

Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System

Student Learning Objectives (SLO) Guidebook

South Carolina Department of Education
Office of Educator Effectiveness



Version 1: March 2015

SLO Guidebook
SCDE SLO Toolkit Training Resources
Implementation 2015-16

About the SLO Toolkit Guidebook

Version 1, March 2015

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 SCDE website *ed.sc.gov/slo* 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.

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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 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 growth 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 standards 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 mindset shift from focus solely on student proficiency towards also emphasizing 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 in the development and implementation of 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. For purposes of the ESEA waiver, the requirement is that SLO measures of student growth be “rigorous and comparable within” the district.

Although the term SLO may be new, 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.

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, will incorporate student growth measures into teacher evaluations beginning in 2015–2016. This guidebook reflects the development and monitoring process for student learning objectives, which are one vehicle for measuring student growth in evaluation systems.

The Purpose of Student Learning Objectives

Even though SLOs are used for teacher 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.

• • •
Grade 8 Social Studies teacher has VAM available but is not required to use it per ESEA. This teacher is not required to write SLOs but can use as a student growth measure.

• • •
Grade 4 ELA teacher has VAM and is required to use it within their student growth measures per ESEA. This teacher must incorporate the VAM into an SLO.

The term classroom-based teacher does not include special area personnel (e.g. school counselors, library media specialists, speech-language therapists).

All classroom-based teachers must have a “student growth” measure each year. Subject to the district’s business rules, teachers with a “test-score-based measure” are not required to write an SLO. For School Year 2014-15, the “test-score-based measure” is the EVAAS Value Added Measure (VAM) scores.¹ Classroom-based teachers without a “test-score-based measure” must write an SLO. Districts can decide to use SLOs as the student growth measure for all teachers, including those with “test-score-based measures.” However, if a district elects to have teachers of ESEA-required subjects write SLOs, they must use those test scores within the SLO.

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

¹ Value-added measures are not the only method of using assessment scores to attempt to quantify student growth. Vertical scales, value tables, and student growth percentiles are examples of other “test-score-based measures.” The SCDE will be investigating the use of other “test-score-based measures” as the Expanded ADEPT guidelines are being implemented. While the State has a contract for EVAAS, those measures will also be available to districts and educators.

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.

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

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.

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

To assist teachers in the development of high-quality SLOs, the SCDE has created an SLO Template (Appendix A). (Individual districts may create their own templates; be sure to check on the correct format for your district before completing your SLO.) A teacher's SLO is a blueprint or work plan that will include components identified in Table 1. The components included here are reflective of 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.

Table 1. Components of an SLO

Criteria	Description
Objective	Identifies the priority content and learning that are expected during the interval of instruction. The objective statement should be broad enough that it captures the breadth and depth of content and spans the majority of the SLO interval, but focused enough that it can be measured.
Rationale	Teachers will provide a rationale for why the standards were selected for the focus of the SLO. Teachers will also provide details related to assessment analysis and how that relates to the student population within the SLO.
Student Population	Specifies the students targeted by the SLO. Information should include, but is not limited to, the following: the number of students in the class, a description of students with exceptionalities (e.g., learning disability, gifted and talented, English language learner [ELL] status, etc.), and a description of academic supports provided to students (e.g., extended time, read-aloud, etc.). Note that the ESEA waiver requires that students not be excluded because of exceptionalities. Also note that the SCDE recommends that the SLO address the subject/course for which the teacher has the most students.
Standards/Content & Interval of Instruction	Describes the content and content standards that are targeted in the SLO. Teachers also will provide a rationale for why the standards were selected for the focus of the SLO. Specifies the period or instructional interval for which the objective is planned. Objectives are typically planned to capture either year-long or semester-long growth. If it impacts the instructional interval, the teacher should include the contact time with students (e.g., 50 minutes once per week).
Assessment (Pre- and Post-)	Describes which assessment(s) will be used to measure student learning, why the assessment is appropriate for measuring the objective(s), and the grading scale and/or rubric used to score the assessments. When available, it is best practice to use 2-3 measures of student growth so that teachers have multiple evidence points on their impact on students' learning.
Progress Monitoring	Describes the type and frequency of formative assessments that will be used to measure student progress toward the learning goals during the interval of instruction.
Baseline and Trend Data	Describes the students' level of knowledge prior to instruction, including the source(s) of data and its relation to the overall course objectives. Trend data describe the patterns that the educator identifies after analysis of data the educator has observed from students taking this course in the past. Trend data might also include longitudinal information on the educator's current students.

Instructional Strategies	Provides a description of the high-yield instructional strategies that will be employed during the SLO interval of instruction. Also provides an opportunity for the teacher to describe plans for differentiating instruction for learners at various proficiency levels. If the educator is conducting action research on new strategies, it could be described here.
Growth Targets	Describes where the teacher expects students to be at the end of the interval of instruction taking into account the baseline scores. The target should be measurable and rigorous, yet attainable within the interval of instruction and period between initial and final assessments. In many cases, the growth targets should be tiered or individualized so that they are both rigorous and attainable for students as they represent varying degrees of beginning skills and abilities, taking into account that we want students on a trajectory towards at least performing at proficiency on grade level.

