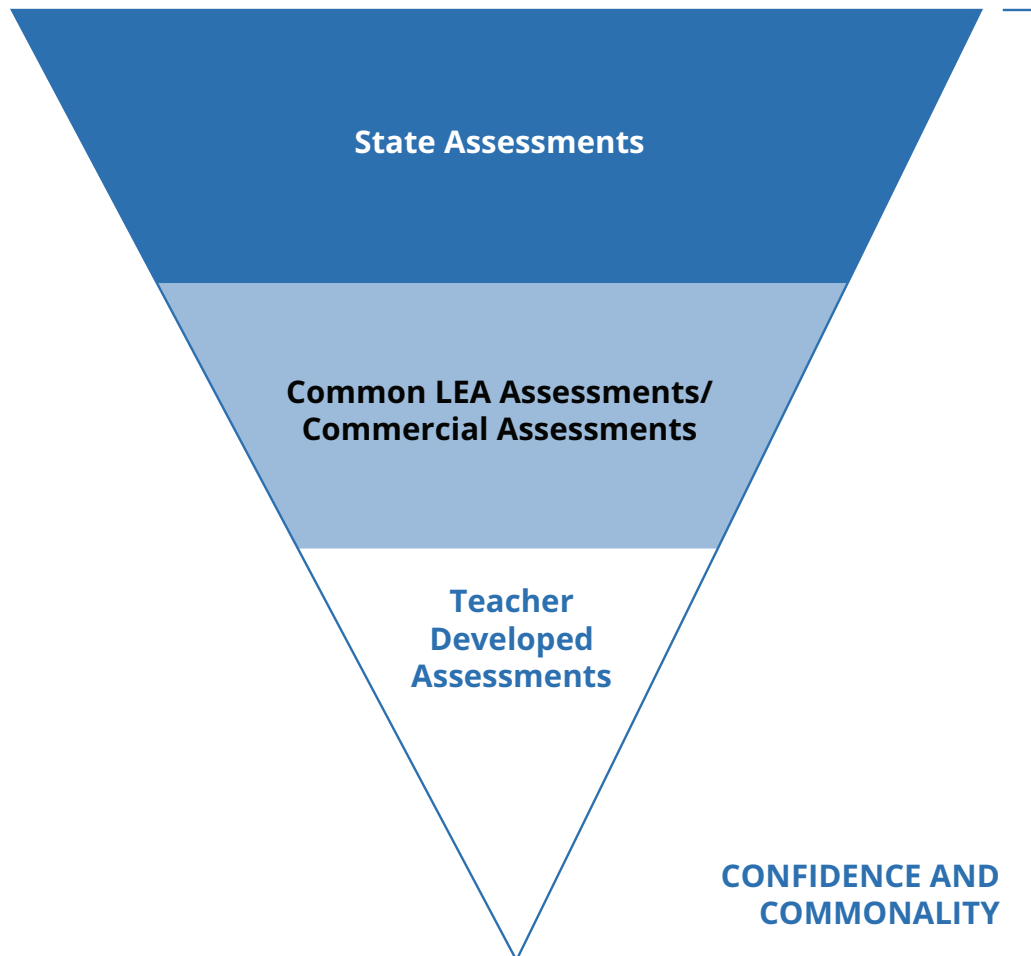
The Framework for Selecting Assessments was developed to assist educators as they select an assessment to measure student learning and inform teacher evaluation. The circles represent the layers, or steps, at each stage of the framework. The step highlighted in red is the critical step of understanding what your current assessment data tells you about what students are learning. The subsequent steps are necessary for determining that an assessment can be used to measure student learning and inform teacher evaluation. To see the details of each layer of the framework, along with guiding questions to facilitate the process of selecting a high quality assessment, see Appendix II, the Framework for Selecting Assessments. Below is an abridged version of the framework to set the foundation for selecting assessments.
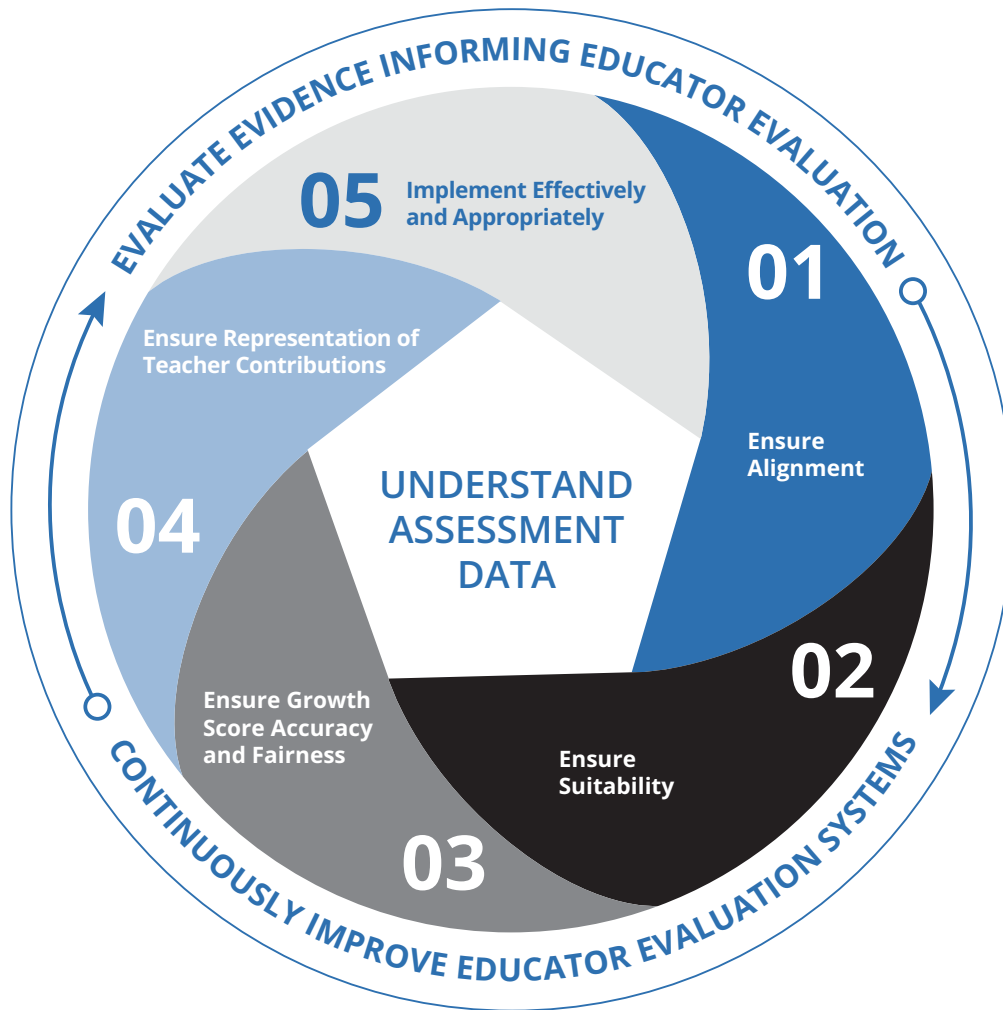
- **Understand assessment data: With any assessment, it is critical that educators know how to interpret the scores from the assessment.**
- **Ensure alignment: a high quality assessment is one that is aligned with the LEA's standards, curriculum, and instructional resources.**
- **Ensure suitability: A high quality assessment is one that yields reliable and meaningful information about what students know and are able to do, and is scored using clear guidelines and criteria.**
- **Ensure growth score accuracy and fairness: a high quality assessment is one that represents the range of where students should fall at the beginning, and then at the end, of a school year.**
- **Ensure representation of teacher contributions: a high quality assessment is one that is sensitive to teacher instruction and free of tangentially related content.**
- **Implement effectively and appropriately: a high quality assessment is one that is implemented with consistent fairness and integrity.**

