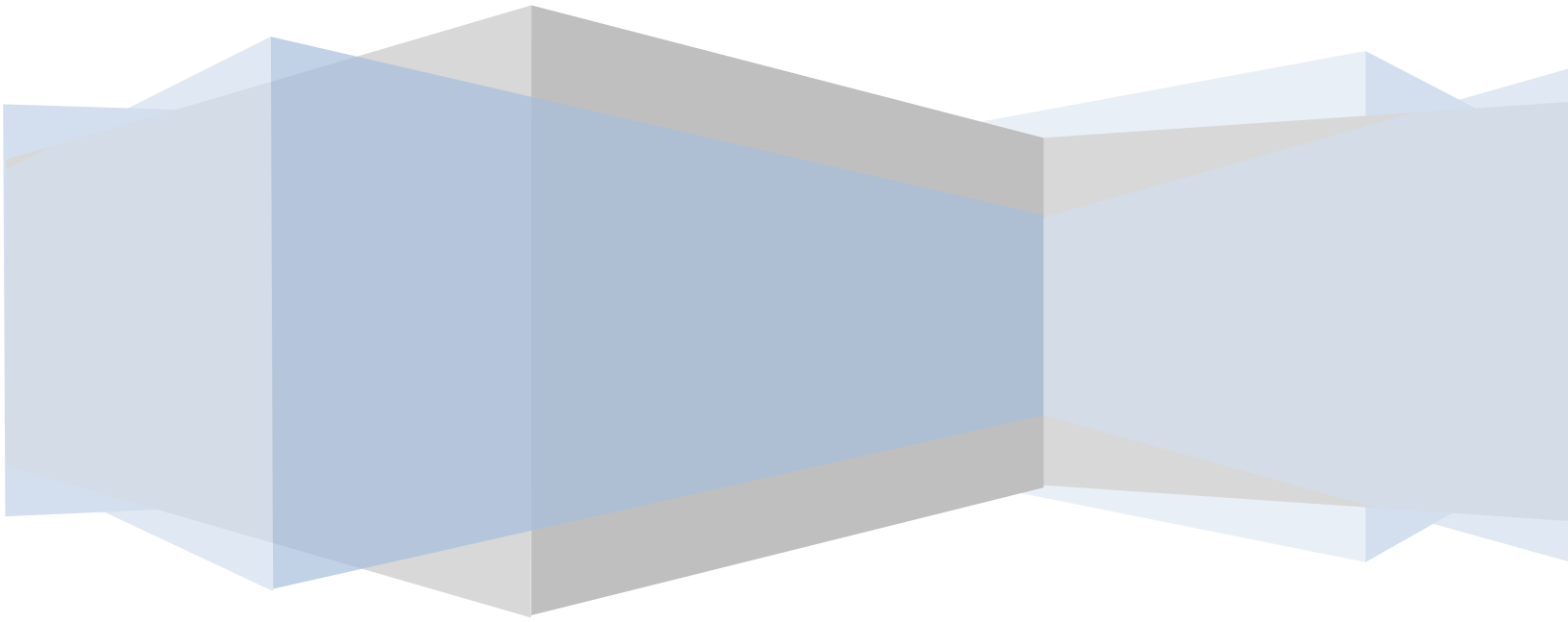
AchieveNJ
Teach. Lead. Grow.

Student Growth Objectives

Developing and Using Practical Measures of Student Learning



State of New Jersey
Department of Education

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1.0 Introduction

About This Guidebook

This guidebook is intended to help you, the teacher, to understand and create Student Growth Objectives (SGOs). The thoughtful application of SGOs to improve student growth begins with you, and this resource is a practical guide intended to provide clarity to a complex but worthwhile task. This guidebook may also be used by administrators as a useful resource for training and completing the SGO component of evaluations under AchieveNJ.

Starting with an overview of SGOs is a useful first step before you begin to immerse yourself in the details of creating your own. Therefore, please take some time to view the short introduction to SGOs and the SGO presentation created by the Department of Education. In addition, you should familiarize yourself with the complete evaluation system to understand how the different components fit together. You can find all of this information on the AchieveNJ website.

At various places in this guidebook, you will see **red "Required" text boxes**. These boxes contain the State requirements for SGOs, such as how many you must set and the role of your supervisor in the process. However, the majority of this guidebook contains procedures, forms, examples, and other **suggested processes** that are provided to help you and your supervisor develop quality SGOs; *their use is not mandated by the New Jersey Department of Education.*

This guidebook should serve as a good starting point for your work with SGOs and has been developed using multiple sources of information[1]. The information found within has been revised based on feedback from educators in New Jersey to make it as useful as possible, and will continue to be updated based on feedback from educators who are using it. Please visit the SGO Section of the AchieveNJ website for updates to this resource and to access individual forms found in the Appendix.

1.1 Measures of Student Growth

With the signing of the TEACHNJ Act,[2] the evaluation of teachers in New Jersey must include multiple measures of student growth. The law mandates that these measures be in place by the 2013-14 school year. In New Jersey's proposed evaluation system, AchieveNJ, **all teachers** set learning goals for their students and are evaluated, in part, on how well their students attain these goals. SGOs will be developed collaboratively between you and your supervisor, with the building principal providing the final approval.
Teachers of Language Arts Literacy (LAL) and Mathematics in grades 4 through 8 (referred to

A **Student Growth Objective** is a long-term academic goal that teachers set for groups of students and must be:

- Specific and measureable
- Aligned to New Jersey's curriculum standards
- Based on available prior student learning data
- A measure of what a student has learned between two points in time
- Ambitious and achievable

[1] The New Jersey Department of Education would like to thank the Departments of Education in Indiana, Rhode Island, Louisiana, Colorado, New York, and Ohio, along with Washington DC Public Schools and the Austin Independent School District, whose materials proved very helpful in the development of this guidebook.
[2] The TEACHNJ Act was signed into law on August 6, 2012, reforming the tenure process and mandating new evaluation procedures for New Jersey educators.

as the “tested grades and subjects”) receive an additional measure of student achievement in the form of a Student Growth Percentile (SGP) score, which is described on the AchieveNJ website.

1.2 The Value of Student Growth Objectives

As many educators know, setting long-term learning goals allows teachers to plan backward from a vision of student success. This helps ensure that every minute of instruction is moving students towards higher levels of achievement. The process of setting SGOs requires the creation of standards-aligned goals and assessments to measure student progress. By implementing SGOs, AchieveNJ seeks to make these best practices a part of every teacher’s planning.

For some teachers, setting and evaluating SGOs will be a major shift in practice and will require the type of collaboration and use of data that might be new and, at first, challenging. However, the result will be more purposeful instruction, closer monitoring of student progress, and, ultimately, greater student achievement.

When done thoughtfully and collaboratively the SGO process will lead to the following:

- ✓ An increase in the quality of discussions surrounding student growth and learning
- ✓ An opportunity for teachers to engage in the evaluation and creation of assessments
- ✓ Increased knowledge and focused use of New Jersey’s curriculum standards
- ✓ Deeper understanding of the academic strengths and weaknesses of students
- ✓ Clearer indications of when and how to adjust instruction to meet students’ needs
- ✓ Increased opportunities to reflect on student performance and teaching practice
- ✓ More thoughtful professional planning for the next school year

2.0 Types and Number of Student Growth Objectives

This section of the guidebook provides information to help you and your evaluator decide the type and number of SGOs that are appropriate for your teaching assignment. SGOs are a teacher-generated measure, but you must create SGOs in consultation with your supervisor and follow the guidance that your district provides. Specific details on how to create SGOs begin in Section 3.1.