Teacher Professional Growth and Development Plan

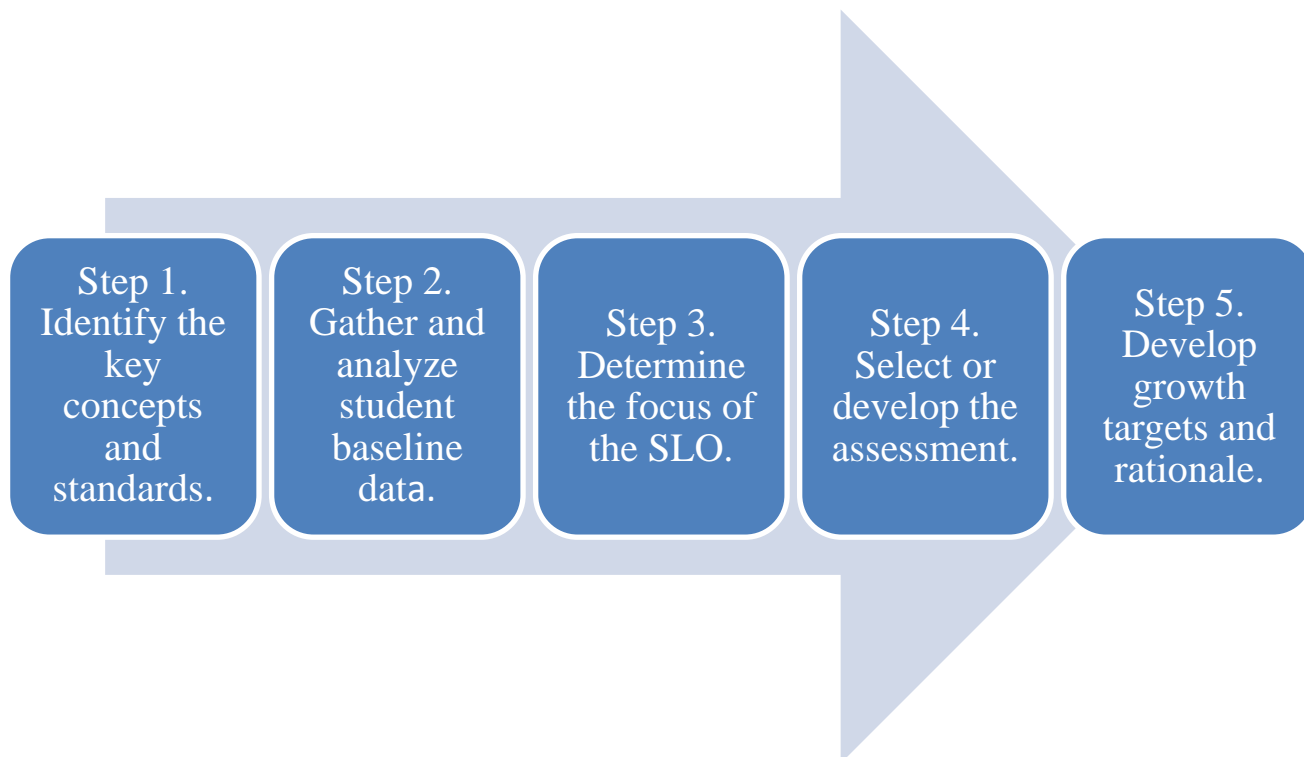
An additional, South-Carolina specific component has been added to the SLO Template. Section IX of the template (Appendix A) reflects a teacher’s professional practice. The *Teacher Professional Growth and Development Plan and Action Research* section of the SLO Template was designed to satisfy the statutory requirement (S.C. Code Ann. Section 59-26-30) that all educators have a professional growth and development plan. This is familiar to educators who have had the Goals-Based Evaluation (GBE) under the South Carolina ADEPT evaluation system for teachers who have been issued a continuing contract.

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 Section IX of the SLO Template, the teacher will describe the professional learning goal(s) in which he or she will participate to successfully complete the student learning goals stated in the SLO and other learning or action research appropriate for the teacher’s professional growth. Teachers are encouraged to establish no more than three goals or areas of focus. Furthermore, the teacher will explain what teaching skills and techniques will be improved as a result of the professional learning and reflect on the effectiveness of those skills as they relate to improved student learning. There is also an opportunity for the teacher to explain whether this work will be compiled into action research that can contribute to the profession. Throughout the year, the teacher will collect evidence of his or her progress toward the goal(s) targeted in this section.

The teacher and the reviewer(s) must agree upon the teacher professional learning goal(s) during the Preliminary Conference. (See the next section for a timeline for the SLO and conferences.) Once the SLO and the teacher professional learning goals have been approved, the teacher may implement the plan. During the Mid-Course Conference, the teacher and reviewer(s) will review the evidence of student progress toward meeting the growth goals and the teacher’s progress toward achieving the professional

learning goals. The reviewer(s) will provide feedback and support as needed. During the Summative Conference, the teacher and reviewer(s) will examine the evidence related to student growth as well as progress the teacher has made toward the professional goals and make a final recommendation for approval to the principal.

