



Union County Educational Services Commission  
Westfield, New Jersey

# **Student Growth Objectives**

## **An Introduction**

**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Student Growth Objective Manual**

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## An Introduction to SGOs

### What Are Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)?

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SGOs are measures of student learning included in the evaluations of all teachers, principals, and assistant/vice principals in New Jersey. Well-designed SGOs provide the following benefits:

- **For Students:** SGOs promote reflective and collaborative teaching practices, alignment among standards, instruction, and assessment, and improvements in student learning.
- **For Teachers :** SGOs provide a method by which teachers can improve their practice while clearly demonstrating their effectiveness through student progress.
- **For Principals/APs/VPs :** Administrators share in the SGO results of their teachers and can use the SGO process to help ensure each student receives the best possible education within their school environment.

### SGO Requirements

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SGOs must be:

- Specific and measurable academic goals that are aligned to state academic standards;
- Based on student growth and/or achievement using available student learning data;
- Developed by a teacher in consultation with his or her supervisor; and
- Approved by a teacher's supervisor.

The number of required SGOs varies depending upon the grade(s) and subject area(s) taught:

- Teachers who receive a median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP) score must create one or two SGOs, as determined by the district superintendent. *Note: The Department recommends that all teachers set 2 SGOs, regardless of whether or not they receive an mSGP score.*
- Teachers who do not receive an mSGP score must create two SGOs.

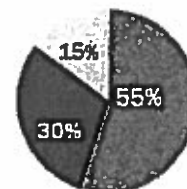
SGOs account for a portion of every teacher's summative rating as shown in the charts to the right. Percentages may change in future years as the system evolves and educators share feedback.

Teachers without an mSGP set two SGOs



■ Teacher Practice

Teachers with an mSGP set one or two SGOs



■ Teacher Practice  
□ Student Growth Objectives  
■ Median Student Growth Percentile

### Key Steps and Timeline for the SGO Process

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In setting SGOs, teachers should take the following steps:

**Prior to School Year – September:** Choose or develop a quality assessment aligned to applicable standards (see section below on Accurately Assessing Student Learning).

**September – October:** Determine students' starting points using multiple measures.

**By October 31:** With supervisor input and approval, set ambitious yet achievable student learning goals.

**October – End of School Year:** Track progress and refine instruction accordingly.

**By February 15:** Make adjustments to SGOs with administrator's approval.

**By End of School Year:** Review results and SGO scores and discuss them with your supervisor.

### Important Points for SGO Development in 2016-17

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The Department has worked closely with practitioners and reviewed thousands of SGOs to learn about the challenges and successes of SGO development in districts to date. The following information synthesizes key lessons and actions that educators should consider when developing SGOs in 2016-17.

High quality SGOs should be:

1. Aligned to standards

Increasing the quality of assessments given is critical in producing high quality SGOs. In the summer of 2015 the Department released a series of "Assessment Design Modules" to assist educators in their continued

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efforts to develop and choose high quality assessment. The Department partnered with the United States Department of Education in the development of these modules, which include input from educators from across the state of New Jersey.

### 2. Grounded in data

To have the greatest impact on student achievement, SGOs must be grounded in data and be driven by high expectations. To assist in this, the Department has released the "SGO Excel Scoring and Tracking Tool". This Microsoft Excel-based resource was designed in collaboration with educators throughout New Jersey. It assists teachers in compiling their SGO data, while connecting it with their scoring form all in one place. In addition, educators can use this workbook to help in monitoring student growth. Using this resource will help schools to align their SGO data much easier and more efficiently.

### 3. Driven by high expectations for students

- In the spring of 2016 the Department spent time working with educators in updating the "SGO Quality Rating Rubric" and developing a series of "SGO Training Videos". Both of these resources were designed with the goal of providing the latest research and best practices on designing and executing high quality SGOs. Practices found within these resources have been implemented in various schools throughout the state.

## Using Multiple Measures to Determine Student Starting Points

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Using multiple measures of a student's starting point not only allows better targets to be set but provides useful information to help drive instruction. Information that a teacher typically gathers from students at the beginning of the year should be used to get a rough sense of their starting points.<sup>1</sup> This includes but is not limited to current grades and test scores, prior year grades and test scores, and markers of future success such as homework completion, class participation, and academic independence, etc. (see example). Diagnostic pre-assessments, when utilized, provide maximum benefit to teachers and students when they are used in conjunction with other measures and in situations where they:

- Are used to evaluate a set of skills;
- Are high quality and vertically aligned; and
- Are normally used by the teacher for instructional purposes.

