

# Introduction to Student Learning Objectives

■ **Facilitator's Guide**

JULY 2013



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING MODULE

# Professional Learning Module

## Introduction to Student Learning Objectives: Facilitator's Guide

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Center on  
**GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS**  
at American Institutes for Research ■

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### **About This Booklet**

This *Introduction to Student Learning Objectives: Facilitator's Guide* is intended for use with the following additional resources:

- Sample agenda
- Slide presentation
- Participant handouts

These online resources are available for download on the Professional Learning Modules webpage of the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders website. Please visit the webpage at <http://www.gtlcenter.org/technical-assistance/professional-learning-modules/>.

### **Adapting This Booklet**

This booklet is designed so that facilitators can adopt it as written or modify the content to reflect state and local context, needs, and priorities. If modifications to content are made, the GTL Center requests that the following disclaimer be included in the revised materials:

***This booklet was modified in whole or in part with permission from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders.***

## Introduction

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) developed this training module on student learning objectives (SLOs) to assist Regional Comprehensive Centers, state education agencies, and, as appropriate, districts in their early stages of SLO implementation in schools as a measure within educator evaluation systems. This module serves as an introduction to SLOs and aims to provide participants foundational knowledge and common language regarding the purposes, goals, and steps of the SLO process.

At the conclusion of this module, **participants** will:

- Understand the SLO cycle and development process.
- Be able to explain what makes a high-quality SLO.
- Understand the various approaches to SLOs, as well as their strengths and limitations.
- Recognize the benefits and technical challenges inherent in the SLO process.
- Understand the critical role of training, guidance, scoring, and monitoring in ensuring fidelity in the implementation of SLOs.
- Have awareness of and access to valuable resources and the SLO research base.
- Have considered next steps for how, or if, SLOs fit within their evaluation system.

**Facilitators** should be able to:

- Support colleagues in understanding the basic components of the SLO process.
- Understand the tools and processes used in developing, organizing, and reviewing SLOs.
- Use materials to facilitate preliminary SLO work with colleagues.

## Audience

This facilitator's guide is designed as a blueprint for training to support states new to SLOs and in the early stages of considering the implementation of SLOs. The training can be conducted by state leadership, and can be co-facilitated by Regional Comprehensive Center and GTL Center staff. This GTL Center module, one in a series of modules, will provide some initial knowledge-building that can serve as the basis for state- and/or district-specific training. Depending on who is facilitating the training, the audience could be state or district-level staff and/or regional service providers. This training would be particularly beneficial to participants with limited or relatively no knowledge of SLOs.

## Timing

The materials provided have been developed for a one-day session that fits within seven working hours, but they can be modified to fit alternative schedules. For participants who are new to SLOs, the GTL Center highly recommends covering all training materials with ample time for discussion and reflection. Please refer to the sample agenda included in the module for the recommended order of the module components and time allotted for each component.

## Resources

The following resources are provided for use in delivering the SLO training module:

- Facilitator’s guide (this document)
- Slide presentation
- Participant handouts, including one for each activity
- Tips and tools for addressing anticipated questions

All of these materials may be used and adapted to fit the needs of the state context. To cite the content, please use the following statement: “These materials have been adapted in whole or in part with permission from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders.”

To further prepare for this presentation, facilitators may want to review the resources highlighted on slide 58 of the slide deck used for this presentation.

## Materials

The following materials are recommended for training and associated activities:

- Chart paper
- Sharpie<sup>®</sup> markers for chart paper
- Regular markers at each table for name cards
- Post-it<sup>®</sup> Notes
- Pens at each table

## In This Guide

The rest of the guide provides a script (the text contained within quotation marks) to support facilitators as they present the content and learning activities included in this module. Along with the script, time stamps and guidance are included to support streamlined and organized facilitation. Reviewing the entire guide prior to facilitating the training is highly recommended.

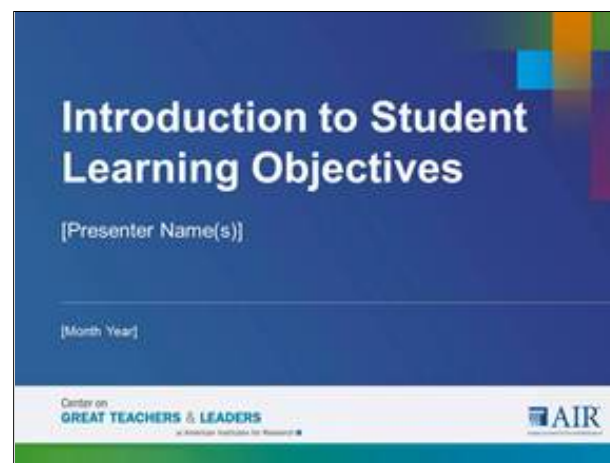
## Introductory Slides

Including introductions, slides 1–6 will take approximately **15–30 minutes** to review.

### Slide 1

*To kick off the session, allow the hosts of the training to introduce themselves and the facilitators. Prior to the start of the day, ask the hosts to share their hopes and goals for the day—explaining to participants why this training is important enough to request that they break away from their busy schedules to attend.*

*During this slide, facilitators should introduce themselves and discuss their relevant background experiences to build participant confidence in their skills as facilitators. Ask participants to introduce themselves and include their titles, so their perspectives can be taken into account by the group.*



### Slide 2

*Slides 2–4 acknowledge that the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders authored the training content.*

#### **Explain:**

“The training slides and materials for today’s session were developed by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, a national content center led by American Institutes for Research. The GTL Center is dedicated to fostering a network of policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and innovators into a system of support for states to ensure great teachers and leaders in all schools.”

*During this slide, it may be valuable to also acknowledge your organization’s history in working with the GTL Center.*





### Slide 3

#### Explain:

“The GTL Center is one of seven content centers that support the work of 15 regional centers. This map shows the different Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) that the content centers support. Other content centers include the Center on College and Career Readiness and Success, as well as the Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation. All of these centers work collectively to support state education efforts.”



### Slide 4

#### Explain:

“This GTL module is one in a series of modules. Each module includes a PowerPoint slide presentation, module activities, facilitator’s guide, and additional resources.

“The goals of this module are to:

- Build RCC capacity to support state education agencies (SEAs) using or considering the use of SLOs.
- Establish a common language around SLOs.
- Create a set of materials that can be used by other RCCs to support SEAs.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration between the GTL Center and RCCs and/or SEAs.”

### GTL SLO Module Overview

- GTL is developing a series of modules.
  - PowerPoint, Facilitators Guide, Module Activities, Resources
- SLO Module Goals
  - Workshops aim to build regional center capacity to support SEA student learning objectives (SLO) consideration and/or implementation.
  - Module materials were developed to build a common language and understanding of the SLO cycle and a variety of SLO approaches.
  - Materials were developed for future SEA-level SLO meetings/workshops cofacilitated by the GTL Center and regional centers.
  - Use of these shared materials will lead to a valuable collaboration between GTL Center, regional center, and SEA staff.

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### Slide 5

*Using slide 5, go over the agenda for the day, making note of specific break times that are not noted on the slide. Ask participants if they have any questions before moving on to the next slide.*

### Student Learning Objectives Agenda

1. Introduction to the SLO Cycle
2. Approaches to SLO Guidance
3. Purposes of SLOs
4. SLO Approaches
5. Reviewing SLOs
6. Writing SLOs
7. SLO Technical and Implementation Challenges
8. SLO Lessons Learned: A Review of Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grantees
9. Next Steps for Your Team

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## Slide 6

*Draw the Likert scale on chart paper prior to the training.*

### Explain:

“Let’s start with a warm-up connecting activity. What is your familiarity with SLOs and how informed are you about SLOs? Using a Post-it Note, place it along this Likert scale, with 1 being no prior exposure to SLOs and 4 being very familiar with SLOs.”

*Have each participant place one Post-it Note where he or she sees fit on the chart paper in order to gauge everyone’s familiarity level with SLOs. Acknowledge how the distribution looks.*

*Advance the next bullet on the slide.*

### Explain:

“Now, on another Post-it Note, write the one question you have when you hear the term *student learning objective*. Write the question down and place it to the side, and we’ll see if your question is answered as we go through the training and activities.”

## Connecting Activity

- Please gauge your familiarity with SLOs and how informed you are, with 1 being no prior exposure to SLOs and 4 being very familiar.

1	2	3	4
No prior exposure	Little familiarity	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar

- Place your Post-it® Note on the spectrum on the chart paper.
- When you hear the term *student learning objective*, what is one question that comes to mind?
- Place your questions to the side, and let’s see if they get answered as we go through the training.

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## Introduction to the SLO Cycle

This section serves as an introduction to the SLO cycle. Slides 7–26 present a general overview of SLOs, set SLOs within the national context of evaluation reform, and provide examples from different states and districts using SLOs. The objectives of this section are to have participants develop a common language to use with SLOs while also developing a general knowledge base for how states and districts vary in their implementation of SLOs.