The SLO Development Process for Teachers



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 Goal: The content standards, goals, and objectives identified in the SLO
- Targets: The teachers' 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 evaluating different aspects of the SLO to make sure it meets “acceptable quality” for classroom implementation.

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 should represent the “big ideas” or domains of the content taught during the interval of instruction. 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, either individually or in teams, 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 New Carolina in adopted 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” propel students along a trajectory towards being ready for college and careers.

Gathering and Analyzing Baseline Data

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
- Individualized education plans (IEPs)

For some teachers who write SLOs as a student growth measure, 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, the following: 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.

Types and Approaches of Student Learning Objectives

There are different approaches to writing and implementing SLOs. SLOs may be developed by teachers

working independently or by teachers working to create a team SLO under which each teacher uses baseline data for his or her student groups but common assessments, content standards, and growth target setting models are used.

A description of each type of SLO is presented in Table 2. Districts will decide whether the approach is determined at the building level or left to the individual teacher or teacher teams to determine. If you are not sure which approach your district has chosen, check with your building administrator. Remember, districts must ensure that SLOs are rigorous and comparable within the district.

Table 2. Types of SLOs

Individual SLO	Team SLO
<p>An individual SLO is written by an individual teacher.</p> <p>This type of SLO holds each teacher accountable only for the students for whom he or she is responsible on self-selected standards and assessments.</p> <p>Teachers select or develop their own assessments.</p>	<p>A team of teachers focus on a similar goal but are held accountable for only their students.</p> <p>This approach encourages collaboration among teachers within the team to develop a set of common standards, to use a common assessment for baseline and growth measures, and to collaborate on a growth target model. Team SLOs promote comparability among team members.</p>

Determining the Student Population for the SLO

The goal for SLOs is to measure the academic growth of students. As such, while districts have some flexibility in determining specific approaches to writing SLOs, 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.

There are different approaches one can take in regard to the student population that is included in the SLO goal. A description of the various approaches and the challenges associated with each is included in Table 3. Districts have flexibility as to whether the approach is determined at the building level or left to the individual teacher or teacher teams to determine.

Table 3. Approaches to SLOs

Course SLO	Class SLO
A course-level SLO covers all of the students enrolled in multiple sections of the course (i.e., all of a teacher’s Biology 2 students, all of a teacher’s Beginning Pottery students, etc.).	A class-level SLO covers all of the students in one class period (i.e., 2 nd hour Biology, 4 th hour Beginning Pottery, etc.).
The strength of this SLO is that it includes more students taught by the teacher. That reduces the measurement error because numbers of students included are higher.	The strength of this approach to SLOs is that it may reduce the amount of data collection and analysis teachers need to conduct.
Challenges: It can be difficult for teachers without a course (e.g., special education teachers). This approach to SLOs can increase the amount of data analysis teachers need to conduct.	Challenges: It can be difficult for teachers without a formal course (e.g., special education teachers). This approach can place emphasis on one class over another.

Selecting and/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.

Table 4. Determining the Strength of Assessments

Criterion	Description
Valid	The assessment items are representative of the actual skills/concepts learned.
Reliable	The assessment 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 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 available. Vendor-prepared, commercial assessments could be used to assess student learning. If the aforementioned assessments are not available, teacher-created assessments could 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).

Growth Targets

Teachers should use student baseline data as well as historical and trend data to inform SLO growth targets. Growth targets 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 SLO rationale.

Growth targets 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, which states that students must attend for 75% (152 days for

yearlong SLOs, and 68 days for semester SLOs) of the interval of instruction to be included in the SLO.

There are multiple approaches to setting growth targets. Student growth targets 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.

The approach to setting growth targets should be addressed within the rationale section of the SLO. Assessment data for all students will need to be reviewed in order to determine if a targeted growth goal is appropriate. The difference between tiered and targeted growth goals are represented in Table 5.

Table 5. Types of Growth Targets

Tiered Growth Targets	Targeted Growth Targets	Individual Growth Targets
Appropriate for the class approach to SLOs, tiered growth targets include all students but at varying degrees of expected growth.	Appropriate for the course approach to SLOs, targeted growth targets are similar for all students within the SLO student population as they have similar needs according to assessment data.	Appropriate for use in class or course SLOs. All students have individualized growth targets based on previous performance and expectations.

Most South Carolina educators are beginning the SLO process in School Year 2015-16.² The SCDE acknowledges that – for some assessments used in SLOs – little data may exist from which appropriate and rigorous growth targets may be set. Districts are encouraged to develop systems for tracking which assessments are used and what growth has occurred for students starting at various baselines during various instructional intervals. Over time, this information can be used to better inform appropriate and rigorous growth targets. Remember that the expectation is that all students will grow, and that all students will progress at least one grade level during the interval of instruction. Students beginning the course performing below grade level will need appropriate instruction to get on track. Students beginning the course performing above grade level will need challenging work to continue and enrich their growth. Educators will need assessments that measure all students and sufficient data on those measures over time to analyze what is an appropriate target for one year's growth. When using commercial assessments with

² The SCDE is requesting a phase in that would start with all induction teachers (PreK-12) and PreK-5th grade educators; however, unless and until that request is approved, all educators should prepare for August 2015 implementation.

