Section 3012-c of Education Law requires districts to conduct an Annual Professional Performance Evaluation (APPR) that includes 20 percent student growth on state assessments or a comparable measure of student growth. The State Education Department (SED) has issued guidance on Student Learning Objectives (SLO), which are required to be used as the comparable measure of student growth for teachers of non-tested subjects. SLOs may also be used as a measure for the 20 percent locally-selected measures of student achievement. This document is designed to summarize SED’s guidance on SLOs and provide advice to local leaders.

What is a Student Learning Objective (SLO)?

A Student Learning Objective (SLO) is an academic goal for a teachers’ students representing the most important learning for the semester or course. SLOs must include baseline performance data for each student, benchmarks to assess progress, and growth goal targets. SLOs are developed collaboratively between principals and an individual teacher, or groups of teachers, and should be based on district, school or grade level objectives that are aligned to New York State’s Common Core, national or state standards. Teacher’s effectiveness scores for this component of their evaluation will be based upon the degree to which their goals are attained.

How will SLOs be used in the teacher evaluation system?

For classroom teachers of grades 4-8 ELA and math, state assessments will be used for the growth component. All other teachers will need SLOs. Teachers of subjects where there is no state-provided measure of student growth on state assessments (i.e., subjects without a state assessment and subjects where a state-provided growth measure has not yet been created based on the state assessment, such as the Regents exams or the NYSESLAT), must use other comparable measures of growth. These teachers will have a growth measure based on SLOs.

SED has provided rules to guide districts in the development of SLOs. However, SLOs, by definition, require an understanding of local needs and objectives. Because of this, much of the responsibility for implementing this component of the evaluation system will fall on the district. Districts will be responsible for:

- Determining the district’s or school’s overarching goals for SLOs, and how the rating will be done;
- Determining, based on SED rules, which teachers must have an SLO, and how many SLOs;
- Ensuring test integrity. Teachers may not score student assessments when they have a vested interest in the outcome;
- Keeping track of all of the data, managing the scoring and calculating final score based on SED’s formula; and,
- Scheduling and processing all of the SLOs for all of the teachers who must have them.
SED Requirements for SLOs

All teachers will have either a state-provided growth measure or at least one SLO. Teachers with 50-100 percent of students covered by a state-provided growth measure will receive a growth score from the state. Teachers with less than 50 percent of their students covered by state-provided growth measures will be required to have SLOs.

How many SLOs a teacher must have to meet the minimum requirements

- At least 50 percent of a teacher’s students must be included in the teacher’s SLO(s). Once the 50 percent threshold is reached, it is a local decision whether or not a teacher should have more SLOs to include a greater number of students. This may mean that not all students assigned to the teacher will be included in a state-growth measure or SLO.
- If a teacher has any class with a state-provided growth measure (4-8 ELA, math, and common branch teachers) but that includes fewer than 50 percent of the teacher’s students, at least one SLO must use the state-provided growth measure.
- The teacher’s largest classes should be selected first to bring the number of students to at least 50 percent and to cover the largest number of students.
- K-3 teachers will have one SLO for ELA and one SLO for math, unless the teacher focuses on just one of these subject areas. Third-grade teachers must use the grade 3 state assessments as the end-of-course evidence.
- Teachers with multiple sections of the same course that use the same final assessment would create an SLO that would cover all sections. Teachers with a mix of sections/courses will create multiple SLOs selecting the largest classes first until a majority of students are covered.

Assessment options for the SLO

The teacher’s SLOs must use an end-of-course assessment as evidence. Each SLO will be developed using one of the following four options for assessments as the evidence of student learning:

- List of state-approved third-party, state, or Regents-equivalent assessments.
  - If any class ends in a state assessment, the state assessment must be used as evidence in the SLO.
  - Core subjects including: Grades 6-7 science; 6-8 social studies; high school - ELA, math, science and social studies, must use a state assessment as evidence, if available. If there is no state assessment, a third-party commercial assessment must be used.
- District- or BOCES-developed.
- School-wide, group, or team results based on state assessments. *(Note: NYSUT opposes school-wide ratings for individual teacher evaluations. This would result in evaluations of teachers of subjects such as physical education and music being based on math and ELA scores over which the teacher had no influence or control, and there would be no meaningful professional development that could result from these measures.)*
- School or teacher-created assessment. The assessment does not need to be a test.
  - Portfolios could be used to evaluate individual student progress while allowing the teacher(s) to look at the overall progress of students in any subject/content. The portfolio could be standardized by requiring examples of the same types of items and the criteria used to assess them.
Performance-based assessments could be used for physical education, music, etc. For example, a physical education teacher might identify a need to improve student cardiovascular endurance. The assessments could be authentic performance tasks scored on a rubric.