Required

- A teacher develops SGOs in consultation with his or her principal, or the principal's designee.
- The principal makes the final determination about the SGO.
- All teachers who receive an SGP score must set between 1 and 2 SGOs, the district-wide number will be determined by the superintendent.
- Teachers who do not receive an SGP score must set 2 SGOs.

2.1 General and Specific Student Growth Objectives

General SGOs are broad in the scope. They include all, or a large proportion of the curriculum, and all, or most of your students.

Specific SGOs focus on a particular subgroup of students, or specific content or skill.

General and Specific SGOs can be subdivided as shown in Figure 1 below. More detail on these subcategories can be found in SGO Step 3: Set Ambitious and Achievable Student Growth Objectives in Section 3.3.

Type of SGO	Definition	Example
General	Focused on the teacher's entire student population for a given course. Includes a large proportion of curriculum standards.	Includes all students in a teacher's Algebra 1 classes and is aligned with CCSS.
General – Tiered	Same as above, but with student goals tiered by student preparation levels.	Same as above, but with student goals tiered by preparation levels.
Specific – Student Group	Focused on a subgroup of students that needs specific support.	Includes students in the group that scored below 45% on the pre-test.
Specific – Content/Skill	Focused on specific skills or content that students must master.	Includes CCSS related to quadratic functions and modeling.

Figure 1: Types of SGOs.

2.2 General Student Growth Objectives

General SGOs include as many of your students as practical and all of the course material that you teach by the time of the final assessment. What this means for you individually, will depend on your teaching assignment. However, provided below are some examples based on whether the teachers receive an SGP score or not.

Non-tested Grades and Subjects (no SGP score)

If you teach in a non-tested grade and subject - all teachers other than math and LAL teachers in 4th-8th grade - you must set 2 SGOs. At least one of these should be a General SGO. The following examples provide several approaches that can guide you and your evaluator in making the right choice for your situation.

Example 1: A 10th-grade social studies teacher has five sections of US History 1 and has 102 students. His general SGO includes all 102 students, and incorporates all of the material he will teach the students up to May 1, the week before the final assessment.

In some cases, perhaps because you have multiple levels or types of classes, setting one General SGO for all students will be impractical. In this case, you will set two General SGOs, as in Example 2 that follows.

Example 2: An 11th-grade life science teacher teaches three sections of biology and two of anatomy and physiology. She sets one General SGO for all of her biology students and one General SGO for all of her anatomy and physiology students.

If you teach more than three distinct courses, you should set SGOs based on the maximum number of students that will be included, as in Example 3 below.

Example 3: A music teacher teaches two sections of orchestra, two sections of guitar, and one of strings. He sets one General SGO for orchestra, and one General SGO for guitar, thereby including the majority of his students.

If you teach a lower elementary grade, you may decide a portfolio approach is the best way to proceed, as in the next example.

Example 4: A kindergarten teacher has 14 students and uses a locally-developed portfolio to assess her students. She sets a General SGO for all of her students based on their growth as measured by the portfolio.

Tested Grades and Subjects (SGP score available)

The SGP score you receive if you teach 4th-8th grade math and LAL is based on how well your students grow on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) tests. If you teach at the elementary level in a self-contained setting, your SGP will include all of your students and a large proportion of what you teach. In this case, you may decide to set Specific SGOs for your students as outlined in the next section. However, if you are a subject area specialist who receives an SGP, a General SGO would allow you to set broad targets for your students, as shown in Example 5 below.

Example 5: An 8th-grade math teacher sets a General SGO for all of her students based on pre-assessment results. Her end of year assessment will measure what they have learned by the end of the year. Her students will also take the NJ ASK in May.

Alternatively, you and your evaluator may decide that a Specific SGO is more appropriate for your situation, as outlined in the next section.

2.3 Specific Student Growth Objectives

Non-tested Grades and Subjects

A Specific SGO allows you to focus on a particular group of students identified as needing extra attention, or a specific skill or content area in which all students might benefit. If you teach a non-tested grade or subject, your Specific SGO may complement the General SGO. For instance, the following example involves the history teacher mentioned in Example 1.

> **Example 6:** A 10th-grade social studies teacher finds through the pre-assessment that his students are particularly weak in their understanding of government. He sets a Specific SGO that deals with this particular content area.

In the previous example, **the assessment he uses to measure growth on his Specific SGO may be the same as the one he uses for the General SGO, thereby simplifying the assessment process.** However, he must ensure that the assessment is carefully aligned to the standards he is teaching and substantial enough to measure the specific SGO adequately. Information about creating or choosing an appropriate assessments can be found in SGO Step 1: Choose or Develop Quality Assessments found in Section 3.1.

In the next example, the US 1 history teacher focuses his Specific SGO on a skill rather than an area of content.

> **Example 7:** A 10th-grade social studies teacher finds on the free response portion of the pre-assessment, some students were unable to clearly use evidence to support their points of view. He sets a Specific SGO that deals with this particular skill. He consults the Common Core State Standards in social studies to assist in developing appropriate activities and assessment questions.

Rather than a focus on a particular content or skill, you may decide that a particular subpopulation of your students would benefit from a Specific SGO - your struggling readers or your English language learners, for example. In this case, you would use the same assessment as for your General SGO but set target scores based on where these students started at the beginning of the year.

Tested Grades and Subjects

A Specific SGO for an elementary school teacher who receives an SGP score may focus on an area of instruction not captured by standardized tests, such as social studies or science. See Example 8 below.

> **Example 8:** A 4th-grade elementary team focuses its Specific SGO on science. In consultation with the middle school science teacher, the team develops a portfolio assessment that requires the students to demonstrate scientific thinking and practice. Each teacher sets an SGO for their individual class based on the starting point of their students. Students build a science portfolio throughout the year. At the end of the year, the team sits together to collaboratively grade the portfolios using a rubric.

3.0 The Student Growth Objective Process

The following section of the guidebook provides step-by-step instructions that you might find helpful when setting your SGOs. You should follow these steps only to the degree that they help you meet the requirements of the law or those of your district. The **SGO Quick Start Guide** is provided below to help you understand the scope of the SGO process. The remainder of the guidebook provides technical instructions for each of the five suggested steps.

Required

- SGOs must be approved by the principal, or the principal's designee, by November 15.
- Any changes to an SGO must be completed and approved by February 15.
- The teacher's supervisor scores the SGO and the rating, if available, is discussed during the annual summary conference.

Student Growth Objective Quick Start Guide

Before beginning:

- Decide how much of the SGO process can be done collaboratively with your colleagues, e.g. developing department-wide assessment, setting similar SGOs and collecting evidence of student learning, etc.
- Review the SGO forms in the Appendix and the sample in Figure 8.

Step 1: Choose or develop a quality assessment aligned to NJCCCS or CCSS.
Determine what assessments you have in place for your students now. Determine if they are appropriate for the purposes of SGOs. Check them for rigor, depth of knowledge, and standards alignment using the forms available in the Appendix. Plan to improve them or create new ones if necessary.