projections of “usual” growth, investigate the underlying assumptions for those targets before including them within the SLO.³

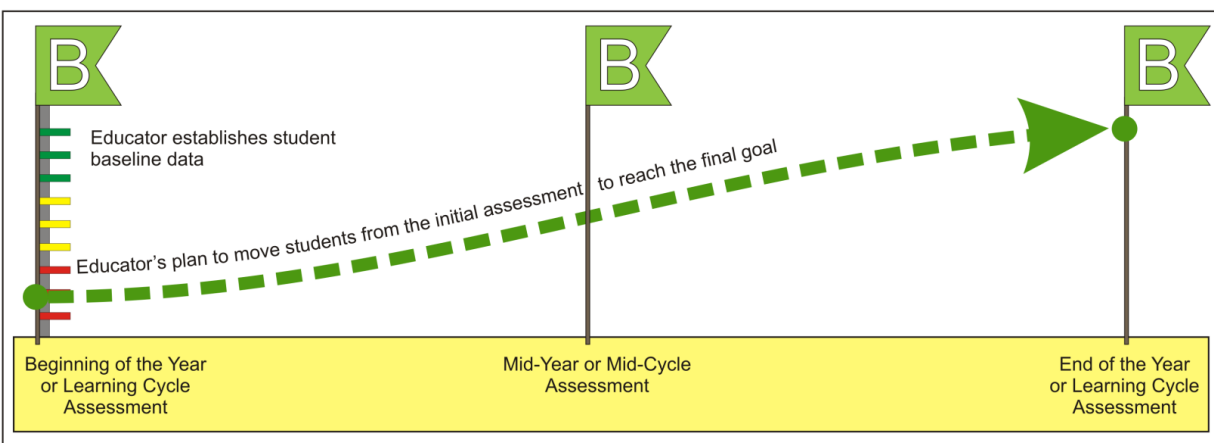
Monitoring the Progress of a Student Learning Objective

Unlike past goal-setting processes, 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.

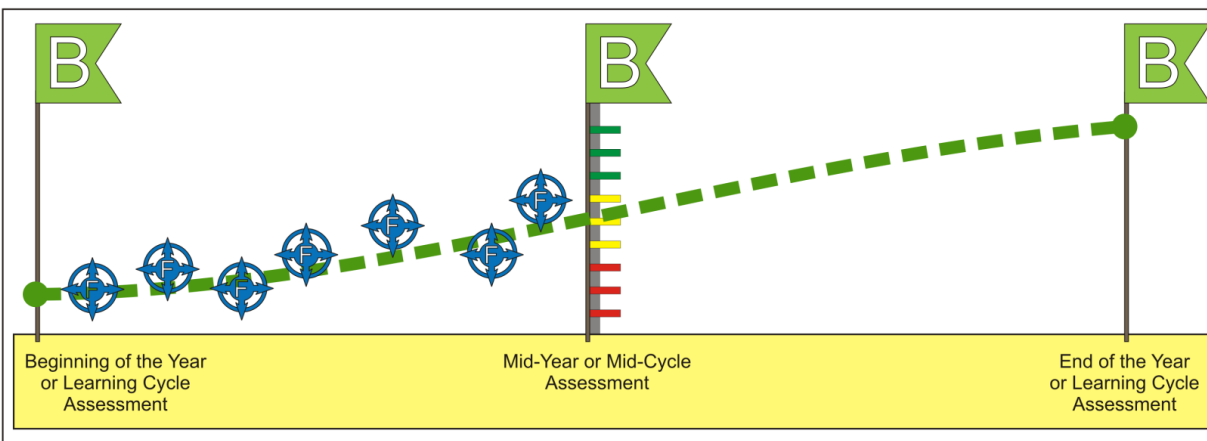
Figure 1: Benchmark Assessment



³ For example, if a projected target is what the “median” growth, 50% of students will not meet that target.

The teacher will need to draw from a baseline assessment measure at the beginning of the SLO interval to determine beginning skills and abilities. The teacher also must administer an aligned post-assessment at the end of the SLO interval. While not required, the teacher may want to consider the administration of an aligned mid-course assessment around mid-interval time if he or she feels other evidence does not provide a clear picture of growth gains.

Figure 2: Ongoing, Formative Evidence of Student Growth



Additional evidence to support the SLO growth goals comes from ongoing, formative evidence collected in the classroom on a more frequent basis. Evidence can include, but is not limited to, the following: quizzes, discussion participation, running records, and student work samples.

The evaluator and teacher collaboratively review SLO assessment results and other evidence of student growth during a series of required conferences. Sample timelines are provided at the end of this section.

Preliminary Conference:

At this time, the educator submits the completed SLO plan to the evaluator(s). During the preliminary conference, 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. 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 for the educator on the four-level ADEPT performance scale. This may be based on a number/percentage of students who meet or exceed their targets, or other method approved by the district. Whatever the method, it is important for the educator to know upfront what the expectations are for reaching each rating level. From the State perspective, we encourage the targets to be rigorous, but achievable, and comparable within the district. During initial implementation during school year 2015-16, 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.

