

Georgia Department of Education Student Learning Objectives Frequently Asked Questions

What are Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)?

SLOs are one component of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). It is the component that serves as an indicator of teachers' impact on student academic growth. LEA determined SLOs are course specific, grade level learning objectives that are measurable, focused on growth in student learning, and aligned to curriculum standards. As a measure of teachers' impact on student learning, SLOs give educators and school systems an additional means by which to understand, value, and recognize success in the classroom. SLOs are developed by LEAs and audited and approved by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

What is the purpose of SLOs?

The primary purpose of student learning objectives is to improve student achievement at the classroom level. An equally important purpose is to provide evidence of each teacher's instructional impact on student learning. This process requires teachers to use assessments to determine student growth over the length of the course. Teachers plan for student success by ensuring that instruction is moving students, teachers, and schools toward the common vision of exemplary instruction and high levels of student academic growth.

Which courses have SLOs?

Non-tested courses utilize SLOs. Tested courses either utilize an End-of-Course-Test (EOCT) or a Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT). Those results will be factored into the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) component of TKES. As such, tested courses will not require SLOs. The one exception is third grade, which will require SLOs because this grade level does not have prior testing history; third grade state assessments will serve as prior data for fourth grade. All other courses without these standardized assessments are considered non-tested courses.

Can an SLO or SLO assessment be changed after the beginning of the course?

Districts may utilize historical data and/or utilize current pre assessment data to determine growth targets. Once the growth targets are determined, the SLO and related assessments may not be changed until the next school year.

In what ways have teachers been involved in the development of LEA student learning objectives?

The amount of teacher involvement is up to each LEA. However, the majority of districts have teachers serve as content experts on development teams. These teams may be involved in developing the SLOs, determining the growth targets, and/or developing or evaluating SLO assessments.

How do we know the SLO assessments are rigorous?

Assessment development teams utilize a Table of Specifications which ensures the created/selected assessment items are aligned to course standards, are at the same cognitive level of the standards, and the standard emphasis aligns with the classroom instructional emphasis. Teams that develop SLO assessments also utilize the Criteria Table to review the assessments for proper formatting, content validity, possible bias, administration procedures, scoring, etc. The use of these research-based processes and tools are required.

What is Depth of Knowledge (DOK)?

DOK is an element of the Webb Alignment Tool developed by Dr. Norman Webb, from the University of Wisconsin, to align standards with assessments. DOK focuses on the complexity of the task rather than the difficulty because it is descriptive in nature, not taxonomy. Depth of Knowledge is represented by four levels of cognitive complexity: Recall, Skill/Concept, Strategic Thinking, and Extended Thinking. In the development of SLO assessments, the DOK

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of the selected standards is determined as well as the DOK of each item. All measurement items must be at the same DOK level of the standard or higher.

How will districts and teachers assess Pre-K students?

Pre-K teachers will use SLOs. The GaDOE has worked closely with the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) to provide guidance regarding appropriate SLO assessments. Representatives from DECAL have worked to create the current public domain assessment. This assessment utilizes the Work Sampling System currently being used by teachers.

Is it possible to use GKIDS for Kindergarten SLOs?

GKIDS is a comprehensive assessment. The SLO assessment may be utilized as a subset of the GKIDS assessment.

If there is a co-teaching classroom that has a support teacher and a teacher of record and the support teacher has not previously been identified as the teacher of record, how will the support teacher participate in the SLO process?

SLOs are assigned to district courses by state course numbers and not to specific teachers and/or their students. If any teacher teaches a course with an SLO attached, the SLO is automatically assigned to that teacher. Support teachers in co-teaching settings should be providing instruction for courses with state course numbers. Therefore, if the support teacher's course has an SLO attached, the support teacher will participate in the SLO process and will be responsible for student performance and any data produced as a result of the SLO. The teacher of record definition for TKES refers to the teacher who is responsible for the student's learning in the course, but not necessarily the teacher who assigns the course grade. With TKES, more than one teacher can be considered the teacher of record. This is

applicable in co-teaching settings. As a result, many LEAs are adjusting students' schedules to reflect more than one teacher of record when appropriate.

When determining teacher of record for the SLO process, will the teacher's Highly Qualified (HQ) status be considered?

No. A teacher's HQ status is not considered when determining teacher of record for SLO purposes.

In a co-teaching classroom model with a special education teacher and a general education teacher, how are the students assigned to each teacher's roster for SLO implementation?

In a co-teaching classroom model, teachers share accountability and collaboratively serve all of the students. Therefore, all students would be assigned to both the special education teacher and the general education teacher. Also, since both teachers are responsible for student learning in the course, the special education teacher and the general education teacher would both be considered the teacher of record.

If a course has fewer than 15 students enrolled throughout the entire instructional day, will the SLO assessment data count toward the teacher's TEM?

No. The teachers will administer the SLO pre and post assessments. However, the results of the SLO assessment data will not be considered when calculating the teacher's TEM due to the small number of students. This number is sometimes referred to as the n-size.

If a teacher has several sections (classes) of the same course throughout an instructional day, will the number of students in each section be added together to reach the required minimum number of 15 students?

Yes. When the teacher's course sections have the same name and state course number, the number of students in each section will be



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combined to reach 15 or more. This would allow the SLO assessment data results to count toward the teacher's TEM.

Can the End of Pathway Assessment (EOPA) be used as an SLO assessment measure for CTAE courses?

No. End of Pathway Assessments are administered after the successful completion of several designated courses in the pathway. SLO assessment measures are administered at the beginning and ending of each applicable course.

Connections classes in middle school usually have very short instructional periods. Are SLOs required for these courses with 4.5 week or 9 week instructional periods?

Yes. SLOs are applicable for these courses. When determining SLO assessment measures and growth targets for the SLOs, districts should select measures and growth targets that reflect the shorter instructional period.

Are SLOs required for Math and/or Language Support teachers?

SLOs are required if the support teacher's class is not scheduled in conjunction with the primary course; and, as a result, the support teacher is not being measured by the course SLO or held accountable for the student growth percentile (SGP) results from the CRCT or EOCT. SLOs for support teachers are not required if the support teacher is being held accountable for the SLO measure or the SGP results from the CRCT or EOCT because the support teacher's course is scheduled in conjunction with the primary course.

How does the SLO data figure into the Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM)?

Student growth will count as 50% of the TEM. An SLO attainment rubric will be used to determine a teacher effectiveness rating which is based on the percentage of students within each teacher's course that met or exceeded their SLO learning targets.

Where can one go for more information?

Teachers' greatest resource is their local school and district leaders. In addition, multiple resources are available on the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness page on the Georgia Department of Education website <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Teacher-and-Leader-Effectiveness/Pages/Student-Learning-Objectives.aspx>