**Required elements of the SLO**

SED’s model requires five elements to be addressed in every SLO. Districts should adopt a standard form that will include each of the following elements (see example attached – *Guide to Developing Student Learning Objectives*):

1. **Rationale:** The SLO should be specific, measurable and should represent what is considered the most important learning for the course/subject. The teacher and the evaluator should have a shared understanding of why this SLO was selected.
2. **Population:** The student population included in the SLO must be defined.
3. **The learning content:** This should be aligned to common core, state or national standards.
4. **Interval:** The instructional period must be defined. This may be a semester, quarter, or year. Teachers of multiple year subjects could have annual goals.
5. **Baseline:** Baseline measures must be identified and students assessed.
6. **Targets and Scoring:** Measures that will be used to assess student progress, such as benchmark assessments, portfolios, and student performance must be defined. The evaluator and the teacher should both understand what the performance expectations are for the HEDI (Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective) rating categories.

**Advice to Local Leaders**

The 20 percent student growth is the component that the state is responsible for creating and implementing. However, because the state has turned much of the responsibility over to the district, there are procedures and implementation decisions concerning the content of SLOs that will require collaboration between the local association and the administration. Following are some of the issues that need to be addressed.

**Professional Development Plan**

The underlying goal of each component of the APPR should be to improve teaching practice. Well-designed SLOs will identify systemic learning gaps. There needs to be a school, grade and/or team-based plan for addressing these gaps. Locals should review the district’s Professional Development Plan to ensure there is adequate support.

**SLOs as a Locally-Selected Measures of Student Achievement**

The SED guidance has blurred the lines between the growth component and the locally-selected measures. SLOs are an option under the locally-selected measures that can be considered, but must be negotiated. As a local measure, districts have greater flexibility in establishing the rules for developing SLOs, including what assessments to use for core subjects, which students will be included, and how SLOs will be scored. If the local association agrees to use this option for the local measures, the assessments used must either be different or used in a different manner than for the growth component.
## Implementation - work to be done now

SED recommends that districts begin preparing for the implementation of SLOs during the 2012-13 school year by addressing five critical decision points before the end of this school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Points</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 <em>Assess and identify priorities and academic needs.</em> Districts should conduct a needs assessment, which will be the basis for developing the rationale for the SLO. NYSUT recommendation: SLOs should represent what is considered the most important learning for the course/subject. Teachers should be involved in these discussions through curriculum committees, district teams or groups of teachers working with principals. 3/1/12</td>
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</table>
| 2 *Identify who will have state-provided growth measures and who must have SLOs as a comparable growth measure.* The Commissioner’s Regulations provide prescriptive rules for which teachers will have a state-determined growth measure and who will be required to use SLOs to measure student growth. NYSUT recommendations:  
  - Local leaders should ensure that there is a process in place to identify teachers who will need SLOs, and a process to notify these teachers before the end of the school year. This will allow teachers time to reflect on their teaching practice and objectives, to establish a foundation for creating SLOs the following year. 3/1/12 |
| 3 *Determine district rules for how specific SLOs will get set.* Districts will need to establish procedures for developing, reviewing and scoring SLOs, and timelines for submissions and revisions, data collection, and reporting. NYSUT recommendations:  
  - Teachers and principals will need to work collaboratively to select appropriate assessments. SED rules require specific summative assessments for core subjects, the benchmark assessments will need to be selected locally. Teachers of other subject areas have more flexibility in the choice of a summative assessment. NYSUT recommends locally-developed assessments, or a combination of local assessments and commercial assessments. Locally-developed assessments are more likely to be aligned to the school/district objectives and to improving teacher practice.  
  - The pre-test should be given after teaching has begun. This allows a more precise measure, rather than using data from prior years. Targets would be set after the results of the pre-test are analyzed. For example, in Austin, Texas, the needs assessment and alignment to the standards is completed between August and September; the assessments and growth targets are determined between September and October; and the SLO submission date is October 28.  
  - SLOs are intended to measure student growth, some of the examples provided by SED are not true growth measures, but are based on the percent of students who achieve proficiency. A growth measure must have a baseline for all students to be measured by the SLO, and an exceptional learning gain for one student will not mean the same end results as it may for another student. The targeted growth, which translates to a rating 3/1/12 |
for the teacher, would be based on what percent of students make a specific level of growth or better. For example:

**Student Growth Measure Targets - 20 point scale**

- At least 50 percent of those students scoring level 1 on the benchmark assessment will move to level 2 or higher on the final exam = 2 point value
- At least 70 percent of students scoring level 2 on the benchmark assessment will move to level 3 or higher on the final exam = 11 point value
- At least 15 percent of those students scoring level 3 on the benchmark assessment will move to level 4 or higher on the final exam = 5 point value
- At least 85 percent of those students scoring level 4 on the benchmark assessment will remain on level 4 on the final exam = 2 point value

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<tr>
<td>4 Establish expectations for scoring SLOs and for determining teacher ratings. The district will be required to develop the methodology for scoring SLOs.</td>
<td>4/16/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYSUT recommendations: The district should develop a communication plan and tools for teachers to use in tracking student progress. Teachers will need to know how they will use the SLO(s) to evaluate student growth and how much growth their students will need to achieve a rating category (Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective). The rating category will translate into a numeric rating that will become part of the teacher’s composite score. Districts will need to develop a methodology for scoring SLOs that will take into consideration that teachers will have different numbers of SLOs. Districts must also weight SLOs based on numbers of students in the each of the teacher’s classes. For example, if a teacher has two classes with SLOs, one with 15 students and one with 30, the class with 15 students will be weighted 50 percent less than the class with 30 students. The state intends to include all students in a teacher’s growth measure, but for the state-determined growth, the teacher’s score will take into consideration student attendance by weighting student absence. To what extent districts will be allowed to set attendance criteria locally is uncertain, but districts should consider creating a review process for whether or not to exclude a student due to excessive absence, or extenuating circumstances. Districts should also consider a cut-off date for including students that enroll during the interval period of the SLO. Teachers who do not teach a full year/semester should not be required to have a growth score, unless it is a planned absence and an appropriate SLO can be created for a shorter period.</td>
<td>4/16/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Determine district-wide processes for setting, reviewing, and assessing SLOs in schools.</td>
<td>5/31/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYSUT recommendations: District processes need to be flexible the first couple of years and allow for adjustments. Rigorous data analysis is important for determining growth targets and it will take experience to model the data to understand how the scoring will work in practice.</td>
<td>5/31/12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Rubrics, developed at the district or school level, can help ensure SLOs are rigorous and comparable. These should be evaluated and adjusted based on the first year’s experience.

Determine how the district will support SLO development through training for principals and teachers. SED will provide training on SLOs for the Network Teams, but this training will not be completed until June 2012. Therefore, the earliest that Network Teams will be able to conduct training at the local level will be during the 2012 summer.

Build in a review process, different from the appeals process. There will be many situations that cannot be foreseen.

### Additional Information

- SLOs are a work in progress. SED has posted a “road map” and guidance on the EngageNY website [http://engageny.org/resource/student-learning-objectives/](http://engageny.org/resource/student-learning-objectives/). SED intends to conduct field testing this spring and will provide more specific information over the next few months.

- NYSUT has created Attachment A - *Guide to Developing Student Learning Objectives (SLO)*, as a tool to assist local leaders frame questions for district officials, or to use as a guide for teachers as they develop individual SLOs.

- The Independent School District in Austin, Texas, began piloting SLOs during the 2010-2011 school year for use in the district’s pay-for-performance plan. This program is one of the sources SED used in developing New York’s model. Many of their documents are available on their website located at: [http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/slos.phtml](http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/slos.phtml). Please see Attachment B for examples of SLOs from Austin Independent School District. These examples were modified to match New York state’s required elements format.

- NYSUT will continue monitor to SED’s progress in developing SLOs. As more information becomes available from SED, NYSUT will develop a training program for teachers.

- NYSUT will keep you informed through leader briefings and the NYSUT website.
Attachment A

Guide to Developing
Student Learning Objective (SLO)

Many educators already use a student goal-setting process in their classrooms. As it is applied to the APPR, the focus is on district and school priorities. This guide was developed to help teachers create individual SLOs, and is based on guidance from the State Education Department (SED). SLOs are a work in progress, and SED guidance will continue to evolve as the work is refined. NYSUT will post information on the NYSUT website as it becomes available.

Procedural questions for all SLOs:
Principals work collaboratively with individual teachers or groups of teachers, to develop district, school or grade level objectives, evaluate baseline student performance data, identify benchmarks to assess progress, and establish growth goal targets. Before individual SLOs can be created, the following over-arching issues need to be addressed:

- SLOs should represent what is considered the most important learning for the course/subject. Who will make that determination (teacher, teacher/principal, team, curriculum committee)?
- What are the review procedures for the SLO (prior to implementation, during implementation, final evaluation? Will there be a sign-off requirement)?
- What are the deadlines for SLO submissions? Are revisions allowed?
- The SLO targets should be based on expectations for growth. (How will growth be determined for students who score 100 percent on the pre- and post-assessments? How will growth be determined for different populations within the student group – the target should be based on growth from the baseline, not proficiency.)
- How will assessment integrity be managed by the district?