The Preliminary Conference is also when teachers present their proposed professional growth and development plan for review and approval by the evaluator.

If it is determined (in the preliminary conference) that revisions are necessary, the teacher will submit the 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 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

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.

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 teacher will present evidence of students' progress and attainment of the growth targets. The teacher and evaluator reflect on the evidence collected and discuss the teacher's summative SLO 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, summative SLO and GBE 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. Examples of yearlong and semester-long interval timelines are presented in Table 6 and Table 7. 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: The state 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.

Table 6. Suggested Year-long SLO Interval Timeline

	Educator’s Responsibilities	Evaluator’s Responsibilities
August - September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze baseline or trend data for students. ▪ Based on data, determine if an individual or team SLO is most appropriate for the students. ▪ Identify student populations, appropriate standards, and appropriate assessments. ▪ Administer baseline assessments (e.g., pretest or beginning-of-year performance task) and set SLO growth targets. ▪ Submit completed SLO Template and selected assessment to evaluator for review. ▪ Meet with evaluator for SLO review meeting, and revise SLO if needed. ▪ Complete Professional Growth and Development (PG&D) Planning, including plans for Action Research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult district business rules on SLOs. ▪ Ensure educator training on effective SLOs. ▪ Review teacher’s SLO submission using the SLO Rubric for Rating Quality, and prepare feedback for the review meeting. ▪ Meet with teacher for SLO review meeting, and set a time for the submission of any revisions. ▪ Consult with peers to ensure rigor and comparability within the district.
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage in the Preliminary Conference for a final review and approval of the SLO prior to implementation in the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all SLOs are reviewed and approved before the school district cutoff date. ▪ Coordinate resources to ensure PG&D plans support quality instruction and student growth.
October–December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor student progress using formative assessments. ▪ Adjust instruction and interventions as needed. ▪ Implement PG&D plan. 	
December-January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with evaluator for Mid-Course Conference to review SLO progress, and identify any changes needed in instructional strategies or supports. ▪ Report on action research and progress under PG&D plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Mid-Course Conference with teacher. ▪ Assist teacher in locating any instructional supports needed to meet SLO targets. ▪ Consult district and peers to ensure business rules, rigor, and comparability are in compliance. ▪ Deal with business rules issues (e.g., attendance, transfers). Adjust rating projections based on any changes.

<p>January– March</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor student progress using formative assessments. ▪ Adjust instruction and interventions as needed. ▪ Implement PG&D plan. 	
<p>March-April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administer summative assessment (e.g., post-assessment, portfolio, or performance task). ▪ Record and analyze data on student performance. ▪ Conduct initial analysis of rating based upon standards set in the initial SLO Preliminary Conference. ▪ Draft report on results of educator’s PG&D plan. ▪ Submit SLO documentation to evaluator, and prepare for Summative Conference. ▪ Meet with evaluator to discuss assessment outcomes, SLO growth target success, and SLO scoring. Complete and sign off on scoring form. ▪ Use SLO results and feedback as part of next year’s professional growth planning, if appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review submitted SLO documentation and scoring; prepare feedback for meeting. ▪ Meet with teacher to discuss assessment outcomes, SLO growth target success, and SLO scoring. Complete and sign off on scoring form. ▪ Assist teacher in accessing any supports or professional development identified as a need, based on SLO outcomes. ▪ Review results of action research and with the educator report results district-wide to build and share knowledge base.

Table 7. Suggested Semester-Long SLO Interval Timeline

	Educator’s Responsibilities	Evaluator’s Responsibilities
First Semester (1): August–September Second Semester (2): January–February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze baseline or trend data for students. ▪ Based on data, determine if an individual or team SLO is most appropriate for the students. ▪ Identify student populations, appropriate standards, and appropriate assessments. ▪ Administer baseline assessments (e.g., pretest or beginning-of-year performance task) and set SLO growth targets. ▪ Submit completed SLO Template and selected assessment to evaluator for review. ▪ Meet with evaluator for SLO review meeting, and revise SLO if needed. ▪ Complete Professional Growth and Development (PG&D) Planning, including plans for Action Research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult district business rules on SLOs. ▪ Ensure educator training on effective SLOs. ▪ Review teacher’s SLO submission using the SLO Rubric for Rating Quality and prepare feedback for the review meeting. ▪ Meet with teacher for SLO review meeting, and set a time for the submission of any revisions. ▪ Consult with peers to ensure rigor and comparability within the district.
Beginning September (1) Beginning February (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage in the Preliminary Conference for a final review and approval of the SLO prior to implementation in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all SLOs are reviewed and approved before the school district cutoff date. ▪ Coordinate resources to ensure PG&D plans support quality instruction and student growth.
September–October (1) February- March (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor student progress using formative assessments. ▪ Adjust instruction and interventions as needed. ▪ Implement PG&D plan. 	
End of October (1) End of March (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with evaluator for Mid -Course Conference to review SLO progress, and identify any changes needed in instructional strategies or supports. ▪ Report on action research and progress under PG&D plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Mid-Course Conference meeting with teacher. ▪ Assist teacher in locating any instructional supports needed to meet SLO targets.
December 1–15 (1) March-April (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administer summative assessment (e.g., post-assessment, portfolio, or performance task). ▪ Record and analyze data on student performance. ▪ Conduct initial analysis of rating based upon standards set in the initial SLO Preliminary Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review submitted SLO documentation and scoring; prepare feedback for meeting. ▪ Meet with teacher to discuss assessment outcomes, SLO growth target success, and SLO scoring. Complete and sign off on scoring form.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft report on results of educator’s PG&D plan. ▪ Submit SLO documentation to evaluator, and prepare for summative meeting. ▪ Meet with evaluator to discuss assessment outcomes, SLO growth target success, and SLO scoring. Complete and sign off on scoring form. ▪ Use SLO results and feedback as part of next year’s professional growth planning, if appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist teacher in accessing any supports or professional development identified as a need, based on SLO outcomes. ▪ Review results of action research and with the educator report results district-wide to build and share knowledge base.
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Evaluating and Scoring an SLO