Covering this section will take approximately **60 minutes**.

### Slide 7

#### Explain:

“The next set of slides will include a general overview of SLOs, set SLOs within the national context of evaluation reform, and provide examples from different states and districts using SLOs. The objectives of this section are to build a common language to use with SLOs while also developing a general knowledge base for how states and districts vary in their implementation of SLOs.”



### Slide 8

*For this slide, it is recommended that the state include their own definition of an SLO and highlight the key components of the definition that should be underscored.*

#### Explain:

“In an effort to reinforce common language, this slide introduces a common definition of an SLO.

“An SLO is a measurable, long-term, academic goal informed by available data that a teacher or team of teachers establish at the beginning of the year for all students or for subgroups of students.

“There are a couple of things to highlight with this definition. First, SLOs are long term, so they generally don’t focus on just a small unit of a course, but rather the main learnings or ‘big ideas’ that a teacher would want his or her students to learn over the course. SLOs are also informed by available data, and they can be developed by a single teacher or a team of teachers. It should also be noted that SLOs



take on a number of names: Denver calls them Student Growth Objectives, and DC Public Schools calls them Teacher-Assessed Student Achievement Data. In Louisiana, they are called Student Learning Targets. Although the names may be different, the concept is generally the same.

#### Slide 9

##### Explain:

“The use of SLOs was truly initiated at the district level. Denver, Austin, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg were early adopters of SLOs, and SLOs were an integral part of their Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) compensation work.

“Most recently, federal and state policy requiring that student growth be a significant factor in educator evaluation has elevated SLOs to the national level. Race to the Top introduced an unprecedented investment in education and pushed states to develop evaluation systems that measure the effectiveness of all educators. ESEA waivers and the continuation of TIF grants have also promoted the development of multiple-measure evaluation systems across states and districts. Within these evaluation systems is the requirement that student growth be used as a significant factor in determining overall effectiveness. For teachers in tested grades and subjects, this often is done through value-added or student growth percentile scores using state standardized achievement test scores. However, the majority of teachers, almost 70 percent, fall into nontested grades and subjects. SLOs have been offered as one way of measuring student growth for these teachers.

“While SLOs offer a way to measure growth, the development of SLOs and the subsequent monitoring of student progress offer important benefits to teacher practice and are also being implemented to:

- Reinforce best practices.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration.
- Provide a critical link between instruction, standards, and assessment.”

#### When and Why Did We Start Thinking About SLOs as Measures of Student Growth?



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## Slide 10

### Explain:

“To understand who is using SLOs in their evaluation systems, we looked at the Race to the Top states, ESEA waiver applications, and TIF grantee programs. A 2012 review of the Race to the Top states showed that 12 out of the 19 RTT states required, recommended, or allowed the use of SLOs for at least some teachers. Early adopters included Rhode Island, Georgia, Maryland, Ohio, and New York. In 2013, looking at ESEA waivers, 10 additional states required, recommended, or allowed the use of SLOs. Finally, many TIF grantees, such as Denver and Austin, are also using SLOs.”

## Where Are SLOs Being Used?

- Many Race to the Top states require or recommend SLOs for at least some teachers.
- On the basis of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waivers, additional states are considering the use of SLOs.
- Teacher Incentive Fund grantees were the early adopters and continue to be trailblazers in the use SLOs.

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## Slide 11

### Explain:

“This slide provides a snapshot of where SLOs are being implemented across the country. This list is by no means comprehensive but does illustrate the variety of implementers, requirements, and uses of SLOs.

“In the left column is a list of the states, such as Georgia and Louisiana, and the districts, such as New Haven, Connecticut, and Hazelwood, Missouri, that are currently implementing SLOs.

“The middle column indicates who is using SLOs in their evaluation system. You can see that some sites use it just for teachers in nontested grades and subjects (NTGS), and others require all teachers, even those in a tested grade or subject, to use SLOs. You will also see that a couple of sites such as Ohio and Austin, Texas, have their principals create SLOs as part of their evaluation system.

“Finally, the right column indicates how the SLOs are being used. In some cases, it is for compensation decisions. In most sites, however, the SLOs are being used as part of educator evaluation.”

## Use in Districts and States

District/State	Required to Use SLOs	Use of SLO Data
Austin, TX	Teachers and administrators	Compensation & Evaluation
Denver, CO	All teachers	Compensation
Georgia	Teachers in NTGS	Evaluation
Hazelwood, MO	All teachers in SIG schools	Evaluation
Indiana	All teachers in the default model	Evaluation
Kentucky	All teachers	Evaluation
Louisiana	Teachers in NTGS	Evaluation
Maryland	Teachers in NTGS	Evaluation
McMinnville, OR	All teachers	Compensation
New Haven, CT	Teachers in NTGS	Evaluation
New York	Teachers in NTGS	Evaluation
Ohio	Offered for all teachers and principals	Evaluation
Rhode Island	All teachers	Evaluation
Wisconsin	All teachers	Evaluation

Source: Lachar-Hanks, L., Mathis, L., Gilling, D., Ryan, M., & Rouse, K. (2013). *Student learning objectives: Early lessons from the Teacher Incentive Fund*. Washington, DC: Teacher Incentive Fund Technical Assistance Network.

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## Slide 12

### Explain:

“So what do we know about SLOs based on the research?”

“Even though SLOs as a measure of student growth is a new concept, early research is emerging. Recent studies indicate that teachers reported an increased focus on data use and student achievement as a result of the SLO goal-setting process. These are practices that align with existing evidence-based practice.

“Teachers also noted that they valued the opportunity to analyze data and plan instruction as part of the SLO process. They reported feeling ‘empowered’ and taking on an increasingly active role in their evaluation.”

## What Does Early Research Indicate?

- Teachers reported increased focus on student achievement and data use and increased use of evidence-based practices as a result of the SLO goal-setting process (Community Training and Assistance Center, 2013; What Works Clearinghouse, 2009).
- Teachers using SLOs valued the opportunity to analyze data and plan instruction as part of the SLO process and reported feeling “empowered” and taking a more active role in their evaluation after SLOs were implemented (Donaldson, 2012; TNTF, 2012).

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## Slide 13

### Explain:

“Although the research on SLOs is minimal, some studies have shown positive correlations between the quality of SLOs and student achievement. The number of objectives met by teachers also has shown signs of correlation to student achievement.

“Other SLO studies, however, have indicated mixed results with student achievement, suggesting a need for additional research.

“Finally, we know that the approaches states and districts take to develop and implement SLOs vary significantly. Those differences and their implications will be discussed throughout today’s workshop.”

## What Does Early Research Indicate?

- Some positive correlations have been found between the quality of SLOs and student achievement and between the number of objectives met by teachers and student achievement, but mixed results point to a need for more research (Austin Independent School District, 2010; Community Training and Assistance Center, 2013).
- SLO approaches vary significantly in terms of teacher agency and SLO comparability (Lachlan-Haché et al., 2013).

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## Slide 14

### Explain:

“Implementing SLOs as a measure of student growth can be a complex endeavor; however, there are several reasons why using SLOs in evaluation systems can be beneficial for a state, district, the teaching profession, and ultimately the students:


1. First, SLOs reinforce best teaching practices. Within the process, teachers use and analyze students’ baseline data, coupled with teachers’ in-depth content knowledge, to set rigorous yet achievable student growth targets that are expected to be achieved by the end of their interval of instruction. Throughout the year, teachers monitor progress through the use of formative assessments as a means to gauge student learning. These data are then used to adjust instruction accordingly to better meet student needs.
2. SLOs also can be used with all teachers as well as administrators or other specialist personnel such as school psychologists, librarians, counselors, and aides. Although SLOs are often introduced to address teachers in nontested grades and subjects, they can and are being used for teachers in all grades and subjects. SLOs are not dependent on state or national assessments; rather, they can be used with local or even teacher-developed assessments.
3. SLOs are adaptable. As states and districts implement new standards—such as the college- and career-ready standards—SLOs can serve as a vehicle for educators to incorporate new standards into curriculum and instructional practice.
4. As we’ve mentioned already, SLOs can facilitate a collaborative culture in which educators work together to establish SLO targets, measures, and benchmarks. Teachers don’t need to develop SLOs in isolation, especially considering the diverse learning needs of the student population and the expertise that specialists bring to bear to

### Why Use SLOs?

- SLOs reinforce evidence-based teaching practices.
- SLOs can be used with all teachers.
- SLOs are adaptable.
- SLOs encourage collaboration.
- SLOs acknowledge the value of educator knowledge and skill.
- SLOs connect teacher practice to student learning.