Step 2: Determine students' starting points.
Determine what sources of information you can use to judge your students' starting points. Decide whether you need to use a pre-assessment. Decide whether grouping students by preparedness level is appropriate and useful.

Step 3: Set ambitious and achievable SGOs with the approval of the principal/supervisor.
Consult with your evaluator to determine what combination of general and specific SGOs are appropriate for your teaching assignment. Using data collected in Step 2, set measurable goals that are ambitious and achievable. Define attainment levels for your SGOs. Complete the appropriate version of the SGO form and have your evaluator approve it.

Step 4: Track progress, refine instruction.
Frequently monitor your student's progress towards the goals you have set for them. Modify your instruction as needed.

Step 5: Review results and score in consultation with your principal/supervisor.
Administer the post-assessment. Collect student performance data and consult with your evaluator to determine your rating. Discuss with your evaluator next steps for setting SGOs in the following year based on your results.

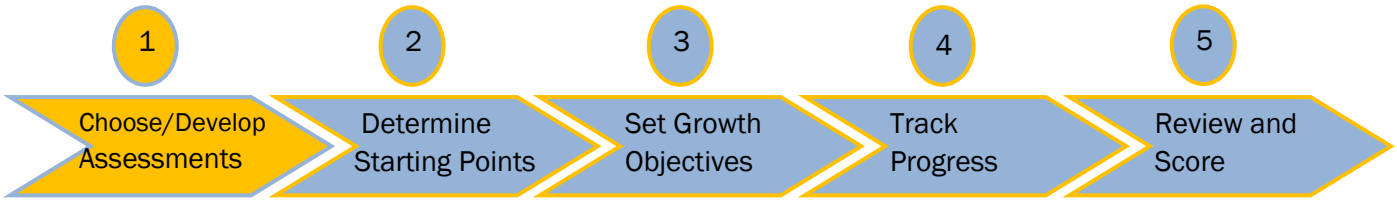
Getting a Head Start

Because you must develop your SGOs and have them approved by November 15, 2013,[3] starting the SGO process before the beginning of next school year will be beneficial. This will give you time to identify or create assessments on which you might set objectives or gather baseline information at the beginning of the year. Figure 2 below depicts the timeframe for various parts of the SGO process.

Time Window	Component of SGO Process
April - October	Choose or develop assessments
September – October	Determine starting points
September –November	Set SGOs
November 15 (2013 only)	Deadline for having SGO approved by evaluator
October – May	Track goals and refine instruction
January – February	Mid-year check in with evaluator
May – June	Review results, evaluator scores SGO

Figure 2: Timeframe for steps of the SGO process.

[3] In 2013-14, this deadline is November 15. In future years it will be October 15.



3.1 SGO Step 1: Choose or Develop Quality Assessments

Required

- Teachers who receive a student growth percentile score may not use the NJ ASK for SGOs in those subjects and grades from which the SGP is derived.
- SGOs must be aligned to NJCCCS or CCSS and measure student achievement and/or growth.

Assessments are central to SGOs, as they determine how much growth students have demonstrated over the year or course. In many cases, you will use a version of the SGO assessment as a pre-test to help indicate the starting point of each student. This important information allows you to set high, yet realistic goals for your students. Determining starting points is discussed more in Section 3.2.
You and your evaluator must be confident that the assessments you use are aligned to appropriate course content standards (New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards or Common Core State Standards). You must also be sure that SGOs are appropriately rigorous for the grade-level and course and are formatted in a way that is clear and free from bias.

There are many types of assessments to choose from depending on the subject and grade level taught. A district may choose to use an available standardized test that comes with guaranteed levels of rigor and reliability. In some cases, the results on such tests may not be available until after the school year ends. In this case, the district must weigh the benefits of the rigor and reliability of the tests with the inconvenience of not having data in time for a teacher's summative rating before the end of the school year.[4]

If you teach a subject or grade level that does not lend itself to paper and pencil type tests, a portfolio may be used, such as Teaching Strategies Gold® for pre-K and K teachers. Other examples of assessments that might be used for SGO purposes are shown below in Figure 3.

Traditional Assessments	Portfolio Assessments	Performance Assessment
• National/State tests (e.g., Advanced Placement exams, DIBELS, EOC Biology test) • District, school and departmental tests (e.g., final exams)	• Teaching Strategies Gold® (pre-K, K) • Writing and reflection samples (LAL) • Laboratory research notebook (sciences) • Portfolio of student work (visual and performing arts, etc.) • Student project-based assessments (all subjects)	• Lab Practicum (sciences) • Sight reading (music) • Dramatic performance (drama) • Skills demonstration (physical education) • Persuasive speech (public speaking)

Figure 3: Some types of assessments appropriate for SGO setting.

[4] If test scores are not available at the time the end of the year, a summative conference once an SGO rating is available must occur during the next school year.

Creating an Assessment

In many cases, your district might ask you and your colleagues to use a test or assessment developed in the school. If there is no common test for a subject and grade level, developing such an assessment can be a valuable way to use professional development time. If you teach a stand-alone course, such as Introduction to Finance, you may still be able to work with your colleagues on developing high quality questions, or on the structure of the test.

When creating an assessment, use the checklist in the box for guidance on the attributes reflected in a good assessment. More detailed checklists and forms can be found in the Appendix.

Suggested Guidelines for Assessment Creation

- ☐ Develop assessments collaboratively.
- ☐ Align all assessments with NJCCCS or CCSS.
- ☐ Align all assessments with district, school and department goals.
- ☐ Make sure all the content in your SGO is covered in the assessment.
- ☐ Incorporate test items that vary in levels of difficulty.
- ☐ Include a sufficient number of test items to ensure rigor.
- ☐ Collaboratively determine possible modifications to meet the needs of students.
- ☐ Develop rubrics to assess essay responses.
- ☐ Make sure content- and skill-based rubrics are specific and address multiple levels of proficiency.

Suggested Process for Approving Quality Assessments

The process of choosing or developing a high quality assessment requires careful thought and coordination. Even though no assessment certification is required by the Department, districts may choose to develop their own processes to ensure the quality of assessments. The next section outlines a process that your district might consider using.

A. Prior to the start of the school year, building administrators create a list of assessments that can be used for SGOs. Where common assessments do not exist for teachers teaching the same course or grade-level, teachers and curriculum leaders begin to create them.

B. Prior to setting an SGO, assessments created at the school or teacher level that will be used for student growth objectives must be evaluated and approved.