## Accurately Assessing Student Learning

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Assessments used to track progress on SGOs can be drawn from a wide range of options, including those developed locally by educators. In order to provide an accurate measure of what students have learned, all assessment tools, including portfolios and rubrics, should follow the guidelines for sound assessment design. In brief, assessments should:

- Align with standards taught during the SGO instructional period;
- Align with the rigor of the standards, content, and instruction of the course;
- Be equally accessible to all students regardless of extra-curricular background knowledge, cultural knowledge, and personal characteristics; and
- Be administered and scored accurately and consistently.

## For More Information

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- AchieveNJ SGO Web Page: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teacher/objectives.shtml>
- Email: [educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us)
- Helpline: 609-777-3788

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<sup>1</sup> Marion et al., Center for Assessment, 2012.

[http://www.ncies.org/publication\\_PDFs/Measurement%20Considerations%20for%20NTSG\\_052212.pdf](http://www.ncies.org/publication_PDFs/Measurement%20Considerations%20for%20NTSG_052212.pdf)

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## The SGO Process

1. Identify a skill on which your students are expected to exhibit growth during the school year.
2. Design multiple baseline/pre assessments and score with a rubric in order to establish each student's current level of functioning (with the student when possible).
3. Set an ambitious yet achievable growth goal for the student or with the student. Share the goal with the student if it was not developed in concert with him/her.
4. Complete the SGO Form.
5. Track the student's progress and (when possible) have the student track their progress on a student growth tracker.
6. Track progress and refine instruction accordingly using your PDP goal.
7. Meet with your supervisor mid-cycle to assess your progress and make any necessary modifications.
8. Review results and discuss score with supervisor.

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## **Step 1: Select Skill for SGO**

1. Select a skill that your students will be practicing all year long.
2. Select a skill that your students need in order to succeed in and out of the classroom.
3. Select a skill in which your students have traditionally struggled.
4. Select a skill from the student's IEP (if applicable)
5. Select a skill in which you are seeking to refine your instructional methodology utilizing your PDP goal.

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## Step 2: Determine Student Starting Points

**Assessments must be accurate and useful measures of student learning.**

Increasing the quality of assessments given is critical in producing high quality SGOs. Building on this work, we are providing a series of Assessment Design modules, developed in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, to assist educators in your continued efforts to develop and choose high quality assessments. In addition, we are providing resources to help teachers use assessments throughout the teaching/learning cycle to monitor student performance and adjust instruction to help students reach their learning targets.

### **Types of Assessments**

We can categorize assessment items into three types: (1) selected-response items, (2) constructed-response items and (3) performance tasks.

#### **Selected-Response Items**

*Selected-response items* ask students to select the correct answer from a list of options included in the item. Examples of selected-response items include matching, true/false and multiple choice. We use answer keys and scoring guides to score these items.

#### **Constructed-Response Items**

*Constructed-response items* ask students to write, or “construct,” the correct answer. We use answer keys to score simpler constructed-response items, such as fill-in-the-blank items.

#### **Performance Tasks**

*Performance tasks* ask students to create products or perform tasks to show their mastery of particular skills. They take a wide variety of forms. Performance tasks can be extended-response items or essays. They can also involve multiple steps that culminate in a product, such as carrying out an experiment, giving a speech or writing a research paper. We use scoring guides and rubrics to score all types of performance tasks.

#### **Portfolio Assessments**

*Portfolio assessments* are not a type of assessment item, but rather a compilation of student work. Portfolio assessments ask students or teachers to collect work products that show growth over a specific period of time. Examples of work products include collections of student essays, artwork, lab reports or reading logs. We use scoring guides and rubrics to score portfolios.

#### **Writing and Selecting Assessment Items**

You may have found that it is less time consuming to select an existing assessment or compile pre-written items than it is to write an assessment from scratch. However, don't assume that

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assessments from curriculum materials or item banks are well designed. As you've probably noticed, they vary in quality, which is why expertise in assessment design, particularly the ability to select well-designed assessments, is important for all educators, not just teachers who need to write assessments from scratch.