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<p>the education of all students. Therefore, the quality of SLOs can be greatly enhanced when developed collaboratively with a team of colleagues with various expertise, all devoted to advancing student learning. When we walk through the SLO development process in a moment, we will highlight where there are natural areas for teacher collaboration.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. SLOs respect the knowledge and skills that teachers bring to the table. Teachers play an integral role in the development of their SLOs. The SLO components empower teachers to use their experience and knowledge of students to identify key content and standards and establish student growth targets accordingly.</li> <li>6. Finally, the SLO process makes an explicit connection between the content teachers want students to know and their instruction in the classroom.”</li> </ol> <p><i>At this point, you are about to discuss the specifics of SLOs, so it is a good time to pause for any questions from participants. If you have time, ask participants to reflect on what you just shared. For example, was the information new to them? Was the information reaffirming what they already knew?</i></p>	
<p><b>Slide 15</b></p> <p><i>For states that have their own SLO template, this slide should be modified to reflect the SLO components highlighted within the state template. The descriptions for the components on the template should ideally reflect the criteria on the checklist.</i></p> <p><b>Explain:</b></p> <p>“In the next few slides, we are going to get into the specifics of the components of an SLO.</p> <p>“Generally, SLOs are developed using two forms, which are shown in the next two slides.</p> <p>“In this first slide, we have a mock-up of an SLO template. This is a list of components typically contained in a format for teachers to complete</p>	



and document the process. Most SLOs incorporate the eight components listed:

1. Baseline and trend data are used as the basis of establishing growth targets. These forms of data can include preassessment results, data from previous years, trend data from students over several years, progress-monitoring results, formative and/or summative assessment results, or any other evidence of student knowledge that informs teachers about students' readiness to learn.
2. Student population covered within the SLO includes the number and identification of students, student exceptionality status (e.g., students with disabilities, English language learners), and/or any other relevant student information. For example, if the SLO covers multiple grades or classes, then this section would also include student grades, classes, and academic levels. It is important to note that student mobility can be addressed in this section as well, if the teacher teaches in a school with a highly mobile student population.
3. The interval of instruction is the length of the course that the SLO will cover. If the course is a full year, then the interval would be a year. If the course is a semester, then the interval would be the semester.
4. The standards and content components consist of the main standards and content the teacher addresses and expects students to learn during the interval of instruction.
5. The assessment section identifies assessment(s) the teacher will use to measure and document student growth at the end of the interval.
6. The growth targets illustrate the expected learning at the end of the instructional period based on students' baseline and trend data. Later in the session, we will review different types of growth targets.

"These last two sections are sometimes used within an SLO template as well:

7. The rationale or basis for determining the growth targets explains why they are

necessary and appropriately rigorous. This section often includes an analysis of students' baseline and trend data, highlights the key content and skills the students should know by the end of the interval of instruction, and identifies appropriate and accessible assessments that accurately capture students' knowledge.

8. Finally, instructional strategies highlight the evidence-based and/or high-leverage instructional practices educators intend to employ to ensure student mastery or growth toward the targets.

“Some SLO experts also recommend having a clearly stated learning goal at the beginning of the SLO template. This may be a critical step to focus the SLO on learning rather than growth. If a learning goal is not stated at the beginning, teachers and administrators could run the risk of viewing the SLO process as a growth measure rather than a learning process.”

## Slide 16

*If available, this slide can highlight your state SLO Checklist.*

**Explain:**

"This second slide about developing SLOs is an example of an SLO checklist. Please don't try to read the information on this slide; we will walk through real examples of SLO checklists in just a minute. This slide simply illustrates an example.

“As you can see, the components in the slide correspond directly to the SLO template we just reviewed on the previous slide. The components identified in the template are the same components that go across the top of this checklist. The checklist sets the bar for quality and acts as a guide for SLO consistency. Under each component is a series of indicators that act as a measure of quality for the SLO. SLO approvers use these criteria when determining if an SLO meets a level of expectations for approval and if the targets are rigorous yet attainable. The checklist can be used to streamline both the development

# How Are SLOs Developed?

## SLO Checklist

Baseline and Trend Data	Student Population	Interval of Instruction	Standards and Content	Assessments	Growth Target(s)	Rationale for Growth Target(s)	Instructional Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies sources of information about students</li> <li>Does not report trend data, if available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers all students in the class (or in the case of a targeted SLO, covers all students in the subgroup)</li> <li>Describes the student population and considers any contextual factors that may impact student growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matches the length of the course (in a 3-quarter semester, semester/year)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifies how the SLO will address applicable standards from the highest ranking of the following:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common Core State Standards</li> <li>Academic Content Standards</li> <li>National standards and Florida standards by education organization</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies assessments that have been reviewed by a content expert(s) to assure validity and reliability</li> <li>Measures student learning as intended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures all students in the course have a growth target</li> <li>Clear baseline or pretest data is determined as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates teacher knowledge of students and content</li> <li>Explains why target is appropriate for the population</li> <li>Addresses individual student needs</li> <li>How the teacher will differentiate instruction in support of this SLO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasizes the instructional methods that will best support the students as measured goals set forth in the SLO</li> <li>Discusses how the teacher will differentiate instruction in support of this SLO</li> </ul>

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and the approval processes.

“The checklist serves as a check-and-balance tool for both teachers and SLO approvers as it allows teachers to use the checklist to guide the development of their SLOs and allows evaluators to look across the checklist as they review and approve SLOs. It also helps to ensure consistency and fidelity to the SLO process.”

### Slide 17

#### Explain:

“Now we are going to look at a series of SLO templates to illustrate the many ways in which a state or district could create an SLO template. All of the templates that we will review as well as additional templates are available in your handout titled ‘SLO Templates.’ These examples are provided in order to present a variety of templates and checklists that are intended to stimulate discussion on how they are similar or different.

“This first example is a template developed by the Ohio Department of Education, which can be found on pages 1 and 2 of your ‘SLO Template’ handout. You’ll notice that this template is similar to the SLO checklist discussed on the previous slide. The only component not included on this template is the instructional strategies component.”

What Does an SLO Look Like?  
*Examples From the Field: Ohio (pages 1–2 in handout)*

Learning Objectives: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Slide 18

#### Explain:

“This second template example comes from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and is highlighted on page 3 of the handout. This template is very similar to the Ohio template; however, a couple of key differences are noted. The Wisconsin template asks teachers to identify the instructional strategies and professional supports they will use during the interval of instruction. Some feel that adding the instructional strategies component is critical to the SLO template because it allows the teachers to consider research-based strategies they will

What Does an SLO Look Like?  
*Examples From the Field: Wisconsin (page 3 in handout)*

Learning Objectives: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_  
Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Instructional Strategies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Professional Supports: \_\_\_\_\_

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utilize throughout the year to help their students meet their growth targets. Also, at the bottom of the template, there is a space for the teacher and evaluator to sign the SLO after it has been approved.”

## Slide 19

### Explain:

“This third template example is on page 15 of your handout. This example was developed by the Indiana Department of Education. This template looks different from the others we’ve reviewed so far. As you can see, some of the components we discussed earlier are captured. For example, baseline score is called level of student preparedness, and the growth targets are actually embedded within the performance levels of the SLO. Other components such as the rationale or instructional strategies are not included in this particular template.

“Indiana’s SLO template is unique in that teachers are required to set specific growth goals that fall within four teacher effectiveness rating categories: highly effective, effective, improvement necessary, and ineffective. For this example, a teacher would be considered effective on his or her SLO if 18 out of 21 students received the mastery score on the assessment. Indiana’s template and SLO system in general are also unique in that mastery, rather than growth, is allowed.”

### What Does an SLO Look Like?

*Examples From the Field: Indiana (page 15 in handout)*

Example 8: Elementary Music Teacher

Teacher(s): Elementary Music Education Teacher		Assessment: Teacher (Classroom) Assessment	
Pre-Work: Step 1	Approved Assessment	Score: 4 out of 4 Rubric Points	
Pre-Work: Step 2	Approved Mastery Score	High: 3	
	Level of Student Preparedness	Medium: 2	
		Low: 1	
	Highly Effective	Effective	Improvement Necessary
	Highly Effective	Effective	Improvement Necessary
Step 3: Data Learning Expectation	Highly Effective	Effective	Improvement Necessary
	Highly Effective	Effective	Improvement Necessary

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## Slide 20

### Explain:

“Now we are going to review and discuss the SLO evaluation cycle, which highlights the general steps of the SLO process over the course of the school year. Before we move on, are there any questions about the content we have covered so far?

*Pause for questions.*

“OK. Let’s start this slide by walking through this graphic. The SLO evaluation cycle includes multiple interactions between teams of teachers,



teachers and their students, and teachers and their evaluators. We will review this slide fairly quickly and provide more detail on each of these steps in subsequent slides.

“Step I generally begins with SLO development where teachers or teacher teams work together to develop their SLOs.