Pre-approval. A teacher or teacher group completes a *Pre-Approval Assessment Form* that asks the teacher(s) to:

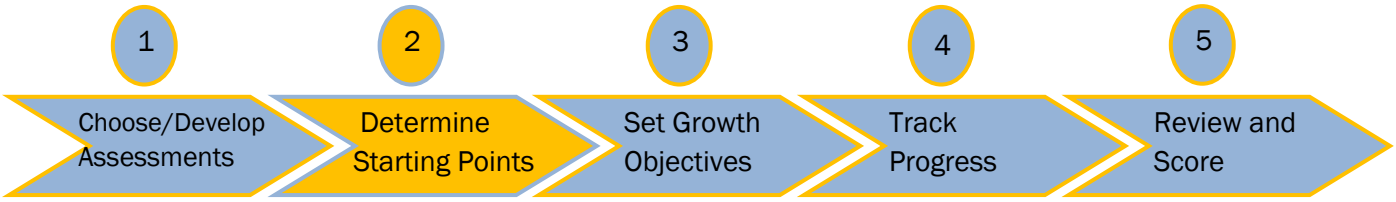
- Identify which New Jersey standards align with questions/tasks on the assessment and complete the *Standards Alignment Check Chart*;
- Use an *Assessment Rigor and Depth of Knowledge Analysis Chart* to give examples of assessment questions/tasks that fall under various Depths of Knowledge levels;
- Review the format of the assessment questions; and
- Describe the assessment's scoring rubric.

Approval. Once teachers pre-approve their assessments, administrators complete an *Assessment Approval Checklist* documenting sufficient evidence of an assessment's alignment and stretch, rigor and complexity, and format. The administrator either approves the assessment, or suggests changes. When approving assessments, administrators should work together with content experts such as department heads and/or curriculum directors whenever possible.

Whatever approach your district decides to take, you can use the following list of questions to start thinking about your particular teaching situation and the assessments that you might use or consider developing.

Initial Questions to Consider When Choosing or Developing a Quality Assessment

- ✓ What style assessment will best measure student growth in relation to my SGO?
- ✓ What assessments do I have now that might I might use?
- ✓ What resources are available to find or create an assessment?
- ✓ How much time do my colleagues and I have to develop or choose an assessment?
- ✓ Will I use the same assessment, or a modification of it, as a pre-test?
- ✓ If the assessment is used as a pre-test, how does it gauge my students' level of pre-required knowledge and skills for the course I am about to teach them?
- ✓ Does my assessment measure depth of understanding and are there questions that would challenge even my most knowledgeable students?



3.2 SGO Step 2: Determine Students' Starting Points

Required

- SGOs must be set based on available student learning data.

Promoting growth in students is what effective teachers go to work to do every day. Even though students may walk through the door on the first day of school at very different points of preparedness, all learners are capable of growing. A key to measuring the gains they make throughout the year is having an accurate picture of where these students start out. An important component of the SGO process, therefore, is to collect evidence on what students already know and understand, and the types of skills they already possess. You can then use this information to set goals that are both ambitious and feasible. Comparing starting points to end points for students provides a way to objectively demonstrate and be recognized for how successfully you help students to grow during the year.

Collecting Evidence of Students' Starting Points

Teachers have long relied on instinct when assessing their new students. However, assessing their starting points more objectively helps in setting ambitious and feasible SGOs. In order to determine your students' starting points, you should collect as much information as possible. Common sources of evidence that you might use to determine starting points are shown in Figure 4 below.

Source of Performance Data to Determine Students' Starting Points	Examples and Notes
Results from beginning-of-course diagnostic tests or performance tasks	• Department-generated pre-assessment • Early course test
Results from prior-year tests that assess knowledge and skills that are pre-requisites to the current subject/grade	• NJASK for math, LAL and science • DRA for reading • End of course tests assessments, e.g. results on English 9 writing portfolio are used by the English 10 teacher
Results from tests in other subjects including both teacher- or school-generated tests and state tests (tests must have assessed pre-requisite knowledge and skills)	• A physics teacher uses results of her students' prior math assessments
Students' grades in previous classes	• Teachers should make sure they understand the basis for the grades given by students' previous teachers

Figure 4: Example of data sources for collecting evidence of students' starting points.

Using Student Data from Prior Years

In some situations, using measures of student learning from prior years may offer the best way to gauge the readiness of the class. For example, reading assessments such as the Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA™2). This assessment offers a standardized way to measure reading level. If you are an elementary school reading teacher, you could use students' scores on DRA2 from the previous year to set a growth objective such as, "All students will increase reading proficiency as measured by DRA2 by at least one proficiency level." There are clearly other factors to take into account when setting such an objective, such as possible summer learning losses (or gains), or reading disabilities. Therefore, you should reinforce the prior year data with another measure, such as a pre-assessment, to build a clearer picture of your students' starting points.

Using Pre-Assessments

Pre-Assessments, in conjunction with evidence of student learning from prior years, will likely provide a more detailed picture of students' starting points. For some subjects, a pre-assessment may provide the clearest indicator of where students are starting out. Comparing results on this assessment to those on the post-assessment will allow you to determine how much students have grown over the year. If you choose to use a pre-assessment that is similar to the post-assessment, refer to the box on this page for questions that you should consider when adopting this approach.

Relationship Between Pre- and Post-Assessments

- How alike should these assessments be?
- Do I have a carefully controlled testing environment in which copies of the pre-assessment will remain secure?
- How many questions is it appropriate to put on a pre-assessment to which students may not currently know the answer but should by the end of the course?
- To what degree should the assessment be built on standards assessed in previous grades or subjects?

Differentiating Students by Preparedness Level

Teachers often have students with a wide range of preparedness and ability in a course or class. One simple SGO for all students might be too low for some students and too high for others. By breaking down SGOs into different levels based on student preparation, your goals are more likely to be ambitious and feasible for a much wider range of students. This could be done in a number of ways, one of which would be to divide students into three groups:

- **Low level of preparedness**: Students who have yet to master pre-requisite knowledge or skills needed for this course
- **Medium level of preparedness**: Students who are appropriately prepared to meet the demands of the course
- **High level of preparedness**: Students who start the course having already mastered some key knowledge or skills

In Example 9 below, a freshman English teacher uses two sources of data to develop groupings of students.

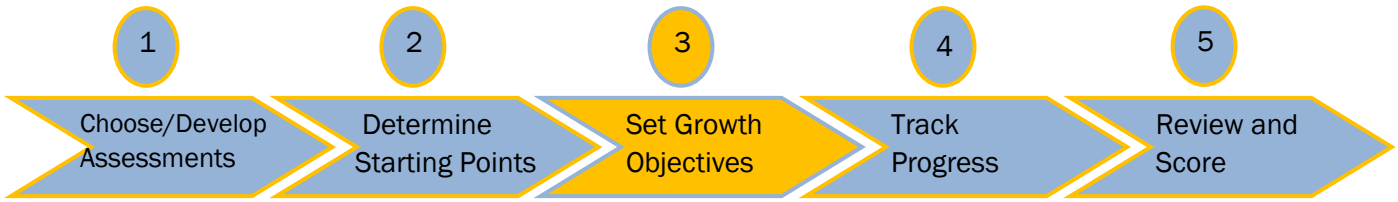
Example 9: A 9th-grade LAL teacher has two sets of data readily available: a department-wide pre-assessment that is based on the content and structure of the final assessment and scores on the portfolio that the students completed the previous year. He and the other teachers in his department determine the appropriate weight that should be placed on each piece of evidence and then make a judgment regarding how individual students should be placed. The table shows how this might look for four students.

Student	Portfolio Score (June 2013)	Pre-Assessment (Sep 2013)	Preparedness Group
1	89	76	High
2	68	43	Low
3	78	54	Medium
4	86	66	Medium

Whatever type of data you decide to use to help set SGOs, use the following list of questions and action steps to work through this process.

