

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION
STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES: GUIDANCE DOCUMENT
Summary

INTRODUCTION:

The Utah Student Growth Workgroup recommends the use of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to document educators' contributions to student performance in non-tested subjects and grades. The SLO approach is designed to reflect and incentivize good teaching practices. In essence, educators establish learning goals, monitor students' progress toward these goals, and then assess the degree to which students have met the students' target outcomes.

The Student Learning Objectives Guidance Document will help guide educators and administrators in designing and implementing the SLO process. This document is divided into four sections: 1) SLO Validity; 2) Process for Establishing SLOs; 3) Assessment/Measures; and, 4) Oversight and Support.

SLO VALIDITY:

The number and specificity of the SLOs are important considerations in terms of maximizing the validity of the evidence regarding the claims one is trying to make as a result of the SLO process.

The following recommendations are designed to maximize the validity of the SLOs:

1. All non-administrator educator evaluations shall include a minimum of two SLOs for each individual educator in a building during the 2014-2015 school -year. This number may be increased in future years.
2. SLOs for each educator should be representative of the set of courses/subjects they teach as much as possible.
3. The selected SLOs shall be linked to the appropriate specific content knowledge and skills from the Utah Core Standards in each course.
4. At the school and/or district discretion, educators shall participate in a shared or aggregate SLO, in addition to the one individual SLOs required by teachers of non-tested subjects and grades.
5. SLOs for educators should reflect consideration of the overall district/school improvement plan.
6. Growth-based SLOS should be encouraged and employed where possible to do so in technically defensible ways.
7. The SLOs should be ambitious but realistic. The student learning objectives should be assessed according to the *Utah Rubric for Assessing Quality SLOs* that includes at least three levels to differentiate the quality of the SLOs and encourage the development of high quality SLOs throughout districts and the state.

PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING SLOs:

The process of setting Student Learning Objectives is critical to the fairness, educator buy-in and manageability of the SLOs. The process should be comparable within the building and eventually

comparable across the district. With the help of USOE developed statewide example content area SLOs and the *Utah SLO Guidelines and Toolkit*, districts will strive to be as consistent and comparable in the development of SLOs as possible.

The following recommendations are designed to maximize the consistency and comparability of the SLO development process:

1. Each district shall establish a framework for ensuring that the SLO development process across the district is as comparable as possible. The *Utah Rubric for Assessing Quality SLOs* shall be used to ensure the SLO development process is consistent.
2. Generally, the school principal is legally responsible for the evaluation of all personnel in the building and therefore should approve all SLOs
3. In addition to school administrators, teams of educators shall be involved in a collaboration process when establishing and developing both shared and individual educator SLOs. School teams and leaders may also be established to help review SLOs for quality prior to administrator approval.
4. The Student Learning Objectives shall be established as close to the individual student as possible; each educator shall have considerable say in establishing his/her SLOs.
5. Relevant performance and baseline data on students for whom SLOs will be set, as well as data from the same course in prior years, shall be used to assist in establishing meaningful targets.
6. The SLO should be established within six weeks of the start of the course or class.
7. The statewide *Utah SLO Model Template* or the components within shall be used to establish SLOs. The template shall include documentation of learning goals, assessments, and targets.
8. Statewide example SLOs shall be developed for non-tested subjects and grades and districts will use these SLOs to assist in the development of content area SLOs as appropriate. Contextualization of the statewide example SLOs will be documented through the targets and instructional strategies.

ASSESSMENTS/MEASURES:

Educators should rely on the highest quality assessments available to evaluate SLOs. Assessments should best match the specific learning goals. It will be a challenge in the early years to find high quality assessments to measure student learning with the SLOs, however, this should be seen as an opportunity to improve the quality of local assessments.

The following recommendations help guide the assessment component of the SLO process:

1. State standard-based assessments shall be used to evaluate the educators' contributions to student performance in the subjects and grades where such assessments are available.
2. When state assessments are not available (specifically for non-tested subjects and grades), schools and districts will have to choose another method for assessing student learning. Those districts that have high quality common assessments shall provide a verifiable method for applying student assessment results to educator evaluation. Using SLOs and setting target outcomes for student growth is recommended. USOE and consortia of districts shall be encouraged to facilitate the development of resources and tools (e.g., common assessments,

common scoring rubrics) as examples to aid in the assessment of learning goals in non-tested subjects and grades.

3. Districts that do not have standardized high quality assessments available for NTSG will use SLOs (learning goals, assessments, and targets) as the analytic method to provide evidence of student learning.
4. Districts shall use the *Utah Assessment Review Tool* to assure high quality assessments are used.
5. The relative weighting of SLOs along with other measures of student performance and growth, such as shared attribution and the use of state standardized tests, shall be determined by the Utah State Board of Education.
6. Educator evaluation ratings for SLOs should be scored using a four point scale (e.g., exceeds SLO, meets SLO, partially meets SLO, and does not meet SLO).

OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT:

Educators will need professional development to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to sustain wide-scale implementation of the SLO process. In order to promote comparability and consistency in the SLO process, some level of monitoring and oversight at the state level will be necessary.

The following recommendations address the need for monitoring and support for the districts and schools:

1. USOE, based on recommendations from the Student Growth Workgroup, shall create clear guidance for creating SLOs and the SLO process. A *Utah SLO Guidelines and Toolkit* shall be provided, as well as statewide example content area SLOs that may serve as models for districts to use.
2. A state SLO Review Committee shall be established to review and support the SLO process, including evaluating the quality and development process of learning goals, assessment measures, and target performance outcomes. A district local review process shall also be used to assist with developing comparability and consistency of SLOs at each grade level or span.
3. USOE will provide statewide example SLOs in NTSG content areas that may be used as the SLO process is being implemented. The statewide example SLOs will be developed by state and local content specialists working with teacher representatives in content area writing groups.
4. USOE, along with contributing schools and districts, shall develop a Utah SLO resource bank of statewide example SLOs and potential assessment instruments and scoring rubrics.
5. Each district, with USOE support, shall design a structure and process for providing professional development on the implementation of SLO processes for its educators and administrators.
6. USOE shall provide an evaluation pilot of student growth measures and SLOs in 2013-14. The results will be used to inform subsequent modifications to the SLO process, the *Utah Model SLO Template*, and the weighting of evidence of student growth and learning in the Utah evaluation system.