“Step II continues with SLO approval, which is often an interaction between teachers and principals or in some cases specialized SLO leaders. At this point, the SLO is submitted to the evaluator and reviewed. If the SLO needs revision, it is returned to the teacher. If it’s approved, the teacher continues to teach students, using the SLO growth targets as a guide to monitor student progress.

“Step III generally occurs at the middle of the academic year, although if the interval of instruction is a semester or trimester, the midcourse check-in would occur at that midpoint. This step involves teachers reviewing student data and then meeting with their evaluator to discuss their progress in meeting the growth targets. It ensures that teachers are continually reviewing student evidence to monitor their progress, which is already common practice among many teachers. This is a critical step to the SLO process, especially in the early years of SLO implementation. It establishes an expectation and the time for teachers and evaluators to reflect on the SLO process, identify any needed changes in instructional practice, determine any services or supports needed to address student needs, and identify any professional development needs of the educator.

“Step IV, the final review and scoring step, takes place when the summative assessment results are collected. The teacher collates and shares with the evaluator any relevant student data and/or evidence in a meaningful manner that accurately reflects student knowledge and progress toward the SLO target. The results are then reviewed and scored by the evaluator.

“In the final step, Step V, the teacher and evaluator meet to discuss the summative scoring and consider impact of the teacher on student learning. Similar to the midcourse check-in, this is also a critical step in the SLO process in the early stages of SLO implementation because it embeds a step for teachers and principals to reflect on the SLO process, learn from the year of experience, incorporate that new knowledge into the next year of the SLO development, and think about how the results will influence professional learning.

“As you look at the evaluation cycle, you will notice the arrow that runs through this cycle. The arrow illustrates the collaborative interaction between teachers and evaluators and between teachers and their students. This interaction is essential as it is the place where instructional adjustments and student and teacher learning take place. Collaboration also allows for continual feedback for teachers to improve their skills as they work toward getting their students to meet their goals.”

#### Slide 21

*If the state has already identified the SLO development process, this slide should be modified to reflect that guidance.*

#### Explain:

“Next, let’s talk briefly about the SLO development process.

“The first step often requires teachers to consider and articulate the core concepts or skills that students will learn during the course. In most SLO examples, the content and standards represent the essential learning of the course. This could be the state standards, the Common Core State Standards, or other college- and career-ready standards. This step requires that teachers keep in mind the balance between content that is broad enough to represent the most important learning in the course, yet narrow enough to be measured through one or more summative assessments.



“The second step in the SLO development process requires teachers to gather and analyze baseline and trend data to investigate and articulate students’ prior knowledge and capacity to handle content covered in the course. These data should include multiple sources, such as end-of-year data from the previous year, baseline data from district assessments, pretest data, progress-monitoring data, curriculum-based assessments, student work samples, and benchmark tests or unit tests that address similar standards.

“After the data are gathered, the teacher analyzes his or her current students’ data to identify trends in student performance and pre-assessment skills and knowledge. The educator can also review past students’ data to identify growth trends specific to the SLO course (e.g., What is the average amount of growth attained in this course? Are there specific skills or content strands that are particularly challenging for students?).

“In many cases, it may be helpful for teachers to think about three groups of students: those who are **prepared to access the course content**, those who are **not prepared** (need some remediation), and those who are **very well prepared** (and may be in need of some enrichment).

“The third step is to identify the focus for the SLO: specifically, the student population and the interval of instruction. The student population can take on many different forms. In some cases, it might be appropriate for the SLO to focus on an entire class, such as for a second-grade teacher. In another situation, the teacher might teach the same class across four periods, such as a high school algebra teacher. In this situation, it may be appropriate for the teacher to write one SLO for all students taking algebra. Still, in other situations, it may be appropriate to write an SLO that targets a subgroup of students. For example, a second-grade teacher might write one SLO that focuses on all students and a second SLO that focuses on a subgroup of students for whom growth is expected but the learning trajectory is different and the students may require specific evidence-based instructional



strategies and/or multi-tiered systems of support in order to progress.

“When determining the interval of instruction, guidance typically suggests that the interval of instruction is the length of the course. For yearlong courses, the interval would be the full year. For semester classes, the interval would be a semester. However, it is important to note any state or district policies that require information to be shared by a certain date. For example, if state policy requires all teacher summative data by mid-May, then the interval of instruction should take into account the time needed to disseminate a summative assessment, score the assessment, score the SLO, and combine the SLO score with any other performance measures. In this situation, if the summative scores were due in mid-May, then the interval of instruction would end close to mid-April.

“Step 4 of the SLO development process requires educators to identify the formative and summative assessments they will use for their SLO. It should be noted that the SLO is only as strong as the assessment used to measure students’ knowledge. This is for two reasons:

- First, it is critically important that the assessments are accessible to all students for whom knowledge can be accurately demonstrated and captured. In addition, selection of the assessment should be based on the assessment’s alignment to the standards and curriculum of the course, and the assessment needs to be able to measure growth of the skills and knowledge being targeted and provide enough ‘stretch’ to show growth in both high- and low-performing students.
- Second, comparability across teachers, grades, and schools should be sought. For example, if there are two sixth-grade science teachers in one school, and one teacher uses a self-created summative assessment to measure student learning and the other teacher uses a vendor-created end-of-course exam, comparing the SLO results between the

two teachers may be difficult. Later today, we will talk more about the different approaches states and districts are taking to support teachers in the assessment selection process.

“The final step in the SLO development process is to develop growth targets and rationales for those growth targets. The growth targets are developed using all of the data and evidence collected so far: the baseline and trend data, the key learning that the students should know by the end of the interval of instruction, and the assessment(s) that measure the key learning. The growth target rationale explains why the target created for the students is appropriate for the students while also being realistic for the teacher. It also should mention how the targets will help students meet the state standards or other college- and career-ready standards. We will talk more about what growth targets can look like later in the day.”

## Slide 22

*Similar to Slide 16, this slide should reflect the state SLO checklist or rubric if available.*

### Explain:

“Step II of the process is, of course, SLO approval. To give you a sense of what a checklist or rubric looks like, we have a handout titled ‘SLO Checklists’ for you to review. The handout is easier to read than these slides, but this slide is an example of the Ohio checklist that can be found on page 1 of your handout. As you can see, each component of the SLO template has a set of criteria that needs to be included in the SLO before it can be considered approved.”



### Slide 23

**Explain:**

“This is an example of a Wisconsin checklist and is on page 2 of your handout.”



### Slide 24

**Explain:**

“The third SLO checklist that we are highlighting comes from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment and is on page 5 of the Checklist handout.

“What’s different about this checklist is that the criteria are scored on a spectrum. Rather than the evaluator providing just a simple yes or no, the evaluator grades the SLO with a range of options.”

*If time allows, ask participants to discuss the pros and cons of the checklists versus rubric approach.*



### Slide 25

**Explain:**

“After the SLO is approved, teachers work together with students to meet the growth goals.

“In many states and districts, it is recommended or required for evaluators to complete a midcourse check-in with teachers to ensure that they are meeting growth goals. Many times, teachers are already collecting data throughout the course of the interval of instruction and are using that data to guide their instruction. The midcourse check-in ensures that the approver is looped into this process.

“During the check-in session, the teacher should meet with the evaluator and discuss how the



teacher is progressing toward achieving his or her SLOs. These conversations will be particularly useful in the early years of SLO implementation as educators reflect on the growth targets they have set for their students. If the targets are too easy or too difficult to achieve, the educator and evaluator should discuss how they can create more appropriate targets for future years.

“During this conversation, the educator and evaluator should also discuss any extenuating circumstances that might cause the educator to modify his or her SLO. This modification should occur only on rare occasions, but there are situations where it is appropriate, such as a change in teaching assignment, a significant influx or exodus of students, or a major event impacting instruction (e.g., relocation of students to another facility).”

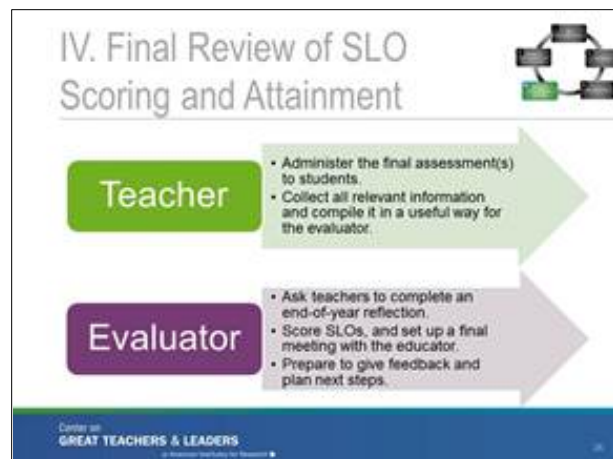
#### Slide 26

##### Explain:

“At the end of the interval of instruction, the educator and evaluator review the data from the SLO to see if the growth targets were met. The SLO scoring process often requires different tasks for the educator and evaluator.