Initial Questions to Consider When Determining Students' Starting Points

- ✓ What sources of student data are available to you?
- ✓ Is a pre-assessment something you should be using?
- ✓ Choose 1-3 sources of data to determine starting points.
- ✓ Gather achievement data on all of your students.
- ✓ Complete the *Identify and Approve Starting Points* form in the Appendix.
- ✓ Determine whether you should subdivide your students for the purposes of the SGO according to the achievement data.



3.3 SGO Step 3: Set Ambitious and Achievable Student Growth Objectives

Required

- SGOs must be specific and measurable and be based on student growth and/or achievement.

After you and your evaluator agree on an assessment on which to base an SGO and have documented the starting points of the students in the course, the next step is to combine this information to define SGOs that are ambitious, but achievable. Developing a quality goal is highly dependent on your expert knowledge of your students and assessments, and the professional collaboration that occurs between you and your evaluator.

As outlined in the introduction, SGOs can be general or specific. Which you use is dependent on your teaching assignment and the guidance provided by your district. Figure 1 summarizes your options. This section of the guidebook first describes how to create a General SGO.

General Student Growth Objectives

There are two strategies to consider when setting a General SGO; simple and tiered.

- The **simple method** is based on determining how many of the total students are expected to meet a single target.
- The **tiered method** is based on expected growth within groups of students identified by their starting points, as discussed in SGO Step 2. (This is a part of the General SGO and should not be confused with a Specific SGO.)

Setting Simple Student Growth Objectives

To use the simple method of setting General SGOs, educators must predict what percentage of students would attain a particular level of performance on the final assessment. There are four levels of attainment of this objective. Shown in Figure 5 are the four levels of attainment possible for a student growth objective and what each level means.

Attainment of Student Growth Objective			
Exceptional **4**	**Full** **3**	**Partial** **2**	**Insufficient** **1**
Teacher has demonstrated an **exceptional** impact on learning by **exceeding** the objective.	Teacher has demonstrated a **considerable** impact on learning by **meeting** the objective.	Teacher has demonstrated **some** impact on learning but **did not meet** the objective.	Teacher has demonstrated an **insufficient** impact on learning by **falling far short** of the objective.

Figure 5: Descriptions of attainment levels for SGOs.

Setting the Standard for "Full Attainment" of the Student Growth Objective

In order to develop a scoring guide based on how well you meet your SGO, determine the following:

a) a target score on the final assessment that indicates considerable learning;
b) the number of students that could reasonably meet this mark;
c) the percentage of students in the course that this represents; and
d) a 10-15 percent range around this number.

For example, you and your evaluator may decide that 80% on a challenging assessment indicates considerable learning. Based on an initial evaluation of the 65 students in your course, your evaluator agrees with the assessment that about 50 of them could reasonably make this score at the end of the year. This is 77 percent of the students. You make 70-84 percent the range around this number. This means that if between 45 and 55 of students (70-84 percent of them) score at least 80% on the final assessment, you would have fully met the objective. This is shown in Figure 4 on page 16.

Setting Other Standards of Attainment

Once a range is established for "full attainment," subtracting 10-15 percent from the lower range of "full attainment" will produce the "partial attainment" category. Any number below this range is the "insufficient attainment" category. Above the high end of the "full attainment" range is the "exceptional attainment" range. These ranges are summarized below in Figure 6 where 15 percent margins were used to set the ranges.

Target Score	Attainment Level in Meeting Student Growth Objective			
80% or Higher on Final Assessment	Exceptional 4	Full 3	Partial 2	Insufficient 1
Number of Students Meeting Target (out of 65)	More than 55	45-55	36-44	Fewer than 36
Percent of Students Meeting Target	Greater than 84%	70-84%	55-69%	Less than 55%

Figure 6: Scoring guide for SGOs based on number of students meeting target score.

Using Changes in Proficiency Level

You may use an assessment method in which the same target score is not appropriate for everyone in the class. For example, for a 3rd-grade teacher, an objective may be to have all students increase one proficiency level in reading as measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment 2. However, even if this is the case, you would still go about setting attainment levels in the same way as described. For instance, full attainment of the goal might be if 85 percent of students gaining one proficiency level. The example in Figure 7 below illustrates this using 10 percent margins and is expressed in a more simplified way, using "at least" language rather than a range.

Target Score	Attainment Level in Meeting Student Growth Objective			
Students increase at least one proficiency level on the DRA™2	**Exceptional 4**	**Full 3**	**Partial 2**	**Insufficient 1**
Percent of Students Meeting Target	At least 95%	At least 85%	At least 75%	Less than 75%

Figure 7: Scoring guide when target score is a "proficiency level" change.

Completing a Student Growth Objective Form

Once the SGO is determined, educators will complete a form to record this information. This form should include information about the standards that the objective captures, the assessment method, and the baseline data used to determine students' starting points. Figure 8 is an example of a form that has been filled out by Mr. Newton, a high school freshman physics teacher. A blank copy of this form can be found in the Appendix.

Grade:	Subject	Number of Students	Interval of Instruction	
9	Physics 1	65	Full year ■ Semester ☐ Other _____	
Name of Assessment	Department-developed Physics 1 assessment		SGO Type	General ■ Specific ☐
Rationale for Student Growth Objective (Please include content standards covered and explanation of assessment method.)				
This SGO covers all of my students, all of the physical science standards that are part of NJs model curriculum and many appropriate science practice standards: NJCCCS physical science 5.2.12 A-E NJCCCS science practices 5.1.12 A-D (as appropriate) Physics 1 assessment – **Written**: 60 multiple choice (4 choice), 5 short response questions, **Practical**: students design a simple apparatus, take measurement and collect data.				
Student Growth Objective				
At least 70% (45/65) of my students will attain a score of 80% or above on the end of course test.				
Baseline Data (Please include what you know about your students' performance/skills/achievement levels at the beginning of the year, as well as any additional student data or background information used in setting your objective.)				
Grade 8 math scores, grade 8 science scores, scores on department-developed Physics 1 pre-assessment. A summary of this data is attached. Average score on the physics pre-assessment was 52%.				

Continued on next page

Scoring Plan				
Objective Attainment Based on Percent and Number of Students Achieving Target Score				
Target Score	Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	Insufficient (1)
80%	85% or greater of students (56 or more)	70%-84% of students (45-55)	55%-69% of students (36-44)	0-54% of students (35 or fewer)
Approval of Student Growth Objective				
Teacher _____ Signature_____ Evaluator _____ Signature _____			Date Submitted_____ Date Approved _____	
Results of Student Growth Objective (State how many students met the final assessment target)				
		Score _____ Date _____	Teacher _____ Evaluator _____	

Figure 8: Sample SGO form.

Notes on Completing SGO Form

- Rationale for SGO: The information Mr. Newton provides is specific to the standards he is testing and the way he is testing them. This specificity is important so that he can clearly communicate the foundation of his SGO.
- SGO: Mr. Newton has written a specific, measurable, ambitious, achievable and time-related goal, clearly indicating what he aims to accomplish.
- Baseline Data: There is not much room on the form for details here. A summary is appropriate. However, Mr. Newton's evaluator might require him to provide supporting documentation. The *Identify and Assess Starting Points* form could be used for this.

