



STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"

1. How are Cohort requirements different?

- **Cohort I** is comprised of the initial 26 Race To The Top (RT3) Districts. These districts must follow all SLOs requirements and deadlines as determined by the RT3 grant. During the 2014-2015 school year a minimum of two growth measures required per teacher is required. The only exception to this requirement would be if a teacher only teaches multiple sections of a single course.
- All district-developed SLOs must be administered district wide which may lead to three or more growth measures for some teachers
- **Cohort II** includes all volunteer districts from the 2012-2013 school year. SLO implementation requirements vary.
- **Cohort III** includes all districts for the 2013-2014 school year. The majority of these new districts will study the SLO process and begin developing assessments during the second semester. SLOs will not be administered until 2014-2015 school year. The minimum requirement will be one growth measure per teacher. However, all district-developed SLOs must be administered district wide which may lead to two or more growth measures for some teachers.

2. What are the components of a Student Learning Objective (SLO)?

The components include the SLO Statement, Growth Target and SLO Assessment

- The SLO Statement defines pre and post assessment windows, includes 100% of students in course, identifies the SLO course and assessment, and describes the content emphasis for the SLO assessment.
- The SLO Growth Target should be individualized for each student. It can also be a rubric score. It must contain an expected and high growth target.
- The SLO Assessment(s) is utilized to measure student growth from the beginning to the end of the instructional period. Each assessment is determined by the districts for kindergarten – 12th grade. Pre-Kindergarten administers a statewide SLO statement and assessment developed by Bright From the Start.

3. What SLO trainings are being offered to new districts?

- SLO Overview Training (1/2 Day)
New districts receive a SLO overview training.
- SLO Training for New Districts (3 Day Training)
SLO team members provide new districts with a 3 day in depth SLO training. The entire SLO process is addressed and the trainings are scheduled by RESA regions.
- SLO Content Weeks (3 Day Training)
Content Weeks, our assessment item development workshop, is conducted throughout the school year at various locations around the state.



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- New Districts Assessment Development
SLO team members, in conjunction with RESA personnel, offer SLO Assessment Development workshops for new districts. Specific assessments developed will vary based on the needs of the school districts.

4. What SLO resources and supports are available to districts?

In order to assist districts in building SLOs, GaDOE has developed supports for 132 courses. These resources, including the item bank and resource library, are made available to all school systems in the state at no cost to the district.

Item Bank

There are currently more than 2,000 assessment items representing 80 courses across 10 content areas in the item bank. Additionally, the DOE hosts monthly item development sessions to add to the current courses and provide additional support for remaining courses. The resources within the item bank strengthen and increase the availability of high quality assessment options for districts. The focus on items, rather than complete assessments, helps districts manage the magnitude of the workload while allowing them ownership of the process and the ability to develop assessment literacy best practices in their districts.

SLO Resource Library

This resource has been created in response to district requests. The purpose of the SLO Resource Library is to create a culture of support focused on student learning and growth. In addition, these collaborative efforts will build capacity across our districts and state which will benefit teachers and students. The SLO Resource Library contains district folders of SLO assessments, administration guidance, Table of Specifications, and Criteria Tables organized by district. The posted assessments may be used in their entirety or customized. Specific items may also be selected and used in district developed assessments.

5. What is Share Point and who has access to it?

SharePoint houses the content-specific assessment items that were collaboratively developed during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. The SLO Resource Library and other assessment development tools are located on this secured site.

Districts determine who may access the SharePoint site. Districts are encouraged to limit the number of staff receiving access to the secured assessment files. A GaDOE Portal login is required to access SharePoint. Please communicate with your district SLO contact to request access to the secured assessment files. Your request will be documented and passed along the GaDOE staff responsible for activating access.

6. Are districts required to use the SLO Resource Library, public domain assessments (PDAs) and other SLOs assessment items?

No. Districts are not required to use the Resource Library, PDAs or other SLO assessment resources housed in SharePoint. Districts may choose to use portions of the assessment



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resources, or they may use the available assessment in their entirety. District decisions concerning assessment usage should be based on district needs.

7. What happens if a district chooses not to use the SLO Resource Library, public domain assessments/SLOs and writes their own?

Districts that choose to write their own SLO assessments may certainly do so. However, it is a requirement that all assessments are developed using the GaDOE approved process which includes a Table of Specifications and a Criteria Table. Both documents shall be submitted the DOE for audit approval and review.

8. What are the Table of Specifications and Criteria Table?

The Table of Specifications and Criteria Table are research-based tools provided by GaDOE. The Table of Specifications is used to determine the content, the level of cognitive demand, emphases of the standard and correlating assessment items/or tasks, and types of items/or tasks included on the assessment. It also leads to consistency and comparability across districts. The Criteria Table is a rubric used by districts to evaluate the quality of a locally developed measure. These required assessment tools will be used by districts to ensure the development of quality assessments.

