

Student Learning Objectives: Frequently Asked Questions

Questions followed by an asterisk are from the larger [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document produced by the Ohio Department of Education. Questions followed by two asterisks are derived from the [Business Rules for Student Growth Measures](#) produced by the Ohio Department of Education.

2015-16 School Year Considerations

What are the major changes to Student Growth Measures for 2015-16?

The major change to our SGM this year is in response to Ohio's Safe Harbor legislation. CMSD will not be using value added data based on state tests for teacher evaluation for 2015-16. The district and CTU have determined which SGM will be used instead of value added for safe harbor teachers. See Appendix D for more details.

Are there other changes?

Another change is that for Category B teachers, vendor data will be reported differently this year. Vendor data will still represent 35% of the overall rating for Category B teachers, but it will be reported in eTPES differently. It will be reported in eTPES as vendor data (20%) and SLO 1 (15%), which equals the 35%. Category B teachers will continue to have a regular SLO reported as 15% which will be reported as the second SLO in eTPES.

What is a Managed SLO?

A managed SLO is an SLO that uses the vendor calculated teacher score as the teacher SLO score. It does not require the teacher to write an actual SLO. The vendor score is reported as an SLO.

Will there be value added for previous year's 2nd and 3rd grade teachers based on NWEA and will it be used for evaluation?

Yes. The ODE has communicated that value added based on NWEA will still be provided to those districts that use it, and that it must be used for teacher evaluation purposes if a teacher has it. It will continue to be 35% of your rating (reported as 20% vendor and 15% managed SLO).

Why am I using the same assessment for both my vendor data and my SLO (e.g. Pro-Core)?

There are some teachers for whom the vendor assessment and SLO assessment are the same assessment. The district and CTU agree that it would be better to use the same assessment for vendor and SLO data than to add another assessment. However, we strive to provide multiple measures for teacher evaluation system. As a result teachers have the option to not double count students on both SLO and vendor data. Teachers will be able to remove students off of their vendor roster if they've been included on their SLO. This is not mandatory, it is optional.

What ESL assessment will be used for ESL teachers at the end of the year?

Ideally, we would have liked to use ELPA21 for the post-assessment. However, the data will not be available prior to the end of the school year. The bilingual department will work with Assessment and teachers to develop an assessment based on the LAS assessment and information will be sent out to teachers with information on the assessment. Targets will be set based on NCEs this year. This is a solution for this gap year. Next year we expect to have ELPA21 results early enough to be able to incorporate them into this process.

Are encore SLOs one semester or year-long?

Encore SLOs will cover semester one.

Where can I access last year's SLOs and SLO scores?

Now, prior year approved SLOs can be accessed in the SLO Portal. See SLO portal instructions for directions.

Teacher Development and Evaluation System (TDES) Teams**What is the role of the school TDES team?**

The school TDES team supports implementation. After teachers write and submit student learning objectives (SLOs), the school TDES team reviews all SLOs using the SLO Approval Checklist to determine whether to approve or ask a teacher to revise an SLO. If the team does not approve the SLO, the team is responsible for providing the teacher with written feedback. Based on the feedback, the teacher revises the SLO and then resubmits it. If the school team members have questions or concerns about whether an SLO is approvable, they should speak with a school administrator.

Will time be provided to the school TDES team for reviewing and approving SLOs?

It is suggested that teams use the additional 200 minutes during the week when possible. Principals and teams may decide, however, to use alternative strategies if the details can be worked out.

What are strategies for finding time for the SLO review?

As noted in the previous question, teams should try to use part of the 200 minutes when possible. In some cases, this may require asking for some flexibility in how to use the 200 minutes during the weeks between SLO submission and approval deadlines.

What if a school TDES team does not know how to answer a teacher's question?

If a school TDES team is not sure of the answer to a teacher's question, a TDES team member should e-mail the SLO mailbox at SLO@clevelandmetroschools.org.

Logistics

Where can I find SLO-related resources?

All SLO-related materials are available on the TDES Student Growth Measure website and on SchoolNet. Click on outreach first, then click on teacher resources and finally click on the link that reads "SLO Resources" on your home page.

How can I access the SLO Portal through the virtual private network (VPN) outside the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) network?