Setting Tiered Student Growth Objectives

There are benefits to setting simple General SGOs. They require less analysis of students' starting points. The goal is also straightforward – *x* students will meet *y* level of proficiency. This simplicity may be appealing to districts that are new to this type of work. However, for districts a little further along in goal setting, or for those who would like to accelerate their progress, setting tiered objectives is an option. Tiered General SGOs provide rich data that can be used to differentiate instruction more effectively. They also allow for setting goals that are appropriate for a wider range of students.

The basic principles used to set simple goals can be applied to creating tiered goals; however, in tiered SGOs, you set different targets for different groups of students according to their starting points. As mentioned in SGO Step 2, you might decide that three groups are a manageable number that will provide good data while not making the process too complex.

Quantifying what each level looks like provides a clear idea of how much growth to expect from each of these groups. For example, Mr. Newton from Figure 8 knows the average performance of his 9th

grade physics students was 52%. However, breaking this down further, he can make the following table (Figure 9).

Preparedness	Score on Pre-Assessment	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Low	35-49	36/65	56
Medium	50-66	21/65	32
High	67-80	8/65	12

Figure 9: Creating tiers of students based on their preparedness level.

Mr. Newton might use other data sources, such as scores on the NJ ASK science test in 8th grade to finalize his low, medium, and high categories. Having a clearer picture of his students' starting points, he can most appropriately place them. Based on this information, he can then set specific targets for each group as shown in the section of the Tiered SGO Form shown in Figure 10. These goals will be ambitious and achievable for each *group* of students.

Student Growth Objective			
Preparedness Group (e.g. Low, Medium, High)	Number of Students in Each Group (Total)	Target Score on Post-Assessment (%)	Number of Students Required for "Full Attainment"
Low	36/65	70	25-30
Medium	21/65	80	15-18
High	8/65	90	6-7
Baseline Data and Preparedness Groupings (Please include the number of students in each preparedness group. Summarize the information you used to produce these groupings. Provide any additional student data or background information used in setting your objective.)			
Based on the Physics 1 pre-assessment and prior year's NJ ASK science scores, students are grouped into 3 levels of preparedness. See attached. Low – 36 students scored 35-49% Medium – 21 students scored 50-66% High – 8 students scored 67-80%			

Figure 10: Setting SGOs for students if grouped by preparedness level.

Based on Mr. Newton's determination of what full attainment of his goal looks like, he can develop a scoring chart using the process as explained previously in Section 3.3. In the case of a tiered objective, he must develop ranges for each preparedness group as shown below in Figure 11.

Scoring Plan					
Preparedness Group	Target Score on Final Assessment	Objective Attainment Based on Percent (and Numbers) of Students Achieving Target Score			
		Exceptional 4	Full 3	Partial 2	Insufficient 1
Low	70	>85% (31-36)	70-84% (25-30)	55-69% (18-24)	<55% (0-17)
Medium	80	>85% (19-21)	70-84% (15-18)	55-69% (11-14)	<55% (0-10)
High	90	>85% (8)	70-84% (6-7)	55-69% (4-5)	<55% (0-3)

Figure 11: Scoring guide based on setting tiered SGOs.

Setting Specific Student Growth Objectives

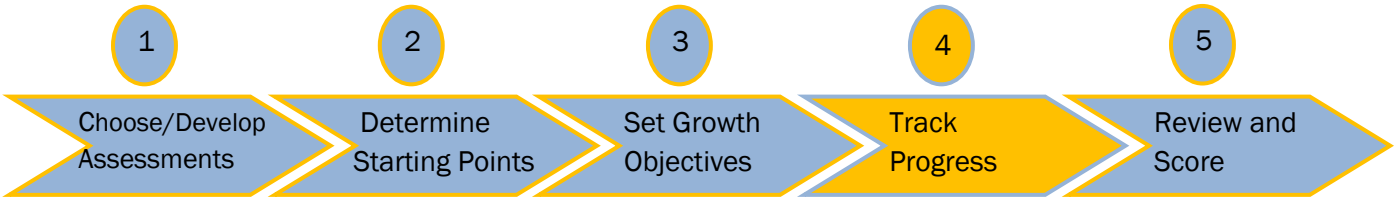
As discussed in the introduction, a Specific SGO allows you to set a goal for a subset of students, or a particular skill or content component that requires particular attention. For example, a 4th-grade teacher who will receive an SGP score based on LAL and math NJ ASK scores might decide to focus the SGO on science or history. Alternatively, a 10th-grade Algebra 1 teacher with no SGP score might choose to focus the SGO on the group of students who have performed in the lowest 15percent on preparedness assessments. Or it may focus on a content area such as quadratic equations, for example.

Apart from the focus on a particular group or content/skill area, you can follow the same process for setting a Specific SGO as for a General SGO, and can use the general SGO form.

The step in the SGO process outlined in the previous few pages can be the most daunting. Use this checklist to help you navigate the process.

Key Steps for Writing SGOs

- ✓ Determine the score on the final assessment (or portfolio) that you will set one of your SGOs towards.
- ✓ If using an assessment in which proficiency levels can be compared one year to the next, determine the change in proficiency levels towards which you will set your objective.
- ✓ Decide whether to set tiered objectives based on groupings of your students.
- ✓ Determine what "full attainment" of your SGO would look like based on target scores or growth in proficiency.
- ✓ Create brackets for other levels of attainment.
- ✓ Complete your SGO form and conference with your supervisor.
- ✓ Repeat for a second SGO if necessary.



3.4 SGO Step 4: Track Progress and Refine Instruction

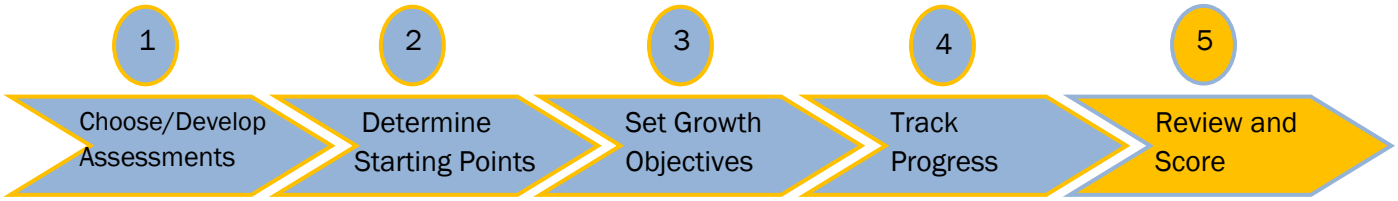
The value of goal-setting becomes particularly apparent when educators track progress towards these goals and can then make adjustments to stay on track. In the classroom, tracking goals means monitoring student performance through some sort of assessment. These assessments could be benchmark assessments that are already in place, for example. They could also be the components in a portfolio.

During the middle of the school year or course, you and your evaluator should check-in to evaluate the progress your students are making towards the targets you have set for them. The *Mid-Course*

Check-in Form in the Appendix may help to facilitate the discussion, encouraging you to reflect on the following questions:

- How are your students progressing toward your SGOs? How do you know?
- Which students are struggling/exceeding expectations? What are you doing to support them?
- What additional resources do you need to support you as you work to achieve your SGOs?