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 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?

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 initial implementation during School Year 2015-16, 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. The evaluator will enter the final SLO scores into the district or state-designated data management system to be combined with other system measures. 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.

SLO Rating Scale

The SCDE is allowing local school districts flexibility to create a scoring rubric for use in assigning final SLO ratings. District-developed SLO scoring rubrics must reflect a multi-level rating scale that will translate with the summative rating to the State-required four rating levels. The SLO rubric template will be submitted to SCDE as a part of a district’s ADEPT plan. The district rubric must be presented to teachers at the beginning of the SLO interval for use in planning and monitoring the SLO throughout the process. The SCDE recognizes that rubrics may vary depending upon the assessment(s) used; however, rubrics must be rigorous and comparable within the district. Examples of scoring rubrics have been provided (Appendix D).

Although one rubric is required with the ADEPT plan, the SCDE recognizes that in the initial years of implementation (beginning SY 2015-16), unique circumstances will arise that may require adjustments and multiple rating metrics. For example, team teaching, blended learning, new curriculum, or “May-mester” courses might require rubrics that vary from the one submitted with a district’s ADEPT plan. During these transition years, the SCDE will work with districts to ensure that ADEPT plans are flexible and amended to reflect best teaching practice that ensures growth for students and valid feedback for educators.

The South Carolina Department of Education’s Role in SLO Implementation

The primary purpose of the Expanded ADEPT system is to shine a flashlight on teaching and learning. Continuous improvement is the goal. The implementation and use of SLOs within educator evaluation is designed to promote collaboration among educators, allowing local input into what is being taught and assessed. There is a shift in attention from measures of student proficiency to measures of student growth, which gives teachers input and ownership in their evaluations. In support of these efforts and in attempts to establish high standards for the implementation of SLOs, the SCDE is committed to supporting districts by providing the following:

1. A guidance document outlining the purpose of writing SLOs and steps for implementation
2. Training resources to assist with implementing SLOs with fidelity
3. Implementation tools—the SLO Template, Rubric for Rating Quality and Companion Guide, and SLO Assessment Checklist
4. Technical assistance based on a district’s needs and readiness for implementation
5. An SLO Toolkit to include a repository of SLO examples and assessment guidance
6. Professional development assistance on SLOs
7. Professional development on development of valid and reliable growth assessments for learning
8. To the extent the SCDE has funding and capacity, support systems such as statewide data systems, a help line, and technical assistance

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Appendix A

Student Learning Objective Template

Teacher Name:		
School District/School Name:		
Principal/Evaluator:		
Content Area for SLO:		Type/Approach of SLO: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Team <input type="checkbox"/> Course <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted <input type="checkbox"/> Class <input type="checkbox"/> Tiered
Grade Level:		SLO Team Members (if applicable):
School Year:		
SLO Objective Statement:		
Assessment Window Dates:	Pre-Assessment Date:	Post-Assessment Date:
SLO Interval of Instruction:	Beginning Instruction Date:	Ending Instruction Date:

<p>I. Rationale: Provide a basis for the work to be accomplished. Why was this focus for an SLO selected? What background work has been done in this area? How does this target align with the school or district goals? What is the expected outcome? Is the objective broad enough to capture the major content but focused enough to be measurable? Provide details related to assessment analysis and how that relates to the student population within the SLO.</p>	
<p>II. Baseline and Trend Data: Describe the data used to identify assessment and growth targets. Explain how this data helped you identify the growth targets for your students. Baseline data: Information about students' level of performance prior to the start of the interval of instruction. How was the assessment done? When? Baseline data are used to establish SLO growth targets.</p>	
<p>III. Growth Targets: The growth targets set for this SLO must be rigorous for all students, yet attainable. Connect the baseline data that you collected at the beginning of the learning interval to your target data. Be sure to tier your growth targets so that you are able to demonstrate growth for students that perform at various levels. Considering all available data with baseline and trending data, what targets are you expecting your students to reach based upon their starting points? Explain how these targets were determined.</p>	
<p>IV. Student Population: Provide an in-depth description of the student population included in the SLO. At least six students are to be involved in an SLO. Describe any exceptionalities and special needs of this student group.</p>	
<p>V. Standards/Content and Interval of Instruction Describe the content and content standards that are addressed by the SLO. Refer to the state content area standards to complete this section. Provide a data-driven explanation for the focus of the SLO. Also, describe the instructional period for this SLO.</p>	

