

Student Growth Objectives

What Are Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)?

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

SGOs must be:

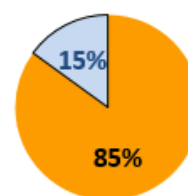
- Specific and measurable academic goals that are aligned to state academic standards;
- Based on student growth and/or achievement using available student learning data;
- Developed by a teacher in consultation with his or her supervisor; and
- Approved by a teacher’s supervisor.

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

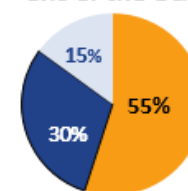
- Teachers who receive a median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP) score must create **one or two** SGOs, as determined by the district superintendent. *Note: The Department recommends that all teachers set 2 SGOs, regardless of whether or not they receive an mSGP score.*
- Teachers who do not receive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



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

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

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

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 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

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.¹ 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

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

- [AchieveNJ SGO Web Page](#)
- Email: educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us
- Helpline: 609-777-3788

¹ [Marion et al., Center for Assessment, 2012.](#)