9. Can the SLO assessment be used for grading and reporting purposes?

Yes, the SLO assessment may be used for grading and reporting. However, this is a district decision. Districts should take into account any barriers that may come into play when deciding. For example possible questions could be:

- Will there be a systematic process in place for scoring?
- How will the results be converted into grades?
- Is the SLO assessment appropriate to be used for a growth and achievement measure?
- How will the assessment be weighted if used as a grade?

10. What is Depth of Knowledge (DOK)?

DOK is an element of the Webb Alignment Tool developed by Dr. Norman Webb. DOK ensures alignment to the intended language of the standards when measuring student understanding. DOK focuses on the content standard in order to successfully complete an assessment/standard task. DOK focuses on the complexity of the task rather than the difficulty because it is descriptive in nature, not a taxonomy. Depth of Knowledge is represented by four levels of cognitive complexity: Recall, Skill/Concept, Strategic Thinking, and Extended Thinking.

11. What is a Balanced Assessment?

A balanced assessment system is a configuration of different assessment types and processes to fulfill purposes that align with expectations for learning and performance.

12. How will districts and teachers assess Per-K students?

Pre-K teachers will use SLOs. Bright from the Start assisted in the development of a Pre-K SLO assessment. This assessment is located in SharePoint.



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13. Is it permissible to state a SLO in terms of a percentage increase across the board?

SLOs should be written to measure student growth (a pre- and post-assessment data points) over the course of the instructional period rather than a percentage increase.

14. How should rounding on SLO performance rubrics be handled?

Normal mathematical rules for rounding should apply ($\geq .5$ rounds up).

15. How will SLOs and SGPs be combined to generate one growth score?

This will be determined as GaDOE develops the specific business rules for the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System.

16. Are districts allowed to use commercial assessments in SLOs?

Districts may use commercial, vendor-based assessments. It is recommended that districts review the vendor's specifications as to ensure alignment to Georgia's standards. A Table of Specification and Criteria Table are not required for SLO submission when a commercially produced assessment is selected.

17. Who develops the SLO assessments?

District teams of teachers, content specialists, School Improvement Specialists, assessment specialists, RESA support staff and district leaders may assist in the assessment development process.

18. What is in place to ensure that teachers do not change data in order to increase their SLO results?

Practices such as signed assurances, triangulation of data, collaborative team planning, common assessments, available assessment resources, and inter-rater reliability contribute to the reliability of student data. Please note, the aforementioned practices are not an exhaustive list.

19. Are SLOs and SGPs really comparable?

The purpose of SLOs is to demonstrate student growth between two points in time. SLOs are not standardized assessments and were never intended to serve in that capacity. SLOs measure individual student growth using the results from pre and post assessments and each student is measured against him or herself.

Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) are generated by comparing students with their academically similar peers. This process compares students to other students. To ensure comparability, assessments and expectations must be consistent.

The comparability of SLOs is derived from the required consistent application of the GaDOE SLO development process and the same course-specific district growth target. All SLOs are aligned to course identified standards and are submitted for state approval. All teachers in the district teaching the same course are responsible for implementation of the same SLO. Those two processes ensure comparability within districts.



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Additionally, student growth generated from SLOs and /or SGPs are 50% of a teacher's overall Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM). An equal weight is given to a standardized classroom observation tool that has been tested with inter-rater reliability. It is the overall effectiveness measure that must be comparable across the state, and the combination of the growth measure with the observation tool achieves that goal.

20. How is appropriate student growth determined for Student Learning Objectives (Student Growth and Academic Achievement)?

A rubric with specific growth target attainment descriptors and ratings of Level IV, Level III, Level II and Level I will be used to determine teacher effectiveness.

21. What is the N Size for Student Learning Objectives?

Fifteen (15) students must be on a teacher's roster to generate a TEM for a teacher. However, the SLO shall be administered to a class of less than 15 students. The students' growth target results will be factored into the school administrators' Leaders Effectiveness Measure (LEM) but will not be applicable in the Teachers Effectiveness Measure (TEM).

22. How long must a student be enrolled in a course in order for the student data to be included in the SLO results?

Students shall be enrolled in a course for 65% of the instructional period, and have both a pre- and post-assessment score, in order for the student's data to be included in the SLO results. The district should ensure that students meeting the 65% enrollment requirement have the opportunity to take the pre-assessment.

23. How long must a student be enrolled in a course before the data will be included in the TEM and LEM?

For Student Learning Objectives, a student must be enrolled 65% of the course for the data to be included in the calculation of the teacher's TEM. In addition, a teacher must provide instruction for 65% of the course.

24. Are SLO assessments secured assessments?

Yes, districts are required to ensure that SLO assessments are secured. Developing testing protocols outlining security procedures is strongly recommended.

25. Does the SLO assessment score factor into the CCRPI score?

No. The SLO assessment score does not factor into the CCRPI score at this time.