<p>VI. Assessment (Pre- and Post-) and Scoring:</p> <p>Describe the assessments (pre- and post-) that will be used to determine student growth. How do they measure the identified content/skills of the SLO? How will they be administered and by whom? Include information on how the assessment(s) will be scored. Assessments reviewed and discussed by a school team will verify the appropriateness of the instrument. Consider state-, district-, school-, and individual teacher-created assessments. Will these assessment be tied to grades, and if so, how?</p>		
<p>VII. Instructional Strategies :</p> <p>Describe the best instructional practices and/or grouping strategies that you will use to teach this content to students. Discuss the varying baselines among your students. How will instruction be differentiated based on data? Have teachers in appropriate grades/subjects linked their SLOs? What interventions will be used if more assistance is needed during the learning process?</p>		
<p>VIII. Progress Monitoring:</p> <p>How frequently will you progress monitor students' mastery of standards taught? How and with what instruments will you assess students to measure their progress over time toward the learning goal? What will you do if students do not show adequate progress toward the learning goal? Who will be sharing and discussing the results of this data collection during the instructional period?</p>		
<p>IX. Teacher Professional Growth and Development Plan and Action Research (S.C. Code Ann. Section 59-26-30):</p> <p>Describe the learning that the teacher will complete to successfully complete the plan. How will this learning occur? Will this be compiled as action research to add to the profession? What reading and reflection will be done during the SLO process? What teaching skills and techniques will be improved through the project?</p>		
<p>Conference</p>	<p>Date</p>	<p>Signatures</p>
<p>SLO Preliminary Conference</p>		
<p>SLO Mid-Course Conference</p>		
<p>SLO Summative Conference</p>		

Summative Scoring Table

Exemplary <i>In addition to meeting the standard...</i>	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
The teacher attains a high level of student achievement with all populations of learners.	The work of the teacher results in acceptable, measurable progress based on established standards for a significant number of students.	The work of the teacher results in student growth but does not meet the established standard and/or is not achieved with all populations taught by the teacher.	The work of the teacher does not achieve acceptable student growth.
Almost all students ____ meet their targeted growth, and many ____ exceed their targets	A significant number of students ____ meet or exceed their targets.	A less than significant number ____ of students meet or exceed their targets.	Fewer than ____ of students meet or exceed their targets.
Beginning of the Year Targets:			
Performance Level:	Performance Level:	Performance Level:	Performance Level:
__ of ____ Meet/Exceed __ of ____ Exceed	__ of ____ Meet/Exceed	__ of ____ Meet/Exceed	<__ of ____ Meet/Exceed
End of Year Performance:			
__ of ____ Meet/Exceed __ of ____ Exceed	__ of ____ Meet/Exceed	__ of ____ Meet/Exceed	<__ of ____ Meet/Exceed

Appendix B-SLO Rubric for Rating Quality

Purpose of this Rubric: This rubric is for use by teachers, school administration, and district administration in evaluating the different aspects of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to make sure the SLO meets an “acceptable quality” rating on this rubric before it is used for teacher performance ratings.

	Acceptable Quality	Quality Needs Improvement	Insufficient Quality
<p>Learning Goal A description of what students will be able to do at the end of the course or grade based on course- or grade-level content standards and curriculum.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable Quality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quality Needs Improvement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Quality</p>	<p>Appropriately identifies and thoroughly describes an important and meaningful learning goal, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the big idea and the standard(s) clearly aligned to and measured by the learning goal, ➤ a clear explanation of the critical nature of the learning goal for all students in the specific grade/course, ➤ a clear description of how the learning goal allows students to demonstrate deep understanding of the content standards within the identified time span, and ➤ specific and appropriate instruction and strategies described to teach the learning goal. 	<p>Generally identifies and describes a learning goal with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the big idea and/or standards minimally aligned to the learning goal, ➤ some explanation of the importance of the learning goal for students in the specific grade/course, ➤ a general description of how the learning goal allows students to demonstrate adequate understanding of the content standards within the identified time span, and/or ➤ some generic instruction and strategies used to teach the learning goal. 	<p>Identifies and describes a learning goal that is vague, trivial, or unessential, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the big idea and/or standards not aligned to the learning goal, ➤ lack of information of the importance of the learning goal for students in the specific grade/course, ➤ little to no description of how the learning goal allows students to demonstrate understanding of the content standards in the identified time span, and/or ➤ questionable and/or vague instruction and strategies used to teach the learning goal.
<p>Assessments and Scoring Assessments should be standards-based, of high quality, and be designed to best measure the knowledge and skills found in the learning goal of this SLO. They should be accompanied by clear criteria or rubrics to determine student learning from the assessment.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable Quality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quality Needs Improvement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Quality</p>	<p>Appropriately identifies and clearly describes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ high quality assessments*, with evidence to support how the appropriateness and quality of the assessments has been established ➤ scoring rubrics that appropriately differentiate student performance, including evidence to support these rubrics have been validated, and ➤ progress-monitoring measures that will be used, including how instruction will be differentiated for all learners based on this information. 	<p>Identifies and provides some description, which may lack specificity, of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ assessments, with partial explanation and no evidence to support how the appropriateness and quality of the assessments have been established , ➤ scoring rubrics that partially differentiate student performance, with no evidence to support how the rubrics have been validated, and/or ➤ progress-monitoring measures used with little detail in how instruction will be differentiated based on this information. 	<p>Identifies and provides an unclear, insufficient, or confusing description of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ assessments, which minimally measure the learning goal, with no reference to how the appropriateness and quality of the assessments have been established, ➤ scoring rubrics with minimal or no differentiation of student performance with no evidence to support how the rubrics have been validated, and/or ➤ progress-monitoring measures used with minimal or no reference to the differentiation of learners based on this information.
<p>Targets Identify the expected outcomes by the end of the instructional period for the whole class as well as for different subgroups, as appropriate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable Quality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quality Needs Improvement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Quality</p>	<p>Clearly and thoroughly explains how the data are used to define teacher performance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ appropriate baseline data/information used to establish and differentiate expected performance, and ➤ rigorous expectations that are realistic and attainable for each group of students using the documented high quality assessments. 	<p>Broadly, without specificity, explains how the data are used to define teacher performance, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ unclear baseline data/information used to establish and differentiate expected performance,, and/or ➤ expectations that are imprecise, somewhat realistic and/or attainable for each group of students. 	<p>Provides an unclear, insufficient, or confusing explanation of how the data are used to define teacher performance, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ no baseline data/information or use of irrelevant information to establish and differentiate expected performance, and/or ➤ low expectations, for each group of students.