When choosing an assessment, teachers and evaluators must be confident that it is aligned to the course content standards, is appropriately rigorous for the grade-level/course and includes questions that require critical thinking, and is formatted in a way that is clear and free from bias. Additionally, it is important that those who teach the same course or grade use a common assessment wherever available. This helps ensure fairness and consistency across classes, and encourages teachers to collaborate around student learning.

The diagram below ranks assessment types based on the amount of confidence one can have in its alignment, rigor, and format, as well as the extent to which they are common across teachers of the same grades and courses.

**State Assessments**

**Common LEA Assessments/
Commercial Assessments**

**Teacher
Developed
Assessments**

**CONFIDENCE AND
COMMONALITY**

## DETERMINING PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Setting targets can be complex; there is no "cookie-cutter" way to do so. Educators should use student baseline data to inform Student Learning Objective targets. Additionally, educators should look at trends among past student populations on the given assessment when considering how to set targets for their current populations. Targets should be both ambitious and feasible for the students enrolled in the course. The end of year target should be one that adequately "stretches" students given their starting point at the beginning of the year.

When drafting a class objective, percentages or particular groups of students may not be excluded when setting performance targets. To address the needs of all students in the class, It may make sense for educators to set tiered targets for their students to ensure that every student is included under the SLO (e.g. students performing in the lowest third of the class may have an end-of-course target set lower than those students performing at the middle third and top third).

## APPROVING AND MONITORING SLOs

Student learning objectives must be approved once the objectives have been set by the teacher. Given the workload and varied content knowledge of many school leaders, content specialists or academic coaches may be considered as contributing evaluators for reviewing SLOs and their components (including targets, rigor of assessments, etc). Content specialists and academic coaches who attend team meetings may be uniquely positioned to oversee the SLO process as they are both familiar with the content and often have an on-going supportive relationship with the teachers. Whoever is selected, at the school level, to approve and monitor SLOs, the role, relationship and process should be identified in advance of engaging in this work.

Teachers should submit their SLOs before meeting with the primary evaluator and/or contributing evaluator in order to provide time for the evaluator to review the drafted SLO and supporting documentation.

When reviewing SLOs for approval, an evaluator attempts to answer three questions:

▶ **Is the objective focused on the right material?**

▶ **Does the numerical performance target represent an appropriate amount of student learning for the specified interval of instruction?**

▶ **Will the Student Learning Objective Assessment provide the information needed to determine if the objective has been met?**

The first question requires evaluators (and any supporting specialists) to consider what students are expected to learn over the course of the year. Evaluators must determine if the SLO is broad enough to cover the most important learning of the year, but not so broad that teachers are unclear about the content that students are expected to learn. The SLO examples included in the appendix of this document provide guidance on what evaluators and teachers can expect from well-written SLOs.

The second question considers whether or not the growth or mastery target a teacher sets for students is both ambitious and feasible. The end of year target should be one that adequately "stretches" students given their starting point at the beginning of the year. Teachers should not set the target so low that students will reach the target by the middle of the semester. Conversely, targets should not be set at a level that is impossible for the majority of students to reach by the end of the course. Again, teachers are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues and review student performance trends (e.g. last year's class) to determine what constitutes attainable and ambitious targets.

Lastly, the evaluator must ensure that the teacher is using a high-quality assessment as evidence of student learning. Teachers should use an assessment with high confidence and commonality whenever possible. Whether a teacher opts to use a state-created assessment, commercial assessment, or self-created assessment, the Framework for Selecting Assessments is useful for assessing the quality of the assessment. While a perfect assessment does not exist, by using the framework, evaluators and teachers will find that there are some assessments that are better aligned to the school's instructional model than others.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## WHY IS OSSE PRESENTING SLOs AS A MEASURE OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

Student Learning Objectives are an opportunity for teachers, those who work most intimately with students, to set the goals for success for their classrooms. SLOs provide an opportunity for teachers to collaborate with their peers and think collectively about the type of learning that will increase student achievement. Goals for students should be both rigorous and attainable.

## SHOULD ALL TEACHERS SET AN SLO?

LEAs receiving Race To The Top funding must incorporate student learning as a component of every teacher's evaluation. For teachers in grades 4-8, student learning is measured using the value-added measure. However, for students in untested grades and subjects, student learning can be measured via a variety of other methods, including Student Learning Objectives.

During the first year of implementation, LEAs may find it more beneficial to phase in the SLO process with only a few grade levels or subjects. The gradual implementation of the SLO process allows teachers and principals to familiarize themselves with the process and make recommendations necessary to refine the process for scaling up to other additional grades and subjects.

## HOW MANY STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES SHOULD TEACHERS SET?

Teachers implementing SLOs should set at least two SLOs per class to cover the breadth of their content standards for the year. For example, a teacher who teaches three periods of Biology and two periods of Earth

Science should set two SLOs for Biology for the year, and two SLOs for Earth Science for the year. Teacher teams should identify the major standards or overarching concepts and skills that are necessary for the successful completion of a course and use them to guide the setting of their objectives. All objectives should be based on DC Learning Standards or Common Core State Standards. LEAs have the flexibility to weigh the scoring of these objectives at their own discretion. In the example above, this could consist of greater weight placed on the scoring of the biology objectives. Guidance for scoring objectives can be found on page 69 of the appendix.

For grades and subjects that are not covered by the DC Learning Standards or Common Core State Standards, objectives should align to available national standards, perhaps those set forth by professional associations (e.g. National Art Education Association).

## WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD THE STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES COVER?