“Prior to the end-of-year review, **teachers** can make the process more efficient by collecting relevant information and compiling it in a systematic way. Having all student work or other documentation clearly organized and final student scores summarized saves valuable time and reduces paperwork. When possible, capitalize on data-tracking systems and processes already in place.

“Although student performance data are a necessary component of this process, **evaluators** may want to consider asking educators to complete an end-of-year reflection that addresses the attainment of student targets as well as the educator’s experience with the SLO process. After receiving the review documents, evaluators then need time to review SLO data and make decisions around scoring and feedback. This is a critical




phase of the process that can be time-consuming and may require meetings across evaluators to ensure consistency in both scoring and feedback. School- and/or district-level calibration sessions should be considered.”

#### Slide 27

##### Explain:

“Here is a snapshot of what a teacher’s data compilation may look like. Such snapshots will look different, depending on the post-assessment and the number of students. For example, not all post-assessments will be numerically based, and most classrooms will have 25 or more students. In this example, the teacher lists the pretest and posttest scores for each student, the growth each student made, each target growth score based on the approved SLO, and whether or not the student met his or her goal. A simple table like this is useful for the final review and scoring session with the evaluator.”



### Student Data Snapshot

Student	Pretest (out of 100)	Posttest (out of 100)	Growth	Target Growth	Met Growth Target?
Student A	20	48	+28	+20	YES
Student B	24	49	+25	+20	YES
Student C	28	40	+12	+20	NO
Student D	45	55	+10	+15	NO
Student E	46	46	+0	+15	NO

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#### Slide 28

##### Explain:

“When the scoring is complete, the final—and perhaps the most important—step is a discussion of the summative rating and its impact on teacher performance.

“The evaluator should come prepared to the final SLO meeting having reviewed the teacher’s materials and completed a scoring guide to determine the teacher’s summative SLO score. Following these steps, the meeting with the teacher should focus on the summative rating and lessons learned from the process.

“In the early stages of implementation, these discussions can focus on the quality of the baseline data, the validity of the assessment, or the accuracy of the growth target. The discussion also should address aspects of the teacher’s performance that were valuable for improving student learning as well as those aspects that could be improved. Conversations around which instructional practices produce student learning



### V. Discussion of Summative Rating and Impact on Performance

- Seek opportunities to practice providing critical feedback in a safe and supportive environment.
- Focus on the summative rating and lessons learned from the process.
- Address aspects of the educator’s performance that were valuable for improving student learning as well as those aspects that could be improved.
- Prepare to offer resources to struggling teachers while providing reinforcement and opportunity for effective teachers.

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<p>and which need refinement can also lead to improved practice and greater gains in student learning. Tying results from observation and other evaluation measures to this discussion also may prove useful.</p> <p>“For this critical piece of the SLO process, districts and states can offer evaluators conversation templates, prompts, trainings, and other resources to support more consistent and high-quality conversations with teachers.</p> <p>“OK. This is our last slide of our introductory section. Remember how I asked you to write on a Post-it Note the one question you have when you hear the term <i>student learning objective</i>? Did we answer your question?”</p>	
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## Activity: Approaches to SLO Guidance

This first activity was developed to support participant knowledge around the variety of SLO guidance that states and districts have offered. It corresponds with the handout titled “Activity: Approaches to SLO Guidance.”

Allow participants **15 minutes to read the handout**. End the activity with a **10-minute group discussion**, prompted by the reflection questions.

### Slide 29

#### Explain:

“Our next activity is going to support your growing understanding of how states and districts are guiding schools in the SLO process. Take a look at the handout titled ‘Activity: Approaches to SLO Guidance.’ The handout includes four approaches that you will review: New York, Ohio, McMinnville (Oregon), and Indiana. Each approach highlights various aspects of SLO guidance offered:

- How do SLOs fit into the evaluation system?
- Who creates SLOs?
- How many SLOs are created?
- What assessments are used?
- How are SLOs scored?”

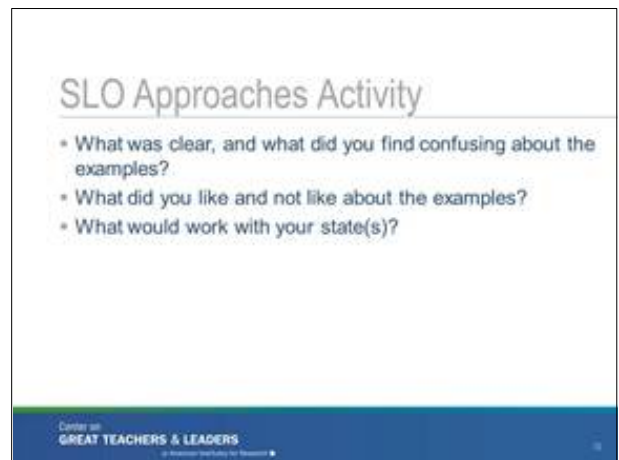


### Slide 30

#### Explain:

“Review the four approaches and consider the three questions on this slide. We will spend 15 minutes reading the material and another 10 discussing your thoughts at the end of the activity. Go ahead now and begin reading.”

*During this time, walk around the room to answer questions and to ensure participants stay on task. Five minutes before the 15-minute reading section ends, let participants know that they have five minutes remaining. At the end of the time, focus everyone’s attention and begin to address the three questions on the slide. Popcorn around the room to hear a variety of perspectives.*





## Activity: Purposes of SLOs

This activity is a reflection on the SLO process that also allows the participants to weave in the purposes of SLOs into their particular district or state. At the end of the activity, participants will be self-reflecting on four questions and sharing their thoughts with the group.

Allow **45 minutes** for this activity.

### Slide 31

#### Explain:

“Now that we have learned a bit about the SLO cycle and some of the approaches states and districts have taken with SLOs, let’s talk a little bit about the purposes of SLOs and some of the contributions they make to teaching and learning. This activity combines a reflection on the SLO process while considering some of its purposes.”



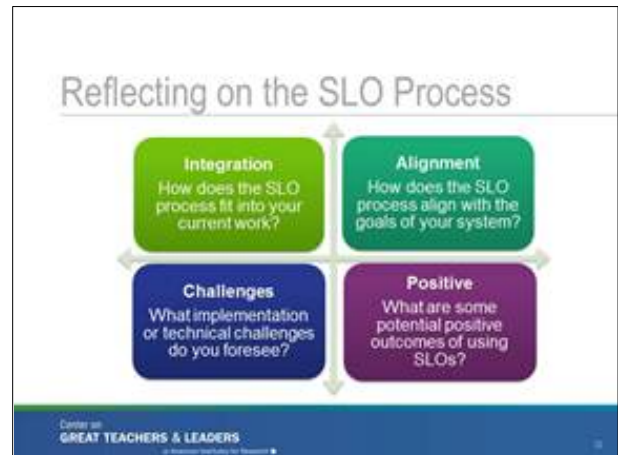
### Slide 32

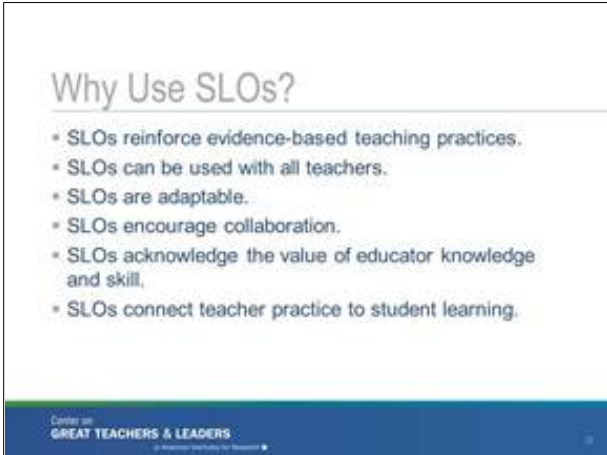
*Facilitators should be prepared to provide some examples of integration opportunities, areas of alignment, positive outcomes and potential challenges that fit the state-context.*

#### Explain:

“This activity reflects on the SLO process that we learned about earlier and thinking about SLOs’ purposes in four domains:

- **Integration.** Think about how the SLO process fits into teachers’ and principals’ current work. Keep in mind the data use that goes into the SLO process, the SLO approval process, and the midcourse check-in. How does this process fit into what is currently practiced?
- **Alignment.** Think about how SLOs fit with the current mission of the state or district, the current educator evaluation system, and the professional development initiatives. This will be an important communication piece for SLOs, and thinking about alignment will help educators avoid viewing SLOs as just another compliance-driven initiative.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Positive Outcomes.</b> What are some of the potential positive outcomes of using SLOs? How will the SLO process positively contribute to teacher professional development and increased student achievement?</li> <li>• <b>Challenges.</b> Finally, what are some technical challenges you foresee? Where do you think teachers and principals will need some additional resources? Thinking about these potential challenges ahead of time will help you to brainstorm some solutions.</li> </ul> <p>“Take some time to self-reflect on these questions, and we will share out with the group afterwards.”</p>	
<p><b>Slide 33</b></p> <p><b>Explain:</b></p> <p>“This slide is a repeat of a previous slide to remind everyone about some of the positive outcomes of SLOs. These points are important for starting conversations around SLOs and as a basis for communications plans. Remember to start out with positive outcomes like these to create a foundation for discussions and to deter SLOs being viewed as ‘just another thing to do’ for the practitioners involved.</p> <p>“For example, we often state, ‘SLOs highlight best practices; create opportunities for collaboration; and provide a valuable link between instruction, curricula, and assessment.’”</p>	 <p>The slide titled "Why Use SLOs?" lists the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLOs reinforce evidence-based teaching practices.</li> <li>• SLOs can be used with all teachers.</li> <li>• SLOs are adaptable.</li> <li>• SLOs encourage collaboration.</li> <li>• SLOs acknowledge the value of educator knowledge and skill.</li> <li>• SLOs connect teacher practice to student learning.</li> </ul> <p>At the bottom, it says "Center on GREAT TEACHERS &amp; LEADERS" and "OF RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND REFORM".</p>

## SLO Approaches

This section serves as an introduction to the SLO approaches spectrum between teacher agency and comparability. The purpose of this section is to promote the discussion among states and districts to consider the SLO approaches spectrum, collectively recognizing this important decision point in their work in developing SLO guidance.

Allow **30 minutes** to discuss slides 34 and 35.

### Slide 34

#### Explain:

“In the first activity, we learned about the variety of guidance states and districts are offering when it comes to SLOs. We have all seen that SLO guidance can vary pretty significantly from location to location. In this short section, we’d like to further that discussion and have you focus on two different aspects of SLOs as they relate to the approach a state or district can take with regard to the writing of the SLO itself.”



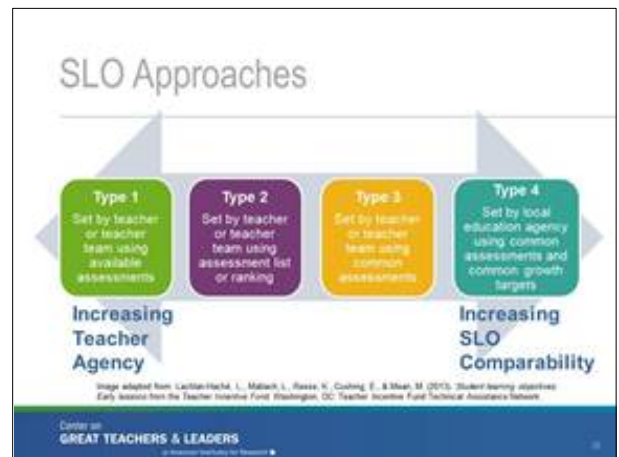
### Slide 35

*If already known, the state should identify where in the spectrum their current SLO approach falls and where they hope to fall on the spectrum over time.*

#### Explain:

“One of the most significant variations in SLO approaches lies on this spectrum between teacher agency and comparability. **Teacher agency** refers to the amount of autonomy teachers have in creating SLOs, specifically in terms of assessment choice and setting growth targets. **Comparability** refers to how similar SLOs are among teachers who teach the same grade or subject across classrooms, buildings, district, or state. Let’s look at the SLO spectrum:

- On the left side of this spectrum, we have districts such as Denver Public Schools and Austin Independent School District, which could be considered Type 1 approaches. In these two districts, teachers write their own SLOs. Teachers conduct a needs assessment of



<p>the students in their classroom and identify area(s) of need. They base their SLO on the standards and assessments that most closely align with their curriculum. Teachers can select district-created assessments or create their own assessments. The teacher-created assessments are reviewed and required to meet district expectations for rigor and quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 2 is similar in that teachers or teacher teams set their SLOs, but they use an assessment list or ranking to determine the type of assessment they apply within the SLO. Ohio uses this type of approach in its SLO process. The state also offers guidance to support assessment literacy—pushing teachers to select or design assessments that are valid, reliable, free of bias, and complete with stretch.</li> <li>• Type 3 increases SLO comparability by requiring teachers to build their SLOs around the assessments provided and required. New York uses this approach, with teachers working in subject(s)/grade(s) where fewer than half of the students are covered by state-provided growth measures.</li> <li>• Type 4 increases SLO comparability and reduces teacher agency in the SLO process by essentially writing the SLO for the teacher, using common assessments and common growth targets. Some might argue that these measures shouldn't even be called SLOs, and in some cases they aren't. Achievement First schools use this type of approach in their Student Achievement Measures or SAMs. District staff members use a calibration assessment to determine what level of student growth to expect on selected, commercially available assessments in each grade and subject. Students are placed into one of four proficiency levels based on the calibration assessment. Then, content experts set cut-points for the proficiency levels on the final or end-of-course assessment. Depending on where students fall within the matrix, growth is categorized as positive, neutral, minimum, or negative.</li> </ul>	
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<p>“It’s important to note that comparability could be increased significantly at the school level in Type I approaches if teachers work collaboratively in teams to develop assessments and SLOs. Further, there are other approaches that we haven’t highlighted here. For example, Rhode Island allows teachers to select their own assessment, but less well-known assessments require more documentation for approval—we could consider that a Type 1.5 approach. McMinnville School District in Oregon falls somewhere between Type 3 and 4: It uses common assessments and common growth goals, but the targets have been set by teams of teachers who have had extensive professional development in assessment literacy.</p> <p>“In all, most states and districts are building unique systems that balance this spectrum between teacher agency and SLO comparability. But some are making decisions without consciously considering the ends of this spectrum.</p> <p>“What comes to mind as you look at this spectrum? Where does your state or district seem to fall on the continuum?”</p>	
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## Activity: Reviewing an SLO

This activity provides participants an opportunity to look at different examples of SLOs from three states. The activity corresponds with the handout titled “Activity: Reviewing an SLO.” The objective is for participants to identify key questions about the SLO examples and discuss those questions as a large group.

Allow **45 minutes** for this activity.

### Slide 36

*In this activity, participants review three different examples of SLOs: one from Ohio, one from Rhode Island, and one from Indiana. As they review the examples, they can write down questions they have about the different examples. The purpose of the activity is for the participants to look at real examples, generate practical questions about SLOs, and have their questions answered.*

*On chart paper, write the names of the different sections of the SLO in columns so there is room for Post-It notes to be posted in that section for this activity. Here is a sample of the first three sections:*

<u>Baseline and Trend Data</u>	<u>Student Population</u>	<u>Interval of Instruction</u>

*After participants finish their reviews, walk through the questions posted and respond to the questions based on your knowledge of how states and districts address each question posed.*



### Slide 37

*If available, this activity should be done with an SLO example that was developed in your state using a state developed template and checklist.*

#### Explain:

“This next activity will include the following:

- Review the three SLOs provided in the handout (Ohio, Rhode Island, and Indiana).
- As you review, jot down questions or concerns about the SLOs using the Post-it Notes provided.
- When finished, place your Post-it Notes in the appropriate SLO section listed on the chart paper.
- As a group, we will review questions and concerns and collectively consider how best to address each.”

### Reviewing an SLO Activity

- Review the three SLOs provided in the handout.
- As you review, jot down questions or concerns about the SLOs using the self-adhesive notes provided.
- When finished, place your notes in the appropriate SLO section listed on the chart paper.
- As a group, we will review questions and concerns and collectively consider how best to address each.

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### Slide 38

#### Explain:

“The next series of slides provide some examples of what an SLO growth target could look like. We recognize that this is an important step in the SLO development process. These examples will give you a sense of the variety of growth targets and their limitations and strengths. In no way are these examples representative of all the possible kinds of growth targets. There are strengths and limitations to each, and all those points should be considered. It should also be noted that there is currently no research regarding types of growth targets; thus, professional judgment on the part of the teacher is crucial.

“This first example is a simple growth target that has the same amount of growth for all students covered under the SLO. In this example, all students are expected to grow 20 points on the assessment by the end of the semester in order for the teacher to meet his or her SLO. This growth target would be appropriate to use if 20 points demonstrated sufficient growth for all students.

“One limitation of this target is that it assumes that 20 points is sufficient or even possible for all

### Examples of SLO Growth Targets

#### Basic Growth Target

- All students have the same growth target.
- Example: All of my students will grow by 20 points by the end of the semester.

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students. For example, is a student who grows from 40 to 60 points growing as much or more than a student who is growing from 60 to 80 points? In some cases, this is the right amount of growth and in other situations it could be too high or too low for the student population and the assessment chosen.”

### Slide 39

#### Explain:

“Setting a common amount of growth may not be appropriate in all circumstances. For example, students who start the year with a lower baseline score may require more rigorous growth goals to close the achievement gap. In this situation, one way to set a growth target is to use a simple calculation.