Directions to set up and use VPN access are available on SchoolNet. If you have any questions about VPN access, please contact the CMSD IT Help Desk.

What do I need to know about the SLO portal?

Please consult the SLO portal directions, which are located in SchoolNet, for information on how to access the portal, how to input information into the portal, and how to submit your SLO.

Can teachers write and edit their SLOs in the portal?

It is suggested that teachers copy and paste information into the system from a word-processing document that they have already edited. The final editing should be completed before the document is submitted. Teachers will not be able to have multiple drafts of their SLOs in the portal.

Will teachers be able to insert tables into the portal?

Teachers will not be able to copy and paste tables into the portal. However, the portal includes a new feature that enables teachers to attach tables. Teachers will need to create the table in a word-processing or spreadsheet program and then attach it.

If the SLO is submitted through the portal and the SLO is not approved, can it then be opened up again for corrections?

If an SLO is not approved after it is submitted, the SLO is automatically opened to be revised. The teacher will then be able to make changes and resubmit.

How do we ensure that rosters are accurate and updated in the SLO portal?

If you need to add or delete students from the roster, follow the SLO portal instructions to add or remove students.

When will post assessments be administered?

All post assessments will be administered in the spring with the exception of Encore course assessments, which will be administered in the winter.

Do I need to write an SLO if I received an overall rating of *Accomplished* on my evaluation last year?

Teachers who received an overall rating of *Accomplished* for the 2014-15 school year will not write SLOs.

Why are there no Category A teachers for the 2015-2016 school year?

In response to Safe Harbor legislation, CMSD will not have Category A teachers this year. Teachers who were Category A teachers in 2014-15 should read the SLO Handbook to determine their teacher category for this year.

Why are teachers who are not exempt from writing SLOs required to write two SLOs this year?

At the beginning of the school year, it is unclear whether teachers will receive a vendor assessment growth score and be a Category B teacher. If these teachers do not write two SLOs, some teachers might end up with only one measure of student growth.

How will teachers know which SLO will be included in their summative evaluation and which SLO will not be included in their summative evaluation if they receive vendor assessments scores by the end of the year?

Those teachers who teach only one subject will need to identify a class for their primary SLO, which will be the SLO that definitely will be included in the calculation of the summative score. The secondary SLO will count only if the teacher does not receive vendor assessments scores at the end of the year through no fault of his or her own or because the teacher had data for fewer than six students.

Those teachers who teach multiple subjects will write SLOs for two different subjects. Refer to Appendix D for more details. The second SLO will count only if the teacher does not receive vendor assessment scores at the end of the year through no fault of his or her own or because the teacher had data for fewer than six students.

How do I determine the strengths and needs of my students if I teach a course in which students have little or no knowledge of the subjects when beginning the year?*

In addition to pre-assessments, trend data and historical data can be very beneficial. Looking at how students have performed in similar subjects may provide some insight into your situation. For example, a Physics I teacher might look at mathematics data to get a sense of whether students have an understanding of algebraic equations. Historical data can help you understand what content previous cohorts of students have struggled to understand or retain in the past.

In other districts, teachers select the standards and content and assessments of their SLOs on their own. Why did CMSD select these standards and assessments for me?

CMSD and the Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU) recognize that the teacher evaluation process, especially the SLO process, is new to many teachers. In an effort to both minimize the likelihood that teachers and administrators will be overwhelmed and ensure comparability across SLOs, CMSD and CTU agreed that a district SLO team would determine the standards and content of the SLOs and use common assessments.

How do I decide which course period to include in my SLO?

It is recommended that the teacher select the class that is most representative of his or her teaching schedule and select the class with the largest number of students.

Questions About SLO Components

Is it appropriate for grade-level teams who are using the same class to use the same verbiage for the Baseline and Trend Data and Student Population sections?

If the grade-level teams share the same students, the teachers can share the Baseline and Trend Data and Student Population sections. The Baseline and Trend Data should reflect the content area performance related to the subject that each individual teacher teaches. (For example, if Grades 7–8 departmentalize and both teachers are using the eighth-grade class for the SLOs, they can share the Student Population information and pertinent Baseline and Trend Data. The Baseline and Trend Data, however, will reflect some differences according to the content area taught.)

How did CMSD identify the standards and content of my SLO?