A teacher's set of objectives should address all students for whom a teacher is responsible. In addition, teachers can set tiered goals so that performance targets are differentiated.

## DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE?

No. Student Learning Objectives are long-term academic goals set for groups of students, as opposed to individual students. Every teacher will set at least two Student Learning Objectives for the students he

or she teaches. A teacher's set of objectives should address all students in the class. In addition, teachers can set tiered goals so that performance targets are differentiated.

## WHAT IS AN APPROPRIATE PERFORMANCE TARGET?

Teachers should begin with the data and historical information they have available on current students and use it to set performance targets for the Student Learning Objectives. Diagnostic or pre-test data and/or prior year's grades and assessment data can be used to inform performance targets. During the beginning-of-year SLO approval meeting, the evaluator will consider the rigor of the target. Performance targets that are not sufficiently rigorous should not be approved.

## WHAT DATA SHOULD I USE TO SET MY STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE PERFORMANCE TARGETS?

Available data pertaining to your current students should be used to set your targets. This data may be a collection from previous years or the current year (e.g. last year's assessment results or a pre-test from the beginning of the current year). If data is unavailable for the students for whom you are currently responsible, data from a similar student population may be used.

## HOW WILL STUDENT LEARNING BE MEASURED?

All Student Learning Objectives require sources of evidence to be used in order to determine how much students learn during the interval of instruction. If a common assessment is available, it should be used as the primary source of evidence. If a common assessments is unavailable, other assessments (such as those created by teams of teachers) and their scoring method(s) must be approved by the evaluator.

## WHAT EVIDENCE SOURCES MAY BE USED TO DESCRIBE STUDENT GROWTH TOWARD OBJECTIVES?

Teachers must present at least one source of evidence for each objective, but multiple sources may be used. If a common assessment exists, it should be used as the primary source of evidence. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with grade-level teams and content teams to obtain or develop common assessments for Student Learning Objectives.

If a teacher is using an internally -developed assessment, the evidence (ex. teacher-made exam, student portfolios, writing pieces, etc.) and plans for how the evidence will be scored must be approved by the evaluator. Evaluators must consider whether objectives have high-quality sources of evidence when initially approving them.

## WHAT IF TEACHERS DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A COMMON ASSESSMENT?

Teachers in some grades and subjects do not have access to common local- or standards-aligned third-party-created assessments for their course standards. In these cases, teachers will need to measure student progress toward their Student Learning Objectives by using assessments that they create, in collaboration with other teachers in their school or LEA who teach the same course. If there are no two teachers in the LEA who teach the same course, teachers may create their own assessment.

Assessments should be approved by the evaluator and/or coaches and content specialists before being used to measure student progress toward Student Learning Objectives. Teacher teams can build on the summative assessment that they are already using to measure student progress if the assessment aligns to the school's standards and curriculum.

It is possible that a teacher-created assessment may change in content from when it is approved by the evaluator early in the year to when it is administered at the end of the year. Such changes to the assessment must be addressed and approved at the Mid-Year Conference. Assessments are not expected to decrease in rigor in order to ensure that students are able to hit their end of course targets.

In order to properly measure student learning for every course and grade level, DC teachers must strive to develop or identify appropriate assessment tools. At the start of the school year, the building administrator(s) will meet with content area leaders and teams of teachers in subjects where external assessments are not available to discuss possible sources of evidence. Course teams developing assessments are encouraged to collaborate across LEAs.

Prior to the beginning-of-year approval, course teams will share these assessments, along with the accompanying scoring tool(s), with their evaluator for review. As a part of the approval process, the evaluator will provide feedback on the assessment and scoring tool. The quality of these assessments and scoring tools is central to the meaningful tracking and evaluating of progress on Student Learning Objectives.

### WHAT IF ONE OF MY STUDENTS DOES NOT PERFORM AS WELL AS I EXPECTED HIM/HER TO PERFORM? HOW WILL THAT AFFECT MY STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE SCORE?

Student Learning Objectives are designed to capture the learning goals for groups of students, instead of individual students. When the teacher and evaluator set Student Learning Objectives at the beginning of the year, the teacher should set rigorous but attainable targets for the group for whom he or she is responsible. When setting these targets, teachers should take into account

students' past performance and the fact that not all students may learn at the same rate.

Student Learning Objectives are scored using a holistic rubric by evaluators who are familiar with the context in which a teacher is operating. Teachers will have multiple opportunities to share the unique circumstances of their classroom with their evaluator, including the mid-year conference. He or she should be aware of any special circumstances (e.g. a student who is new to the school or has been absent for extended periods of time).

