



This section of materials is for LEA SLO Specialists to use in providing professional development on SLOs for educators.

Topics in this section include:

1. What are SLOs?
2. Why do SLOs?
3. How do states, LEAs, and schools “do” SLOs?
4. How have other states, LEAs, and schools designed and developed SLOs?
5. How will SLOs be implemented in Utah?
6. How will the USOE pilot SLOs?

It is suggested that LEA SLO Specialists use this material to introduce SLOs to the administrators and teachers in their LEAs. Having a complete explanation and discussion about SLOs prior to assigning work associated with using SLOs for educator evaluation will assist in building capacity and buy-in for the SLO process.

Additional information may be obtained through the Utah State Office of Education Teaching and Learning Department.

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/cert/Educator-Effectiveness-Project/Resources.aspx>

Instructions for Group Facilitators: Your role is to guide discussion and identify key points about the topics that need clarification.

1. Assign each participant at your table one of the six topics to read. (5 minutes)
2. Each participant should create a visual representation of the topic to teach the topic to the other table participants. (5 minutes)
3. Participants will move to LIKE TOPIC groups to discuss their representation with those that read the same topic. (10 minutes)
4. After sharing in LIKE TOPIC groups, table participants will meet with the Group Facilitator to debrief key learnings and discuss key points of the topics. (25 minutes)
5. The Group Facilitator will identify issues that come up and record them on the chart paper.
6. All issues and key points will be recorded and discussed at this meeting or future LEA SLO Specialists meetings.



1. What are SLOs?

SLOs are carefully planned goals for what a student or group of students will learn over a given period of instruction time and can be written for both tested and non-tested subjects and grades (CTAC, 2013).

SLOs are used in educator evaluation systems to determine the educator's contribution to student learning and to directly link an educator's instruction to specific measures of student growth and learning in a content area.

Educators determine baseline student performance data, establish student growth targets, and identify how growth in the content area will be assessed. At the end of the instructional period, the educators provide evidence to the administrator demonstrating the degree of attainment of the student growth targets.

All SLOs (whether in Utah or in other states) have the following:

- Identified student population (students broken down into groups as well as the whole class)
- Learning content areas (from Utah State Core Standards)
- Instructional strategies
- Interval of instruction time
- Student learning targets (growth required of the identified student groups)

The three main parts of the SLOs included in the Utah SLO Template are:

1. The Learning Goal
2. The Assessment
3. The Learning Targets



2. Why use SLOs?

Numerous districts and states across the United States are implementing SLOs into their educator evaluation systems (CTAC, 2013). SLOs are recognized as a way to address the problem of measuring growth associated with non-tested subject and grades (NTSG). They provide an analytic method for determining student growth and attributing the growth to the educator(s) identified in NTSG.

In addition to the accountability solution, SLOs also constitute an instructional improvement process. They are more than a means to evaluating educators. They are designed to strengthen teaching and improve student learning (CTAC, 2013). Many districts are using SLOs in both tested and non-tested subjects and grades because it encourages teachers and administrators to work collaboratively to analyze instructional practices and adjust strategies to better meet student needs. By using SLOs, meaningful conversations occur and strategic choices about future professional development take place.

SLOs also allow educators to contextualize and customize student growth targets based on previous student data. To measure growth, teachers set learning targets for individual and groups of students; at the end of the interval of instructional time, the number of students meeting their growth targets helps teachers see how much students have grown and helps administrators evaluate teacher effectiveness.



3. How do states, LEAs, and schools “do” SLOs?

Having effective SLOs requires thoughtful design and development of statewide and districtwide plans. Appropriate organizational structures and guidelines need to be in place.

The following guidelines allow for a more meaningful and successful implementation of SLOs:

- 1) Enlist a broad base of stakeholders to design the SLO process and develop the SLO procedures statewide and districtwide;
- 2) Plan for professional development in the SLO process;
- 3) Allow time for writing, reviewing, revising, piloting, and approving SLOs and build these activities into the implementation timeline;
- 4) PD in the elements of SLOs at the school level needs to include teachers and administrators;
- 5) Designated point persons at the school, district, and state levels should be selected to handle questions and promote comparability of SLOs.

How these organizational structures and guidelines are determined and aligned needs to be thoroughly discussed and put into policy and practice at all three levels of the system.

Having a statewide SLO Template and a statewide Rubric for rating the quality of the SLOs is an important component of the system’s organizational structure to ensure greater comparability and reliability.



4. How have other states, LEAs, and schools designed and developed SLOs?

Stakeholder support is essential to the SLO process. A leadership or steering committee at all three levels of the educational system ensures that all key players have a voice in the process.

Having a group of educators at each level that serves as “SLO ambassadors” to encourage buy-in of other teachers and administrators builds the leadership capacity and strengthens the support for comparable SLOs. The team appointed to design the SLO process should include curriculum experts, administrators, teachers, assessment personnel, human resource specialists, and other education specialists.

It has been suggested that model SLOs be developed and that templates be used to ensure rigor and comparability across classes, grades, schools, districts, and state. Templates and statewide SLOs may evolve overtime as feedback is received through early implementation. Initially, the use of organizational SLO models and templates has demonstrated to teachers, boards of education, parents, students, and the public that the process seeks to be fair and comprehensive. Providing guidance at the beginning of the implementation stage has increased quality, rigor and relevance of the SLOs (CATC, 2013).