“This example is what the Austin school district uses for its growth targets. All students are expected to grow half the distance between their baseline score and 100. As the examples show, the amount of growth expected of the student varies based on his or her pre-assessment score.

“It’s important to note that this calculation is valuable in its simplicity, and it can guide growth targets for teachers who are using a new assessment or lack sufficient data to make more precise growth targets. Yet some assessments aren’t designed so that growth from a 10 to a 55 is equivalent to growth from an 80 to a 90. Further, formulas may push teachers to assume that lower performing students will grow more than higher performing students, which is not necessarily the case. These are important considerations when choosing the type of growth target used. They point to the importance of assessment literacy for both teachers and evaluators.”

## Examples of SLO Growth Targets

### Simple Average Growth Calculation

- Growth targets are determined by a common formula, but each student has a different growth target based on his or her preassessment score.
- *Example:* Based on the preassessment score, students will score halfway between their baseline score and 100.
- If student scored 50 on the preassessment, his or her growth target is 75.
- If a student score 40 on the preassessment, his or her growth target is 70.

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## Slide 40

### Explain:

“Another way to write a growth target is to use a tiered growth target. With a tiered target, teachers group their students on the basis of their pre-assessment data and, after reviewing trend data, set growth targets based on the expected growth for each tier of students.

In this hypothetical example, the teacher knows that students who start the year with a baseline score of 0–45 tend to score around a 65 on the end-of-year assessment. Students who scored between 45 and 70 tend to score around 75 points on end-of-year assessment, and so on. This teacher is aiming to bring her students to the level of expected growth based on both baseline and trend data.”

*Pause to ask participants if they have any questions.*

“One more point of note before moving on to the next slide: If you look at these tiers, you might realize one drawback to this approach. Can anyone spot the limitation to this approach?”

### Explain:

“If a student scores a 70 on his or her pre-assessment, what is that student’s expected growth? And if a student scores a 71, what is the expected growth?”

*Allow participants time to consider the answers to these questions. Ideally, participants will recognize that the limitation lies in the chunking process. When a student scores a 70, that student only has to grow 5 points. If another student scores a 71, that student has to grow 14 points. This difference can be narrowed by using the type of growth target outlined on the following slide.*

## Examples of SLO Growth Targets

### Tiered Growth Target

- Group students together based on their preassessment scores.
- Divide students into three or more categories (low, mid, advanced).

• Example:

Preassessment Score	Growth Score
0–45 points	65
46–70 points	75
70+ points	85

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## Slide 41

### Explain:

“This final example of a growth target is called an advanced tiered target and is designed to address the challenge we just identified in the previous example. An advanced tiered growth target pushes all students to achieve the highest level of growth within their tier. As the table shows, if students scored a 70 on the pre-assessment, they would have to score an 85 on the post-assessment; if they scored a 71 on the pre-assessment, they would be expected to score an 85 on the post-assessment.”

## Examples of SLO Growth Targets

### Advanced Tiered Growth Target

- Students have a tiered target based on their preassessment.
- Divide students into three or more categories (low, mid, advanced).
- Students have to reach the greater of the two targets.

• Example:

Preassessment Score	Growth Score
0–45 points	65 or +35 points, whichever is greater
46–70 points	75 or +15 points, whichever is greater
70+ points	85 or +14 points, whichever is greater

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## Activity: Writing an SLO

In this activity, participants will be required to write an SLO, given a scenario. The scenario provides participants the opportunity to write an SLO without having their own classroom or student data at hand. The activity corresponds to the handout titled “Activity: Writing an SLO,” which includes two SLO templates and two SLO checklists that can be used for the activity. This allows participants to test differing formats to consider which might work best in their context. The activity ends with a group discussion, prompted by reflection questions.

Allow **60 minutes** for this activity.

### Slide 42

#### Explain:

“In our next activity, we will use the handout titled ‘Activity: Writing an SLO.’ The purpose of this activity is to give you a sense of what information and skills are required to write an SLO. It is also an opportunity to generate more discussion about how SLOs will be used in your contexts.”



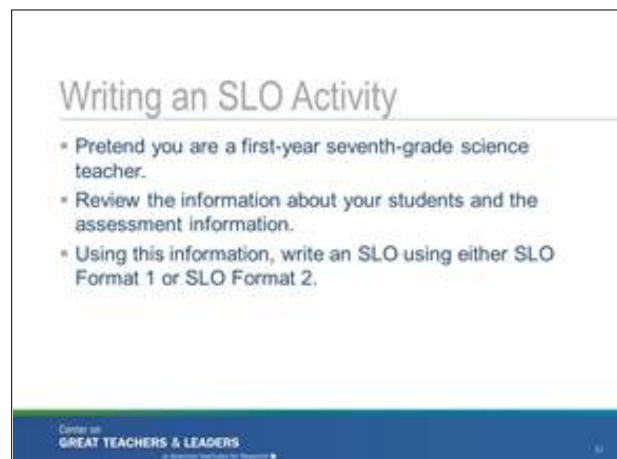
### Slide 43

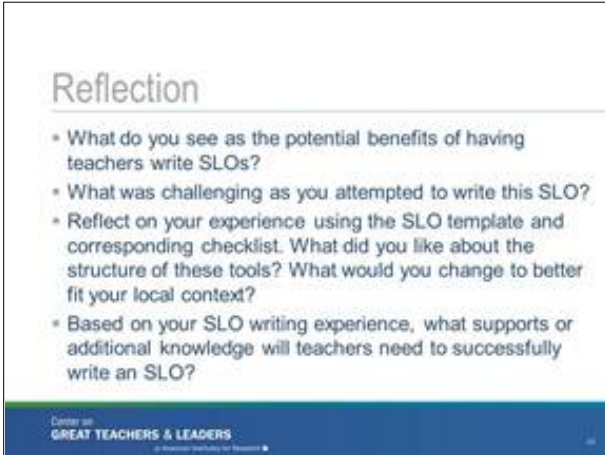
#### Explain:

“The handout provides a scenario that will allow you to write a trial SLO. We’re going to ask you to pretend that you are a first-year seventh-grade science teacher. In the handout, we have included information about your students, about the assessments you have access to, and some basic information about students who have taken this course before. Because you are a first-year teacher, you’ll be relying on information from another teacher’s classroom.

“Also in this handout, we have provided two varieties of SLO templates as well as two checklists.”

*You can allow participants to select which format they would like to use, OR you can assign specific groups Format 1 and Format 2. If the group is in the early stages of considering formats, it’s best*



<p><i>that some use one and some use another so a variety of perspectives can be elicited from the group. If the state has already developed a template and checklist, those resources should be used in this activity.</i></p> <p><i>Allow <b>35 minutes for reading and writing</b>, checking in with participants as they work. In many cases, participants need additional time. Ask them to hold up fingers as to how many minutes they need to complete the work.</i></p>	
<p><b>Slide 44</b></p> <p><i>When participants have finished writing the SLO, facilitate a <b>group discussion for 10–15 minutes</b>, using the reflection questions listed on this slide.</i></p>	 <p><b>Reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you see as the potential benefits of having teachers write SLOs?</li> <li>• What was challenging as you attempted to write this SLO?</li> <li>• Reflect on your experience using the SLO template and corresponding checklist. What did you like about the structure of these tools? What would you change to better fit your local context?</li> <li>• Based on your SLO writing experience, what supports or additional knowledge will teachers need to successfully write an SLO?</li> </ul> <p>Center on <b>GREAT TEACHERS &amp; LEADERS</b> <small>A Partnership for Learning and Research</small></p>

## SLO Technical and Implementation Challenges

This section highlights the key technical and implementation challenges for using SLOs in evaluation systems, while also providing some examples on how states and districts are addressing these challenges.

This section should take **30–45 minutes** depending on the number of questions asked.

### Slide 45



### Slide 46

#### Explain:

“Now, let’s shift the focus to another why question: Why not use SLOs? Or stated another way, what are the challenges of using SLOs? In the same way that it’s valuable to consider the benefits of SLOs, it’s also valuable to consider the challenges. Knowing the challenges also will help define the vision. For example, one challenge of SLO implementation is that it often comes with a culture shift that is sometimes unanticipated.

“It’s important to be able to acknowledge the challenges as well as the benefits. Teachers, principals, and other school staff will appreciate that these challenges are recognized and anticipated with strategic thinking and solutions. In addition, it’s also important to encourage a pilot period without high stakes, so that implementation data can be collected and improvements made on the process. By using a pilot, some of the challenges can be mitigated when SLOs are implemented on a larger scale.”



