



# Essential Components of Student Learning Objectives Implementation: A Checklist

May 2015

Lisa Lachlan-Haché, Ed.D.  
Marina Castro

## Introduction

Student learning objectives (SLOs) have become the preferred measure of student growth in many new systems of teacher evaluation and compensation across districts and states. The SLO approach to measuring student growth is evolving and taking on new forms throughout the United States, and most states and districts would probably agree that SLO implementation is a challenging endeavor. From communicating business rules to monitoring systems for continuous improvement, districts that are developing and implementing new educator evaluation systems—including those participating in Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) initiatives—must anticipate needs, refine thinking, and deliver quality. To support TIF districts in taking these critical steps, this document offers a framework for thinking strategically through the core components of SLO implementation.

By articulating the critical steps of SLO implementation and providing examples from TIF states and districts, this document aims to provide a vision for TIF grantees to improve SLO quality, enhance assessment rigor, and promote scoring consistency. This document outlines the importance of considering the variety of implementation supports that are available and the options for states and districts that have limited resources.

This SLO Implementation Checklist builds upon a companion document, *Essential Components of Student Learning Objectives Implementation: A Practice Brief*. Both documents have been developed to assist states and districts in the implementation of SLOs by providing practical steps for building a sustainable system of developing and measuring student growth.

### Student Learning Objectives

Student learning objectives are a set of goals that measure educators' progress in achieving student growth targets.

The following implementation elements support rigor, comparability, and sustainability in the SLO process. Each element is described in greater detail in the companion to this document, titled *Essential Components of Student Learning Objectives Implementation: A Practice Brief*.

**Engage Stakeholders and Develop a Vision of Sustainability**—Recognize that the use of SLOs may represent a shift in educator practice. To build a sustainable culture that supports implementation, consider the obstacles that lie ahead, develop teacher confidence in the new process, and create a coherent vision of its value.

**Provide Policies, Examples, and Resources**—Effective implementation requires resources that promote rigor, consistency, and clarity across schools or districts.

**Pilot and Scale Up With Training and Rater Calibration**—Offer ongoing training to assure rigor and consistency throughout schools and districts.

**Communicate and Monitor for Continuous Improvement**—Monitor, triangulate, and communicate the implementation process to promote the rigor, discussion, and reflection that lead to insightful systemic revisions.

### SLO Implementation Checklist

<b>Engage Stakeholders and Develop a Vision of Sustainability</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Has there been an effort to assess:			
a. Levels of stakeholder engagement in and commitment to educator compensation reforms and to SLOs in particular?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The quality of student data and assessments available to teachers and leaders (the foundation for quality SLOs)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The general infrastructure and mechanisms for implementing, monitoring, and improving district-level reforms and procedures over time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Teachers' and evaluators' data analysis and assessment literacy skills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. The utility, validity, and reliability of available assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. The availability of noninstructional time for teachers to write SLOs and for evaluators to support teachers, assess their SLOs, and develop confidence in the scoring process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. The level of shared understanding as to why there is a need to develop SLOs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Readiness and ability to provide support systems for teachers as they design, monitor, and meet SLO targets?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have the components listed above already been leveraged to develop your SLO process and needed supports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Can these efforts be merged with preexisting activities or initiatives, such as data teams, teacher collaboration time, staff meetings, teacher-principal conferences, professional development, induction, leadership team meetings, and professional learning communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are there feedback loops for collecting teacher and principal feedback on the implementation of the SLO process; and can the feedback received be used to make refinements during early and ongoing implementation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Provide Policies, Examples, and Resources</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
5. What resources from the following list are provided to teachers and evaluators in order to communicate consistent expectations and offer support for implementation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. SLO templates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Checklists and rubrics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Timelines that integrate the SLO cycle with the academic calendar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Sample SLOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. "Sets" of SLOs (e.g., a SLO in need of revision, the same SLO with evaluator comments, and the revised SLO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Illustrations or vignettes that show teachers completing the steps of the SLO process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Frequently asked questions about the SLO process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Guidebooks or manuals that provide compilations of forms and procedures and that contain the district's operating "business rules" and policy exceptions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Other(s): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are the aforementioned resources easily accessible and commonly known?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is there guidance for selecting or creating assessments, and does the guidance outline what makes an assessment valid, reliable, rigorous, and aligned to standards? If so, does the guidance offer suggestions for locating such assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is there guidance for setting rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate growth targets? If so, is this process consistent with the district's definition of and goals around student growth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there clarity around the use of professional judgment so that leaders know when professional judgment is warranted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Has the district clearly articulated its scoring process through guidance and rubrics that will help evaluators score SLOs consistently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Has the district established a way to address questions that arise for educators, such as an e-mail or telephone hotline staffed by SLO experts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Has the district determined the need for transition plans or roadmaps for how it will transition to the new SLO system and how expertise will shift from administrative staff or consultants to those individuals charged with SLO implementation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Pilot and Scale Up With Training and Rater Calibration</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
13. Will trainings that address the following questions be provided, and for whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Will all stakeholders receive a basic overview of SLOs and an introduction to how SLOs align with the overall evaluation system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Will staff—particularly evaluators—receive training to understand the SLO process and to lead the approval and final scoring of SLOs during the academic year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Will teachers receive training on creating quality SLOs and, in some cases, on how to translate a SLO goal into actionable instruction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Has there been an assessment of other trainings needed (e.g., trainings on data literacy, assessment selection, target-setting)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Will there be a process for assessing interrater reliability, such as calibration sessions during which evaluators review multiple shared SLOs to determine how their ratings on SLO approval or scoring align?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Is the district prepared to resolve differences in scoring when they occur?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Has the district established a fair appeals process for SLO scoring and approval, and is information about this process accessible and transparent to teachers and evaluators?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Is the district’s SLO scoring methodology simple, transparent, fair, and connected to improvements in teacher practice and student growth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Do teachers and administrators share a common understanding of how SLOs are scored?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Does the process foster consistent and fair ratings across teachers and evaluators, and does it produce scores that can be easily combined with other measures to create a final summative rating?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Are the uses of teacher ratings communicated clearly to teachers such that they understand how their ratings will influence their compensation or other outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Communicate and Monitor for Continuous Improvement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
22. Has the district developed a monitoring process for supervising the development, approval, and implementation of SLOs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Does the monitoring process help the district to gauge the quality of approved SLOs, highlight common mistakes, and indicate additional training needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Is there a process in place for monitoring student learning outcomes to assure that SLOs are valid and assessed for differentiation (e.g., review of patterns in SLO scores disaggregated by school, grade, subject)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Is there a process in place to triangulate SLO data with other effectiveness measures, such as classroom observations, student surveys, or other measures of student growth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Is there a process for research into the characteristics and outcomes of SLO implementation to help districts learn from implementation and revise and improve their systems to support teacher learning and student growth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Conclusion

High-quality SLO implementation demands a concerted effort and thoughtful decision making from stakeholders at all levels of leadership. This checklist can serve as a simple yet comprehensive assessment of implementation efforts for TIF grantees to use in their specific contexts. As the TIF technical assistance network continues to learn about SLOs through research and collaboration, the checklist and its companion brief can add to a growing body of work for educators at any stage of the SLO implementation process.