During this check-in, you can share evidence of learning that supports answers to these questions and adjustments to your teaching strategy. This is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate your responsiveness to student needs and for your supervisor to provide guidance and support as necessary.



3.5 SGO Step 5: Review Results and Score

Required

- A teacher's supervisor and/or a member of the School Improvement Panel will calculate a rating for the SGOs.

At the end of the school year, you will compile the results of the assessment(s) used for SGOs and your evaluator will use them to formulate a rating. The performance of Mr. Newton's students for his tiered SGO is shown in Figure 12.

Preparedness Group	Target Score (%)	Number of Students at Target Score
Low	70	31
Medium	80	16
High	90	4

Figure 12: Scores of students on post-assessment

Mr. Newton uses his SGO form to determine his attainment level, as circled in Figure 13.

Scoring Plan					
Preparedness Group	Target Score on Final Assessment	Objective Attainment Level Based on Percent and Number of Students Achieving Target Score			
		Exceptional 4	Full 3	Partial 2	Insufficient 1
Low	70	>85% (31-36)	70-84% (25-30)	55-69% (18-24)	<55% (0-17)
Medium	80	>85% (19-21)	70-84% (15-18)	55-69% (11-14)	<55% (0-10)
High	90	>85% (8)	70-84% (6-7)	55-69% (4-5)	<55% (0-3)

Figure 13: Attainment level of teacher based on number of students as target score.

Mr. Newton can then enter this information at the bottom of his SGO form as shown in Figure 14. The process described can be used for simple General SGOs and Specific SGOs.

Results of Student Growth Objective				
Preparedness Group	Number of Students at Target Score	Objective Attainment Level	SGO Score Average Objective Attainment Level	Teacher I. Newton Evaluator _____ Date _____
Low	31	4	3	
Medium	16	3		
High	4	2		

Figure 14: Final SGO rating information.

Weighted Method for Calculating Tiered Student Growth Objective Scores

The simplest way to generate a score based on how many students met their target score in a tiered SGO is to assign a point value to the attainment level for each group. However, this does not take into account that the number of students in each preparedness group may significantly differ. For example, if 85 percent of students in the medium level group made their target, this might result in four points as "exceptional attainment" of the goal. However, perhaps only 65 percent of the high level group made their goal, giving a score of only "partial attainment" and two points. If both groups were of the same size, an average score of a three would fairly represent the teacher's work. However, if there were 50 students in the medium level group and only 10 in the high level group, giving equal weight to each score does not fairly represent the overall achievement. Using a weighted score solves this problem. This can be seen in the next two tables (Figures 15 and 16).

Preparedness Group	Number of Students in Each Group	Percentage of Students in Each Group	Weight Assigned to Attainment Score*
Low	36/65	56%	0.56
Medium	21/65	32%	0.32
High	8/65	12%	0.12

**rounded up to produce 1.*

Figure 15: Calculating weights for attainment scores based on proportion of students.

The calculated weights from Figure 15 can then be applied to the straight scores obtained as shown in Figure 16.

Preparedness Group	Number of Students at Target Score	Objective Attainment Level	Weight	Weighted score
Low	31	4	x 0.56	2.24
Medium	16	3	x 0.32	.96
High	4	2	x 0.12	.24
			Total	3.44

Figure 16: Determining a weighted score for a tiered SGO.

Using weights provides a more nuanced calculation. Comparing the numbers here to those in Mr. Newton's example in Figure 13 on the previous page, a 0.44 increase in the SGO score is evident. Using this method may not always result in a higher score; however, it will provide a fairer representation of your performance on an SGO.

Calculating a Total Student Growth Objective Score

A teacher with two SGOs can do a simple calculation to work out the final SGO score regardless of type of SGO, or how the score was calculated.

Figure 17 demonstrates the calculation used if placing equal weight on both SGOs. A district may decide to use different weightings for each SGO.

Student Growth Objective	Score	Weighting	Weighted Score
General	2	x 0.50	1.0
Specific	3	x 0.50	1.5
		Total	2.50

Figure 17: Determining a final SGO score.

3.6 Using Student Growth Objectives to Improve Practice and Student Learning

When the SGO process is carried out diligently, the information that SGOs provide will be valuable to teachers who are seeking to improve their practice. Not only can this information be used during the year to make course corrections in instruction, it can be used to develop a well-thought out instructional plan for the following year. You might use the results from your SGOs to inform your professional development plan, choosing to focus on areas of challenge through which you or your students struggled. Conversely, while planning for the next school year, it may be clear from your SGO results that you should keep or expand particularly successful strategies or materials.

For many teachers and principals, SGOs will require a shift in thinking about assessment, goal setting, and instruction. However, when created and used thoughtfully, SGOs offer a powerful tool that will not only help improve instructional practice, but ultimately, and most importantly, student learning.

Appendix – Forms for Setting, Assessing, and Scoring Student Growth Objectives

The following forms may be used to set, assess and score SGOs, and evaluate the assessments that you use when setting your growth objectives. Microsoft Word versions of these forms and fillable PDFs are available on the **AchieveNJ** website on the SGO page.

1.1 Pre-approval for School-based Assessments
1.2 Standards Alignment and Coverage Check
1.3 Assessment Rigor Analysis and Depth of Knowledge
1.4 Approval Checklist for School-based Assessments
2.1 Identify and Approve Starting Points
3.1 Student Growth Objective Form (Simple)
3.2 Student Growth Objective Form (Tiered)
4.1 Mid-course Check In

Pre-Approval for School-based Assessment

Grade Level/Subject: _____

Teacher(s): _____

Evaluator Name: _____

Directions: For any school-based assessment used for the purposes of SGOs, please complete the steps below. If a department or team of teachers is using a common assessment, only one copy should be turned in per assessment. (Please make sure all teachers using the assessment are listed above).

1) Complete the *Standards Alignment and Coverage Check Chart*
Using the New Jersey Common Core Content Standards or the Common Core State Standards, identify which standards align to which questions or tasks on your assessment. Write or type the standards next to the assessment questions. Attach this chart to this form.

2) Complete the *Assessment Rigor and Depth of Knowledge Analysis Chart*
Give examples of assessment questions or tasks that fall under various levels of the Depth of Knowledge Framework. Note: Not all questions must be categorized, but there must be sufficient examples given of questions meeting a higher-level of rigor. Attach this chart to this form.

3) Review the *Approval Checklist for School-based Assessments*
Refer to this form to ensure that your assessment and rubrics are constructed appropriately. Specifically, check for aspects of the assessment not addressed by parts (1) and (2) above:

- ✓ Are questions/tasks written clearly?
- ✓ Are there a variety of types of questions/tasks?
- ✓ Are the questions/tasks free of bias?
- ✓ Are the questions appropriate for the subject/grade level?
- ✓ Are rubrics carefully designed?

4) If the assessment(s) will need to be adapted for students with special needs, please specify any changes below:

Please return this form to your primary evaluator, along with a copy of the assessment(s), Standards Alignment and Coverage Check Chart, Assessment Rigor Analysis Chart, and any additional supporting materials (rubrics, scoring guides, etc).

Standards Alignment and Coverage Check

Grade Level/Subject: _____

Teacher(s): _____

Directions: After aligning assessment to New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards or the Common Core State Standards, use the chart below to list assessment questions with the corresponding standards to which they are aligned. Use extra sheets as needed. Teachers with common assessments need only complete one copy.