* A high quality assessment has been determined to be aligned to identified standards and depth of knowledge, has a rubric or scoring guide that allows for reliable scoring, and is fair and unbiased.

Appendix C

Assessment Checklist

<i>Alignment to Standards</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>No</i>
1. All items on the assessment align to the standard(s) addressed in the SLO.			
2. All items on the assessment align to the intent of the standard(s).			
3. All items on the assessment cover essential skills and knowledge.			
<i>Item Quality: Multiple-Choice Questions</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>No</i>
1. All items are clear, concise, and unambiguous.			
2. All items contain a stem that is in the form of a direct question.			
3. All items state the whole question in the item stem.			
4. The stimulus is essential to the question with which it is associated.			
5. All items avoid using negative statements such as “not” or “never.”			
6. All item answers avoid repeating words or phrases.			
7. All item distractors are based on common student errors or misconceptions.			
8. All item answers are roughly the same length.			
9. All item answers avoid choices of “all of the above” or “none of the above.”			
<i>Item Quality: Short-Answer and Extended Response</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>No</i>
1. Items are clear, concise, and unambiguous.			
2. Items contain a stem that is in the form of a direct question.			
3. Items state the whole question in the item stem.			
4. The stimulus is essential to the question with which it is associated.			
5. Items avoid providing clues, and answers are not obvious without mastering material tested.			

6. Items do not lend themselves to subjectivity.			
Assessment Format and Components	Yes	Somewhat	No
1. All items use a full-length format.			
2. All parts of a test question are on one page.			
3. An adequate number of questions are on one page and are not overcrowded.			
4. Eighty-percent of the items are multiple-choice, 15% are short-answer, and 5% are extended response, with 42–46 items.			
5. Charts, tables, and graphs are used, when appropriate.			
6. Directions are clear and explicit.			
7. Directions indicate how the answer should be expressed.			

Stretch	Yes	Somewhat	No
1. All items match the full range of cognitive thinking as outlined in Bloom’s Taxonomy or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge.			
2. Items cover prerequisite knowledge and skills from prior years and appropriate, grade-level/content-relevant items that will challenge the highest performing students.			
Rubric, Scoring Guides, and Keys	Yes	Somewhat	No
1. Assessment includes rubrics, scoring guides, and/or keys.			
2. Rubrics, scoring guides, and keys are clear and explicit.			

Appendix D

SLO Rating Scale Examples

Below are examples of SLO rating scales. A district’s local context or a particular teacher-course context should determine the approach to scoring SLOs. Generally, a teacher’s SLO rating is determined by the percentage of students who have attained the growth goal that was set for them. Those percentages may vary depending upon the assessment and the goal-setting methods used.

SLO Rating	Percentage of Attainment
Unsatisfactory	Fewer than 40% of students met or exceeded their goal.
Needs Improvement	40-69% of students met or exceeded their growth goal.
Proficient	70- 89% of students met or exceeded their growth goal.
Exemplary	90-100% of students met or exceeded their growth goal.

The next example uses a different approach. In this example, a score of Proficient is the minimal expectation, with all students achieving their growth targets. A score of Exemplary indicates that all students have not only met their growth targets but portions have exceeded the targets set for them.

SLO Rating	Percentage of Attainment
Unsatisfactory	50% or fewer students met growth goal.
Needs Improvement	51 -99% of students met growth goal.
Proficient	All students met growth goal.
Exemplary	All students met growth goal; 25% of students exceeded goal.

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.

MID-COURSE CONFERENCE:

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 (SLO):

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.