**Suggestions for Developing Assessments for Determining Student Starting Points**

1. Give multiple assessments in order to determine student starting point.
2. Utilize a rubric in order to grade student assessments.
3. Consider the time of day and day of the week you are giving the assessments. Vary these for each assessment.
4. Determine student starting point by:
  - a. Taking an average of the assessment scores
  - b. Using the assessment scores as a guide (especially if one seems very high or low)
  - c. When possible, determine starting point with the student
5. Consult with an administrator, mentor, and/or trusted colleague when you have questions



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## Step 3: Set Student Goals

1. SGO goals should be **ambitious yet achievable**.
  - a. Where is the student now?
  - b. Based on your knowledge of the student, how much do you think he/she can grow in five months?
2. SGO goals can be modified if needed with administrator approval.
3. SGO goals should be individualized. No two people grow at the same rate.
4. Whenever possible, SGO goals should be set with the student's input
5. Best Practices:
  - Collaborate with your peers and supervisor to enhance SGO value to teachers and students.
  - Use knowledge of the students, standards, and SGO assessment to develop a vision for student mastery of the standards.
  - When setting goals, differentiate targets for students based on their relative starting points.

### Writing an SGO Goal

1. Complete SGO Target Data Form with individual baseline data and target scores.
2. Use the following wording and scoring plan  
At least 75% of students will meet their individual target goal in \_\_\_\_\_ by February 2018.
  - 4: 90-100% of students meet their individual target goal
  - 3: 75-89% of students meet their individual target goal
  - 2: 65-74% of students meet their individual target goal
  - 1: 0-64% of students meet their individual target goal

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## Step 4: Complete the SGO Form

- I. Heading
  - A. Name
  - B. School
  - C. Grade
  - D. Course/Subject
  - E. Number of Students - the more the better
  - F. Interval of Instruction
- II. Standards, Rationale, and Assessment
  - A. Short and to the point
  - B. List standards
  - C. 1-3 sentences explaining why you selected this instructional goal
  - D. 1-3 sentences explaining how students will be assessed throughout the SGO period
- III. Starting Points and Preparedness Groupings
  - A. Under most circumstances, each student is a group of his or her own.
  - B. Use the language: Preparedness Group: 1
  - C. Information 1-3: List the pre-assessments used in addition to other factors taken into consideration when creating the student target goal.
- IV. Student Growth Objective
  - A. By February 2018, at least 75% of students will meet their individual goal in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. Written with numbers for a 3
  - C. Preparedness Group/Number of Students in Each Group/Target Score on SGO Assessment
    1. Simply write SEE ATTACHED
    2. Attach SGO Target Data Form
- V. Scoring Plan
  - A. State the projected percentage of students who will meet their target at each attainment level.
  - B. Preparedness Group: 1
  - C. Student Target Score: See Attached
  - D. Teacher SGO Score Based on Percent of Students Achieving Target Score
    1. 4: 90-100% of students meet their individual target goal
    2. 3: 75-89% of students meet their individual target goal
    3. 2: 65-74% of students meet their individual target goal
    4. 1: 0-64% of students meet their individual target goal

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Sample



**Student Growth Objective Form  
2017 – 2018 School Year**

Name	School	Grade	Course/Subject	Number of Students	Interval of Instruction
Tammy Teacher	Top Tier Academy	7-8	General Science	24	September 2017-February 2018
<b>Standards, Rationale, and Assessment Method</b>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the content standards covered by this Student Growth Objective</li> <li>State the rationale for how these standards are relevant to your assigned subject area.</li> <li>Name and briefly describe the format of the assessment method.</li> </ol>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next Generation Science Standard: Collect data to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence to answer scientific questions or test design solutions under a range of conditions. (MS-ESS2-5)</li> <li>Throughout the year, students will be collecting and analyzing data in order to ask and answer questions on each topic covered in the curriculum.</li> <li>Students will be given three assessments in September that will ask them to analyze data in order to answer a question. Their answers will be graded on a rubric (see attached). This same rubric and form of assessment will be utilized throughout the school year when students are using data to answer to formulate questions.</li> </ol>					
<b>Starting Points and Preparedness Groupings</b>					
State the type of information being used to determine starting points and summarize scores for each type by group.					
Preparedness Group	Information #1	Information #2	Information #3		
	Pre-Assessments 1-3	Knowledge of Students	Individual Goal Setting Meetings with Students		
1	See attached				
<b>Student Growth Objective</b>					
State simply what percentage of students in each preparedness group will meet what target in the space below, e.g. "75% of students in each group will meet the target score." Describe how the targets reflect ambitious and achievable scores for these students. Use the table to provide more detail for each group. Modify the table as needed.					
By February 2018, 75% of students will meet their individual target goal in using data to formulate and answer questions.					
Preparedness Group (e.g. 1,2,3)	Number of Students in Each Group	Target Score on SGO Assessment			
1	24	See attached			

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Preparedness Group	Student Target Score	Teacher SGO Score Based on Percent of Students Achieving Target Score			
		Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	Insufficient (1)
1	See Attached	90-100%	75-89%	74-65%	0-64%

**Approval of Student Growth Objective**  
Administrator approves scoring plan and assessment used to measure student learning.