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE A TEACHER WHO HAS NEW STUDENTS JOINING THE CLASS LATE IN THE YEAR?

The mid-year conference presents an opportunity for a teacher and evaluator to revisit and revise goals, if needed. Any teacher who has students who have been added to his or her roster late in the year and wishes to alter his or her Student Learning Objectives should discuss these changes with their evaluator at the Mid-Year Conference. All Student Learning Objectives should be "locked" (no more changes made) by early-February. Students who are added to a teacher's roster after the Mid-Year Conference has occurred should not be included in the Student Learning Objective for evaluation purposes.

### WHAT IF I TEACH A STUDENT WHO IS CHRONICALLY ABSENT? WILL HIS OR HER ATTENDANCE COUNT AGAINST ME IN MY STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE?

All students for whom a teacher is responsible should be covered by a teacher's set of Student Learning Objectives. However, at the End-of-Year Conference, the teacher and evaluator will have a conversation about the teacher's summative student learning

data. If it appears as though there are factors outside the teacher's control that significantly impact his or her student learning data, those factors may be taken into account when the evaluator is assigning a final Student Learning Objective rating.

## HOW CAN I SET STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES THAT ARE BOTH RIGOROUS FOR ALL STUDENTS BUT STILL ATTAINABLE?

Student Learning Objectives can be set in a variety of ways. Targets may be set that pertain to the average performance of a group of students, they may be based on student progress from one level to another or overall mastery. Targets may also be tiered such that students with similar academic histories are expected to meet one target while students with another similar history are expected to meet another target. Specific targets may vary between various groups of students for whom a teacher is responsible. See some of the sample Student Learning Objectives for ideas on how to differentiate targets.

## HOW DO TEACHERS WHO PROVIDE SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS SERVICES SET STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES WHEN THEY MIGHT BE WORKING WITH STUDENTS ACROSS MULTIPLE GRADE LEVELS OR SUBJECTS?

Student Learning Objectives for special education teachers will vary depending on the individual context. Special education teachers should work with their general education counterparts and evaluator to construct Objectives that are in alignment with those of the general education classes but accommodate for the specific starting points of the special education students. For more information, please review some of the samples of Student Learning Objectives available in the appendix.

## NOT ALL GRADES AND SUBJECTS HAVE ACCESS TO THE SAME TYPES OF STUDENT ASSESSMENTS AS EVIDENCE FOR STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES. HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN COMPARABILITY AMONG DIFFERENT GRADES AND SUBJECTS?

While teachers may assess student learning using different assessments, all teachers will have the ability to use the sources of evidence available to set customized learning targets based on available data. In addition, all Student Learning Objectives are assessed using a common scoring guide, allowing the evaluator to take into account inconsistencies such as variability in assessment type. Student Learning Objectives are meant to be set collectively by a team of teachers such that comparability is established within and across LEAs, and conversations about measuring student learning become grounded in a common language.

## WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE HAVE THAT STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES ARE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO MEASURE STUDENT PROGRESS?

The Technical Assistance Task Force found Student Learning Objectives to be a favorable approach to measuring student learning because it allowed teachers to work with their colleagues and use existing tools to make determinations about how much students are learning. In many cases, the actual measurement of student learning is being done in the same way as it was before Student Learning Objectives were created – Student Learning Objectives merely ask teachers to use those measures and determine specific, numerical goals for their students. Also, Student Learning Objectives can be used for all teachers since they do not require the use of a state or national assessment.

# Example SLOs

### CHEMISTRY
Students in grade 11 will be able to describe the composition, structure, and properties of matter, draw conclusions about the interactions and conservation of matter and energy, and explain why matter and energy can neither be created nor destroyed in a given system and/or reaction.

### READING
All students will move up at least three reading levels by the end of second grade.

### MUSIC
80% of students in fifth grade will be able to identify and describe the differences between three pieces of music from the Middle Ages, the Classical period, and/or 20th century.

### VISUAL ARTS
80% of students in sixth grade with 85% attendance will identify visual images in works of art with multicultural themes (e.g., King Tut, Nefertiti, Mt. Fuji, Sumo wrestler, samurai, Aztec, Mayan, and Incan symbols).

### DANCE
80% of students in seventh grade will create a dance to demonstrate understanding of the scientific concepts of force and motion.

### DRAMA
80% of students eighth grade with 85% attendance will demonstrate acting technique by portraying characters in scripted scenes.