Guidelines for SLO Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Elements</th>
<th>Guiding Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rationale:</strong> The SLO should be specific and measurable. The teacher and the principal should have a shared understanding of why this SLO was selected.</td>
<td>Define the objective:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the goal for student achievement (big picture)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What is the need that has been identified?</td>
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<td>• What is the learning objective for this SLO? (by the end of… students will be able to…)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Population:</strong> The student population included in the SLO must be defined.</td>
<td>What is the targeted population? Who determines this?</td>
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<td>• Which students are covered by this SLO?</td>
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<td>• Will special education and ELL students receive all accommodations on pre- and post-assessments?</td>
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<td>• Student withdrawal – how and when do they count? Will there be a new student cut-off date? Will there be an attendance requirement?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The learning content:</strong> This should be aligned to common core, state or national standards.</td>
<td>• What are the relevant NYS learning standards and performance indicators?</td>
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<td>• What are the skills to be taught?</td>
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<td>• What strategies will be used to address the SLO?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interval:</strong> The instructional period must be defined.</td>
<td>• Semester, quarter, or year-long courses – a combination of these? Multi-year course with defined intervals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Elements</td>
<td>Guiding Questions</td>
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| Baseline: Baseline measures must be identified and students assessed.            | • How will the pre- and post-assessments be determined? Who will make that determination?  
• Will there be a deadline for administering pre-assessment?  
Will students enrolled throughout the year have the opportunity to take pre-assessments? |
| Targets and Scoring                                                              | Student outcomes                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                  | • How and when will you measure progress? What are the activities or assessments that you will use? Who will make those determinations?         |
|                                                                                  | • Outcome assessment - How will you know what students have learned?                                                                               |
|                                                                                  | • What documentation (project/assessment) is required?                                                                                               |
|                                                                                  | • Will the student activities/assessment be rated by a rubric? Who will develop the rubric?                                                        |
| Teacher ratings                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                  | • How will you know that you achieved your objective? Who makes that determination?                                                               |
|                                                                                  | • How will this be factored into the HEDI rating for growth?                                                                                         |
|                                                                                  | • If you have multiple SLOs, how will this SLO be weighted?                                                                                         |
## Attachment B
Examples of Student Learning Objectives adapted from Austin Independent School District, modified by NYSUT, to match New York state’s required elements format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>The learning content</th>
<th>Interval</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Targets and scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4th Grade Library | Goal - develop research skills.  
Objective - Students will learn to acquire electronic information in a variety of formats with a special emphasis on the use of databases. | All students in one class   | MST Learning Standard 2, ELA Learning Standard 3 | 2012-13 school year | All students scored 50 or below on the locally-developed assessment | 75% of students who scored: 7-10 out of 20 points, will improve score to 14 out of 20; 11 out of 20 and above will improve score to 16 out of 20 |
| 8th Grade Art   | Students will improve their ability to draw from direct observations via studies of still life, skulls, African masks, etc. – skills learned will prepare for HS Fine Arts, underlying need, drop-out prevention by keeping students engaged | All                          | Art Learning Standards 1, 2    | First semester   | Pre-assessment of student’s ability to draw from direct observation, prior to instruction | 75% of students will improve by at least one level using the locally-developed rubric. |
| Living Environment | Students need to grasp complex scientific vocabulary and reinforce critical thinking skills using biology data.  
Students will use the scientific method to organize, analyze, evaluate, make inferences, and predict trends from biology data. | One class, 25 students       | MST Learning Standards 1, 4    | 2012-13 school year | All students scored an average of 30% on the teacher-developed 40 question multiple choice test. Each question is worth 2.5 points for a total of 100 points. | 75% of students will make half the growth to 100 points on the Regents exam (i.e. a student who scored a 20 on the pre-test would need to gain 40 points [half the growth to 100] or 60 points on the Regents exam) |
| 11th grade AP U.S. History | Weakness in DBQ essay of AP Exam, support for arguments, clear thesis statements, and use of primary documents.  
Students will increase their ability to identify and create the key elements of a strong DBQ response including a clear thesis statement, presentation of strong supportive arguments and incorporation of primary documents. | One class, 25 students       | ELA Learning Standards 1, 3    | 2012-13 school year | A majority of students scored below 70% on the assessments of student writing performance using the AP DBQ Rubric. | 80% of students scoring below 70% on AP U.S. History DBQ on the pre-test will increase their score by at least 20 points on the post-test. |