Teacher _____ Signature _____	Date Submitted _____
Evaluator _____ Signature _____	Date Approved _____

**Results of Student Growth Objective**  
Summarize results using weighted average as appropriate.

Preparedness Group	Students at Target Score	Teacher SGO Score	Weight (based on students per group)	Weighted Score	Total Teacher SGO Score

**Mid-Point Review Notes**  
Describe any changes made to SGO after initial approval due to unforeseen circumstances.

**Review SGO at Annual Conference**  
Describe successes and challenges, lessons learned from SGO about teaching and student learning, and steps to improve SGOs for next year.

Teacher _____ Signature _____	Date _____
Evaluator _____ Signature _____	Date _____

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## Step 5: Track Progress and Refine Instruction

### **Tracking Student Progress**

- Use Student Progress Tracker - Teacher to keep track of the student's performance level weekly or after each assessment.
- Use Student Progress Tracker - Student (if applicable) to have students reflect on their progress when they get work back or during student/teacher conferences.

### **Continuous Cycle of Refining Instruction**

A process by which teachers...

- **Plan** – Develop curriculum, instruction, and assessments
- **Implement** – Teach
- **Collect** – Gather indicators of student progress
- **Analyze** – Identify trends, patterns, and misconceptions; decide what needs more reinforcement or re-teaching
- **Plan** – Refine the plan based on analysis of the data

### **Link to Professional Development Plan**

- Your PDP Goal is designed to help you help students.
- By growing professionally, you refine your instructional practices which help students to grow.
- Utilizing techniques you learn through your professional development will allow you to try new strategies with students who are not making growth.

### **Other Suggestions for Refining Instruction**

One or more educators (teachers and/or administrators) together can do the following:

- Weigh in on strategies to support SGO attainment
  - Include instruction, differentiation, assessment, and enrichment.
- Use team meetings to seek help with particular challenges and difficult cases, such as students performing way below grade level, or new strategies for teaching complex content.
- Analyze class assessment data, sharing refined instructional plans with teams for feedback.

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## Step 6: Mid-Year Review

Although you will be tracking your students' progress all year long, it is best practice to meet with your administrator mid-cycle to see if your students are on track. There are times that student goals need to be adjusted due to factors beyond your control. This is the time to make these changes. In order to assess your progress and prepare for your conference with your administrator, it is recommended that you review the following questions and be prepared to use them to guide your discussion.

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- 1) How are your students progressing toward your student growth objectives? How do you know?
- 2) Which students are struggling/exceeding expectations? What are you doing to support them?
- 3) What additional resources do you need to support you as you work to achieve your student growth objectives?
- 4) Are there any student attendance issues substantial enough to affect your student growth objectives?

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## Step 7: Collect Final Data

When the SGO process is carried out diligently, the information that SGOs provide will be valuable to teachers who are seeking to improve their practice. Not only can this information be used during the year to make course corrections in instruction, it can be used to develop a well-thought out instructional plan for the following year. You might use the results from your SGOs to inform your professional development plan, choosing to focus on areas of challenge through which you or your students struggled. Conversely, while planning for the next school year, it may be clear from your SGO results that you should keep or expand particularly successful strategies or materials.

For many teachers and principals, SGOs will require a shift in thinking about assessment, goal setting, and instruction. However, when created and used thoughtfully, SGOs offer a powerful tool that will not only help improve instructional practice, but ultimately, and most importantly, student learning.

As with your mid-year review, you will most likely already know where your students growth lies prior to giving the final assessment(s). As indicated earlier in this manual, SGOs are a good way to set future Professional Development Goals and inform your lesson and curriculum planning. When you calculate your final results, spend some time self reflecting on what this process taught you this year.

- Give students final assessment(s) in order to determine their final assessment score.
- Calculate number of students who met their target score and record on SGO form.
- Collect information about student learning from the SGO assessment. Consult with your supervisor to share your information, discussing your final score.
- Together, discussed lessons learned from the year and possible steps for setting SGOs moving forward.

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## Forms

The following forms can be found in the Staff Evaluation Manual

- Student Growth Objective - NJDOE Form
- Student Growth Objective - Data Form
- Student Growth Objective - Student Assessment Rubric
- Student Growth Objective - Student Progress Tracker