

Assessing and Adjusting Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)

The Value of Assessing SGO Quality

Even after a careful SGO approval process has been implemented, it may be appropriate to conduct a broad review of SGO quality. A district-wide inspection of SGOs may:

- Indicate certain schools within the district that may need further SGO support; and,
- Identify patterns of strengths and weaknesses in SGO construction that can be used to inform professional learning opportunities and future SGO development and training.

Therefore, the Department encourages members of the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC), School Improvement Panel (SciP), and others supporting evaluation within districts and schools to assess and potentially adjust SGOs as necessary and appropriate.

Adjusting SGOs

If an SGO includes any of the following factors, it cannot provide a sufficient measure of teacher effectiveness and should be modified no later than the **February 15th deadline** (see suggested solutions beneath each):

1. A poorly constructed SGO statement and scoring plan make it **impossible to determine what the objective is**.
 - Solution - set targets that make sense, are consistent with baseline data, and include an aligned scoring plan.
2. The achievement or growth **target is set too low** to be a meaningful assessment of the teacher's effectiveness.
 - Solution - include more students and/or set a higher target.
3. **No assessment** is provided or the assessment is inadequate.
 - Solution - require the assessment be submitted or rewrite assessment.
4. **No information about starting points** is provided or data is inadequate.
 - Solution - require starting point information be collected and submitted, preferably multiple measures.

Tailoring Professional Learning for Future SGO Development

With access to SGO quality information, the DEAC can make district-wide recommendations for professional learning that will facilitate SGO development in the next school year and beyond. For example, the DEAC may find that the quality of SGO assessments is poor, or that most teachers used only student scores on pre-tests in order to set learning targets. In these cases, the DEAC may recommend that teachers and administrators focus their professional learning on choosing and creating high quality assessments and using data to set appropriate targets. This will lead to higher-quality SGOs in future years.

Suggested SGO Assessment Process

A district should approach the SGO assessment process in a way that makes sense for its own circumstances. Administrators will need to balance the benefits of conducting an SGO review with other competing priorities. Described below is one possible approach a district might take when tackling this work:

1. **Convene an administrative team** to review SGOs. Choose a facilitator with a strong understanding of the SGO process. In large districts, consider assembling school-based teams to communicate findings to the central office. An SGO team might consist of School Improvement Panel (ScIP) or District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) members or other administrators who take part in the evaluation process.
2. **Choose a rubric with a 1-4 scale** with which to evaluate SGOs. The Department has produced a comprehensive [SGO Quality Rating Rubric](#) for this purpose (see a summary in the box).
3. **Conduct a norm-setting process** so that all team members understand the components of a high quality SGO and the aspects that prevent some SGOs from appropriate use. Provide SGO samples that span the range of quality and calibrate the team using these samples. Use the presentation [Evaluating SGO Quality](#) to help guide this process.
4. **Score SGOs on a 1-4 scale** to identify teachers who need immediate help to improve their SGOs, as well as broad patterns of strengths and weaknesses in the SGOs overall.

Components of a High-Quality SGO

1. The SGO statement is specific and measurable.
2. The scoring plan is consistent with the SGO statement and arranged to provide a suitable four-point scale. Targets are ambitious and achievable. Differentiated learning targets informed by student starting points are used.
3. The SGO incorporates a significant number of standards and a significant proportion of the teacher's students.
4. The assessment is comprehensive and of good quality. Evidence is provided to show how the summative assessment is aligned to standards.
5. More than one data source is used to determine starting points. Together, these data sources are used thoughtfully to set realistic targets.

Note: SGO assessments should be made available for inspection throughout this process.

For More Information

Please view the [AchieveNJ SGO Web Page](#) for a variety of resources on SGOs, including:

- **Evaluating SGO Quality** ([PPT](#) | [PDF](#)). This presentation provides guidance to SGO teams and administrators to help prepare before assessing SGO quality.
- **SGO Quality Rating Rubric** ([Word](#) | [PDF](#)). This two-page rubric provides detailed descriptions of SGO quality on a four-point scale.

To share questions or feedback, please email educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us, or call the AchieveNJ Help Line at 609-777-3788.