Teacher teams with the guidance of the district SLO team composed of content experts reviewed the course expectations and collectively identified the overarching standards that represent the breadth of the course. All teachers teaching the same course as you will have the same standards and content in their SLO.

How did CMSD determine which assessment I should use in my SLO?

The district revised Appendix D this year based on feedback from educators from prior years.

How will CMSD determine if a target was met for any given post assessment score?

When determining if a student met their target, CMSD will first add points equal to one standard error of actual growth across all students taking the same assessment.

Are we to assume that all growth targets for a given grade and subject will be the same (e.g., Algebra I)?

The growth targets will be set the same for all students within a given course and grade level sharing the same or similar pre-assessment scores and the teachers will be able to adjust the targets to suit the student population and background information. The explanations and reasons must be included in the Rationale section of the SLO tool. See the assessment-specific guidance at the TDES website for more information on how growth targets are set.

Why are some of the district-provided growth targets the same as the baseline scores for some SLOs?

For some assessments, the growth targets are Normal Curve Equivalents (NCEs). An NCE is a way of measuring where a student falls along a normal curve distribution. In a normally distributed population, if all students were to make exactly one year of progress after one year of instruction, their NCE scores would remain exactly the same, and their NCE gain would be zero, even though their raw scores (that is, the number of questions they answered correctly) increased. This is why some district-provided growth targets are the same as the baseline scores. See Appendix E of the SLO Handbook for additional information.

Where can I access information about adjusting growth targets?

CMSD has created *Guidance on Rationale to Support Adjustments of Growth Targets*, which describes the contextual factors that may be used to justify target adjustments, as well as assessment-specific guidance, which provides guidance on acceptable ranges of target adjustments. Both sets of guidance are available at the [TDES website](#). It is highly recommended that all teachers and school TDES teams review these documents.

Special Teacher Circumstances

Is there ever a circumstance in which I would not have an SLO?

Teachers of subjects for which no common assessment is currently available are exempt from developing and submitting SLOs. See Appendix D of the SLO Handbook for a listing of these courses. The summative evaluation for these teachers will be based on professional practice only. All teachers should still access the SLO portal and answer a series of questions about their teaching assignment.

What if I do not write an SLO?

Failure to complete the SLO process will result in the lowest score possible for the SLO portion of your teacher evaluation (15 percent for Category B teachers, and 25 percent per SLO for Category C teachers).

Do teachers who plan to retire at the end of the 2015-16 school year have to write SLOs?

Teachers planning to retire at the end of the 2015-16 school year must file for retirement by December 1 in order to be exempt from the TDES evaluation process, including the SLO process. Teacher filing after this date will not be exempt from the TDES evaluation process, including the SLO process.

If you teach in two or more schools, can you write an SLO for your non-TDES school?

It is suggested that you write your SLO(s) for your TDES school. However, if you do not teach any subjects that are assessed using assessments in Appendix D at that school, then you should write your SLO(s) for your non-TDES school.

If a teacher was transferred into a new class after the pre-assessment was given, does the teacher have to write an SLO for the new class?

The business rule for CMSD/CTU is that the teacher has to be the one to set the SLO target and administer the post assessment. If the teacher does those two things, the SLO stands. For example, if Teacher A transfers to a new class in October, and students had already taken the course pre-assessment, then the teacher would write the SLO on the basis of the pre-assessment that was administered prior to taking over the class. At the end of the course, the current teacher would administer the post assessment.

Do day-to-day substitutes or long-term substitutes write SLOs?

No. They are not part of the TDES system.

How do you address staff on medical/intermittent leave?

In general, if a teacher is on an approved leave of absence for a significant period of time at the time SLOs are written and submitted, then a teacher is not expected to submit SLOs; however, teachers who feel this applies to them should submit specific questions and comments to the SLO Helpdesk in order for this determination to be made (to SLO@clevelandmetroschools.org).

If I am a late hire or will be on extended leave, do I need to create an SLO?**

Yes, in most cases you still will write an SLO. For example, if you were hired on November 1, you could have an SLO covering the rest of the instructional year. If you are going on leave in February, you would write an SLO for the first half of the year. In a small number of extenuating circumstances, school and district administrators may approve an exemption, but only in rare cases.

What if a special circumstance arises and I am going to miss a deadline associated with the SLO process?