Standard Number	Standard Description	Question Numbers/Portfolio Components

Assessment Rigor and Depth of Knowledge Analysis

Grade Level/Subject: _____

Teacher(s): _____

Directions: Use the chart below to categorize assessment questions. Rigor increases as you go down the chart. While not all questions need be categorized, there must be sufficient examples of the highest levels of rigor. Teachers with common assessments need only complete one copy.

Level	Learner Action	Key Actions	Sample Question Stems	Question Numbers/Portfolio Components
Level 1: Recall	Requires simple recall of such information as a fact, definition, term, or simple procedure.	List, Tell, Define, Label, Identify, Name, State, Write, Locate, Find, Match, Measure, Repeat	How many...? Label parts of the…. Which is true or false...?	
Level 2: Concept	Involves some mental skills, concepts, or processing beyond a habitual response; students must make some decisions about how to approach a problem or activity.	Estimate, Compare, Organize, Interpret, Modify, Predict, Cause/Effect, Summarize, Graph, Classify	Identify patterns in... Use context clues to... Predict what will happen when... What differences exist between...? If x occurs, y will….	
Level 3: Strategic Thinking	Requires reasoning, planning, using evidence, and thinking at a higher level.	Critique, Formulate, Hypothesize, Construct, Revise, Investigate, Differentiate, Compare	Construct a defense of…. Can you illustrate the concept of…? Apply the method used to determine...? Use evidence to support….	
Level 4: Extended Thinking	Requires complex reasoning, planning, developing, and thinking, most likely over an extended time. Cognitive demands are high, and students are required to make connections both within and among subject domains.	Design, Connect, Synthesize, Apply, Critique, Analyze, Create, Prove, Support	Design x in order to….. Develop a proposal to…. Create a model that…. Critique the notion that…	

Approval Checklist for School-based Assessments

Grade Level/Subject: _____

Teacher(s): _____

Evaluator Name: _____

Criteria	**Considerations** (Check all that apply)
Alignment and Stretch	☐ Items/tasks cover key subject/grade-level content standards. ☐ Where applicable, items/tasks cover knowledge and skills that will be of value beyond the year – either in the next level of the subject, in other academic disciplines, or in career/life. ☐ Where applicable, there are low- and high-end stretch items that cover pre-requisite objectives from prior years and objectives from the next year/course. ☐ Scoring system is weighted appropriately for question complexity. _____ Evidence/Feedback:
Rigor and Complexity	☐ Overall, the items, tasks, rubrics are appropriately challenging for the grade-level/course (e.g. appropriate depth of knowledge and correct reading level). ☐ Many items/tasks require strategic and extended thinking. ☐ Multiple-choice questions are appropriately rigorous or complex (e.g. multistep, four or more choices). ☐ Key content standards are assessed at greater depths of understanding and/or complexity. _____ Evidence/Feedback:
Format Captures True Mastery	☐ Items/tasks are written clearly. ☐ The assessment/tasks are free from bias; no wording or knowledge that is accessible to only specific ethnicities, subcultures, or genders. ☐ Some standards are assessed across multiple items/tasks. ☐ Item types and length of the assessment are appropriate for the subject/grade level. ☐ Tasks and open-ended questions have rubrics that (1) articulate what students are expected to know and do and (2) differentiate between levels of knowledge/mastery. _____ Evidence/Feedback:

☐ I approve of this assessment/task and any accompanying rubrics without further change.

☐ Please make changes suggested in feedback above and resubmit the assessment/tasks and rubrics.

Signature of evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Signature of teacher(s): _____ Date: _____

Identify and Approve Starting Points

Grade Level/Subject: _____ **Number of Students in Group** _____

Teacher: _____

Evaluator Name: _____

Level of Preparedness	Number/Percentage of Students	Evidence Collected
High (*students prerequisite skills or knowledge are ahead of where they need to be starting this course)*		
Medium (*students prerequisite skills or knowledge are where they need to be starting this course)*		
Low (*students prerequisite skills or knowledge are below where they should be starting this course)*		

Possible Sources of Baseline Data (all do not need to be used)

Current Year

- Results from beginning of course pre-assessment
- Results from first interim assessment
- Results from components of course work assigned in the first few weeks

Prior Year

- Results from prior course tests that assess knowledge and skills that are pre-requisite to the current subject/grade (may be in a different subject, if relevant)
- Results from relevant standardized tests

☐ Teacher has appropriately assessed students' starting points.

Signature of evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Signature of teacher: _____ Date: _____

Student Growth Objective Form (Simple)

Grade:	Subject	Number of Students	Interval of Instruction
			Full year ☐ Semester ☐ Other _____
Name of Assessment		SGO Type	General ☐ Specific ☐

Rationale for Student Growth Objective (Please include content standards covered and explanation of assessment method.)

Student Growth Objective

Baseline Data (Please include what you know about your students' performance/skills/achievement levels at the beginning of the year, as well as any additional student data or background information used in setting your objective.)

Scoring Plan

Objective Attainment Level Based on Percent and Number of Students Achieving Target Score

Target Score	Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	Insufficient (1)

Approval of Student Growth Objective

Teacher _____ Signature_____ Evaluator _____ Signature _____	Date Submitted_____ Date Approved _____

Results of Student Growth Objective
(State how many students met the final assessment target.)

	Score _____ Date _____	Teacher _____ Evaluator _____

Student Growth Objective Form (Tiered)

Grade	Course/Subject	Number of Students	Interval of Instruction
			Full year ☐ Semester ☐ Other _____
Name of Assessment			

Rationale for Student Growth Objective
(Please include content standards covered and explanation of assessment method.)

Student Growth Objective

Preparedness Group (e.g. Low, Medium, High)	Number of Students in Each Group (Total)	Target Score on Post-Assessment (%)	Number of Students Required for "Full Attainment"

Baseline Data and Preparedness Groupings
(Please include the number of students in each preparedness group. Summarize the information you used to produce these groupings. Provide any additional student data or background information used in setting your objective.)

Scoring Plan

Preparedness Group	Target Score on Final Assessment	Objective Attainment Level Based on Percent and Number of Students Achieving Target Score			
		Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	Insufficient (1)

Approval of Student Growth Objective

Teacher _____ Signature_____

Evaluator _____ Signature _____

Date Submitted_____

Date Approved _____

Results of Student Growth Objective

Preparedness Group	Number of Students at Target Score	Objective Attainment Level	SGO Score Average Objective Attainment Level
			_____

Teacher _____

Evaluator _____

Date _____

Mid-Course Check-in

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Grade Level/
Subject/Period: _____

Evaluator: _____

In preparation for the mid-course progress check-in, please complete this questionnaire and submit it to your evaluator**.** You may attach your responses to this form or write them here directly.

1) How are your students progressing toward your student growth objectives? How do you know?

2) Which students are struggling/exceeding expectations? What are you doing to support them?

3) What additional resources do you need to support you as you work to achieve your student growth objectives?

4) Are there any student attendance issues substantial enough to affect your student growth objectives?

Please return this form to your primary evaluator, along with your SGO forms, and any interim student learning data you would like to discuss during the check-in.