Establishing guidelines and procedures has also ensured that the SLO process is fair and equitable. It has been suggested that guidance on the SLO process should include the following:

- 1) SLO oversight
- 2) Appropriate student groups for SLOs
- 3) Assessments options
- 4) Attribution options (individual and/or shared)

In addition, allowing for flexibility and choice at the various organizational levels is a necessary component for success. For example, flexibility in determining the following has been recommended:

- a) The number of SLOs required above a minimum;
- b) Attribution configurations;
- c) Whether tested subjects and grade are required to do SLOs;
- d) Adopting and/or adjusting statewide SLOs; and
- e) Weighting options for SLOs within the student growth evaluation component.



5. How will SLOs be implemented in Utah?

The USOE Student Growth Workgroup was given the charge to determine how student growth would be measured for Utah's Evaluation System. For two years this workgroup researched, discussed, and collaborated to come to consensus on recommendations that would be taken to the State Board of Education in 2013-14.

The recommendations are as follows:

- **Who is required to do SLOs:** Educators in non-tested subjects and grades (NTSG); it is recommended that educators in tested subjects and grades (TSG) also do SLOs, but it is not required
- **Number of SLOs required:** Two; LEAs have the option to require additional SLOs for teachers in either or both TSG and NTSG
- **Analytic methods:**
 - a. Student Growth Percentile (SGP) will be used to determine student growth for TSG and applied to educators teaching these courses
 - b. Student Learning Objective (SLO) will be used to determine student growth for NTSG and applied to educators teaching these courses
- **Attribution:** This term is used to describe the educator(s) that the student growth is attributed to and applied to the educator(s)' evaluation:
 - a. Individual attribution means that the students' growth is attributed to an individual educator (the teacher of record)
 - b. Shared attribution means that the students' growth is attributed to more than one educator, a team of educators, a grade level, a department of educators, even the whole school or district
- **Assessments:** To measure the progress of students' learning or growth on Utah Core Standards in both TSG and NTSG assessments must be used. There are three categories of assessments:
 - a. State standardized tests in ELA, math, and science that measure students' proficiency on the Utah Core Standards
 - b. Commercial assessments aligned with the Utah Core Standards may be used to measure proficiency
 - c. Teacher made assessments or district made common assessments may also measure proficiency. Learning Goals are developed from the Utah Core Standards and are part of an SLO. These assessments must measure the growth or progress made by students toward the Learning Goals.
- **Administrators' role and responsibilities:** Principals or their designee will approve the SLOs and sign off on the results of the SLO which are then applied to educator evaluation.
- **State support for using SLOs:**
 - a. Statewide SLOs in NTSG content areas
 - b. Bank of SLOs in content areas as models and examples for districts and schools to use
 - c. Statewide SLO Template
 - d. Statewide Rubric for assessing the quality of SLOs
 - e. Assessment Literacy professional development
 - f. LEA professional development and LEA SLO Specialist professional development
 - g. Peer Advisory Committee and LEA audits
 - h. Piloting of SLOs in 2013-14 and 2014-15



6. How will the USOE pilot SLOs?

The first pilot of SLOs will be the second semester of 2013-14 school year. The four content area model statewide SLOs (CTE, Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Special Education) that were developed last year will be piloted in LEAs.

Districts piloting the USOE model observation tools (Teaching and Leadership) will be asked to pilot the SLOs in order to seek data on the how the combination all three evaluation system components (Professional Performance, Stakeholder Input, and Student Growth) interact to produce valid and reliable evidence of effectiveness.

Other districts and LEAs using the USOE observation tools will also be invited to pilot the four content area SLOs. It is optional for them to participate.

LEAs in the SLO pilot are required to:

1. Give the USOE a list of educators (with school name, supervisor name, and email address) opting to pilot SLOs the second half of 2013-14;
2. Provide professional development to the educators and the administrators piloting the SLOs;
3. Track the educators and ensure that they have identified appropriate Student Learning Targets within their classroom(s);
4. Provide information to the USOE on the progress of the educators piloting the SLOs; and,
5. Be interviewed by the pilot research team concerning SLO implementation and the USOE SLO Template; participants will also be asked to complete an online survey concerning the experience.

LEAs in the SLO pilot have the option to:

1. Decide how many educators are piloting SLOs;
2. Decide which content area SLOs they want to pilot and who will pilot them;
3. Whether to use the statewide SLOs as developed, to adapt the statewide SLO, or to have educators develop their own SLO following the statewide model and template.

Research will be completed on the SLOs and the educators involved in the pilot by May 2014. The intent of the pilot is to determine the fidelity of the implementation process, the reliability of the Utah SLO Template, and the variability of SLO results across classrooms, teachers, grades, schools, and districts. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected. The benefits of participating in the SLO pilot are:

- Get first-hand experience with the SLOs and how the PD will be provided prior to full implementation;
- Have the opportunity to provide valuable input to the SLO process and make recommendations prior to implementation.