Contact your administrator and your school SLO team. Meeting deadlines is an expectation, but your administrator and school SLO team may be able to work with you to resolve issues if they are communicated promptly.

Special Student Circumstances

For the Student Population component of the SLO, can we identify or list students who live with one parent/guardian/grandparent or are in foster care?

The student population portion of the SLO template is used to define any pertinent information that supports teachers' knowledge of their students. However, calling individual students out by name is discouraged. Instead, you might say: "[Number] students live with one guardian. An additional [number] students live in foster care." Remember that just because a particular living situation is present does not mean that the target should be adjusted. The teacher should have data to support the rationale for adjusting targets.

How does student attendance affect the teacher's SLO?

If a student has been chronically absent and has shown limited learning in the past, these factors are most likely captured by the baseline and trend data. If the absences had negatively affected student performance in the past, then the baseline score would be lower, and therefore, the projected score would take that into account. In addition, it might be unfair to assume that a child would not be able to show a year's worth of growth just because she or he has been frequently absent in the past; this year, the student might have a high attendance rate. If the pattern persists and the student is absent 45 days (if it is a yearlong course) or more during the year or 22 days or more during the semester (if it is a semester-long course), then the student may be removed from the SLO by the teacher during the SLO roster verification process and consequently excluded from scoring calculations at the end of the year. Therefore, adjustments to growth targets are not necessary.

What happens if a student was absent only 10 days during the year, but the student was tardy to school 50 times and missed my first-period class?

In the scenario described here, the student would be excluded from scoring because of being absent from that particular class more than 45 times. Similarly, if a student frequently left school early and missed a ninth-period class more than 45 times, then the student would be excluded from scoring on the ninth-period teacher's SLO.

Teaching Configurations

How do I write my SLO if I have split classes?

Refer to Appendix D. Please e-mail the SLO mailbox SLO@clevelandmetroschools.org with specific information about your teaching configuration.

Can teachers use a single class to write the two SLOs?

Yes, you can use the same class but separate subjects for separate SLOs.

We are departmentalized in Grades 1–8. What assessments do ELA and social studies teachers in Grades 1–3 use? What assessments do mathematics and science teachers in Grades 1–3 use?

See Appendix D.

What if you do not fit into Appendix D?

Please e-mail the SLO mailbox at SLO@clevelandmetroschools.org.

Special Education and Intervention Specialists

If I am a special education teacher with fewer than six students in each grade level, is it necessary to combine grade levels?

Yes, you should combine grade levels and go by grade bands so long as they are using the same assessment.

What happens if I provide instruction to fewer than six students total?

If you do not have six students total, you need to go into the SLO portal, document your situation, and submit that information, but you do not need to write SLOs.

When ED/cross-categorical teachers have more than six students, but not at any one grade level, do they select the largest student population (even if they only three or four students)?

In this situation, the teacher should select students by grade band as long as the assessments are the same.

The reading intervention teacher has not been assigned any students in the SLO Portal. How will he or she write SLOs?

Any teacher who does not have students assigned in the SLO Portal should create their own courses within the portal and identify their students. Refer to the SLO Portal instructions at the TDES website. The teacher should choose a grade level or class (that he or she serves) for each SLO and write the SLOs for that group or section.

If I teach a K–3 or 9-12 multi-handicapped self-contained class, do I write an SLO?

Students following a Life Skills Curriculum (MH, AU, etc.) in Grades K–3 or Grades 9-12 the teacher does not submit an SLO this year. Teachers of students following a Life Skills Curriculum (MH, AU, etc.) in Grades 4–8 do submit SLOs (see Appendix D).

Encore Teachers

When and to whom do Encore teachers give their completed assessments? What is the specific date that they are due?

All completed Encore assessments will be sent back to the CMSD Assessment Department. Please follow the instructions for due dates in the Encore assessment package that was sent to buildings and principals.

Who grades and scores the Encore assessments? How long before the results are returned?

The CMSD Assessment Department scores the Encore assessments. Results will be posted in the data tool as soon as possible.

Do Encore teachers select a grade band or just any class?

Encore teachers are Category C teachers; therefore, they are required to submit two SLOs for two different courses or classes (see Appendix D). For this year, Encore teachers will have to stay within the assessment parameters offered by CMSD.