## Slide 47

*Limitations may be added to or removed from this list depending on state context.*

### Explain:

“This slide identifies some of the key challenges that we have heard as reasons for not using SLOs. Although these are definitely challenges, we have seen states and districts work toward reducing these challenges over time. Let’s look at these challenges one at a time:

- There is a lack of high-quality assessments for all grades and subjects. As already mentioned, SLOs are only as strong as the assessments used, and identifying high-quality assessments for all teachers in all grades can be difficult. To address this issue, states and districts have been taking various steps to support teachers in selecting the most appropriate and high-quality assessments available. Some states—New York, for example—have provided a list of assessments to the teachers. In other states such as Georgia, there has been a significant investment in developing teacher assessment literacy to create new assessments that are high quality. Still, in other states, for example, Ohio, a list of ranked assessments is provided to teachers so that they know which type of assessment is prioritized at the state level.
- Another challenge is knowing how to set appropriate growth targets for all students, especially in the beginning years of SLO implementation. Knowing what is appropriate growth for all students given their unique strengths and weaknesses is a challenge. To address this challenge, states and districts provide support in a variety of ways. As mentioned, Austin provides a growth calculation that all teachers use to set their growth targets. Other districts are considering developing growth targets for teachers while still allowing them to slightly increase or slightly decrease the target provided, based on their student population.
- Setting rigorous but realistic targets is also challenging. There is a danger that great

## Limitations of SLOs

- Lack of high-quality assessments for all grades and subjects
- Difficult to create appropriate growth targets for all students
- Challenging to set rigorous but realistic targets
- Limits of capacity and resources that make continuous improvement of the SLO process difficult

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teachers set high expectations for themselves and their students and then fail in achieving the SLO. Similarly, a struggling teacher could set relatively low growth goals and achieve them without setting a very high standard for rigor. By embedding points of reflection for teachers, such as the midcourse check-in or the end-of-course discussion, states and districts are ensuring that teachers continually learn from the growth goal-setting process and use that information in subsequent years.

- Finally, limited capacity and resources at the state and local levels make it difficult to continuously monitor and improve the SLO process. We all know that funding is tight for this work; yet, to ensure that the initiative is successful, states and districts need time, staff capacity, and resources to implement SLOs with fidelity. Fortunately, several leading states and districts—such as Rhode Island, Ohio, Denver, and Austin—have shared their lessons learned and strategies for implementation across the country. Staying abreast of early adopters is one way states and districts currently in the beginning stages of development can capitalize on and learn from the experiences of others.”

#### Slide 48

##### Explain:

“At this point in the day, it should be obvious that SLOs represent a shift in teacher and principal responsibilities and practice. Assessing the culture change is one way that states and districts can begin to plan for the necessary resources and staff to facilitate this change in responsibility and practice. To build a sustainable culture of SLO use, (1) consider the obstacles that lie ahead and develop a plan for addressing those obstacles; (2) encourage teacher confidence in the SLO process by providing training and opportunities for teachers to ask questions to experts on the SLO process; (3) create a coherent vision for how SLOs address the goals of the state or district and how they integrate into the work already underway in schools.”

### How Do States and Districts Prepare for SLO Implementation?

- **Assess the culture change.** Recognize that SLOs may represent a shift in educator practice. To build a sustainable culture of SLO use, consider the obstacles that lie ahead, develop teacher confidence in the SLO process, and create a coherent vision of the value of the SLO process.

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## Slide 49

### Explain:

“Developing materials and resources is a critical step for all stakeholders new to the SLO process. Not only do supporting materials provide key information on the state or district process, but they also act as a main method for ensuring consistent implementation of the process. Effective SLO implementation requires resources that promote rigor, consistency, and clarity across schools and districts. Such resources include the following:

- Templates, checklists, timelines, examples
- Guidebooks, videos, training materials
- Hotlines, office hours
- Transition plans

“Because there are so many SLO implementers, states and districts now have the opportunity to strategically borrow and modify resources such as templates, checklists, timelines, guidebooks, and examples in a way that the early adopters did not.

“Furthermore, there are lessons learned from trainings and online supports that can be shared. Office hours are one resource that can serve in a fashion similar to a hotline, without requiring all of the staff time. Office hours are a dedicated time, such as 2:00–4:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during which the state or district sets up a webinar and allows teachers or other stakeholders to call into the webinar and ask any questions they may have about SLOs. Indiana has used office hours to address stakeholder questions and concerns while keeping in mind the busy schedules of their state team.

“If a state has more time or resources, a Help Desk or hotline can be developed. The Help Desk allows stakeholders to e-mail any questions they have about SLOs and get a response within a short period of time.

“The final resource, transition plans, is a critical step in the implementation process. Encouraging states and districts to think beyond initial

## How Do States and Districts Prepare for SLO Implementation?

- **Provide supporting materials.** Effective SLO implementation requires resources that promote rigor, consistency, and clarity across schools and districts.
  - Templates, checklists, timelines, examples
  - Guidebooks, videos, training materials, FAQ documents
  - Hotlines, office hours
  - Transition plans

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<p>implementation to identify what processes need to be in place to ensure success accomplishes two things: It not only provides a roadmap for state and district staff, but it also demonstrates to teachers and principals a long-term commitment to the work. Teachers and principals can see the long-term vision for the work and the various indicators of success along the way, and that can be a powerful tool when trying to get stakeholder buy-in.”</p>	
<p><b>Slide 50</b></p> <p><b>Explain:</b>  “Offering ongoing training and rater calibration is a critical step in ensuring that SLO evaluators have a common understanding of what a quality SLO looks like. This is especially true for principals who will need to establish a common understanding of what the different SLO criteria look like in practice on the SLO checklist. Initial training is critical; however, providing ongoing training and rater calibration is one way to ensure long-term rigor and consistency throughout schools and districts.”</p>	<p>How Do States and Districts Prepare for SLO Implementation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Offer training and rater calibration.</b> Offer ongoing training to ensure rigor and consistency throughout schools and districts.</li> </ul> <p>Center on <b>GREAT TEACHERS &amp; LEADERS</b>  <small>© 2014 Pearson Education, Inc. All Rights Reserved.</small></p>
<p><b>Slide 51</b></p> <p><b>Explain:</b>  “This example of a lesson learned has been shared by our colleagues in Rhode Island. During early implementation, the state had not established a scoring process for SLOs. As a result, principals were unsure how to score the SLOs, and the state received a variety of SLO scores that were determined through a variety of methods. This made it extremely difficult to make any comparison among scores. Establishing a process for scoring SLOs at the end of the interval of instruction early on in SLO implementation is important. Creating such a process will ensure consistent and fair ratings across teachers and evaluators while producing scores that can be easily combined with other measures for summative rating.”</p>	<p>How Do States and Districts Prepare for SLO Implementation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide a structure and process for scoring SLOs.</b> Foster consistent and fair ratings across teachers and evaluators while producing scores that can be easily combined with other measures to create a final summative rating.</li> </ul> <p>Center on <b>GREAT TEACHERS &amp; LEADERS</b>  <small>© 2014 Pearson Education, Inc. All Rights Reserved.</small></p>

## Slide 52

### Explain:

“Finally, establishing mechanisms that can monitor and evaluate the SLO implementation process over time is a critical step. Soliciting and implementing feedback from teachers and principals can help demonstrate the state’s or district’s commitment to improving the process for school-based staff. Conducting a random audit of SLOs will help ensure fidelity to the SLO process. It is a good idea to get together a group of key stakeholders to design an SLO monitoring process. Triangulating evaluation data such as value-added scores, observation scores, and SLO scores can help states and districts identify any weaknesses in the SLO process. In some cases, this may require additional professional development or training sessions for principals or teachers, or it could require a policy change at the state or district level. Finally, incorporating recent and relevant research on SLOs can ensure that the state or district continues to implement promising practices. Incorporating all of these steps into the SLO process can help promote the rigor of the SLO process and facilitate discussion and reflection that lead to insightful revisions to the system.”

## How Do States and Districts Prepare for SLO Implementation?

- **Monitor and evaluate SLO implementation.** Monitor, triangulate, and research the SLO process to promote the rigor, discussion, and reflection that lead to insightful revisions to the system.
- SLO audits are encouraged in order to ensure fidelity to the SLO process. Establish a committee of stakeholders (teachers, principals, district staff, etc.) to design a process by which SLOs can be verified.

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## Slide 53

### Explain:

“In conclusion, SLOs can be considered an investment in our profession. They highlight best practices; create opportunities for collaboration; and provide a valuable link between instruction, curricula, and assessment.

“If implemented sustainably and well, SLOs can drive professional learning, nurture assessment literacy, and build educator capacity for data-driven instruction.”

## What Lies in the Future for SLOs?



- SLOs can be considered an investment in our profession. They highlight best practices, create opportunities for collaboration, and provide a valuable link between instruction, curricula, and assessment.
- If implemented sustainably and well, SLOs can drive professional learning, nurture assessment literacy, and build educator capacity for data-driven instruction.

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## SLO Lessons Learned: A Review of TIF Grantees

The activity corresponds to the handout titled “Activity: Lessons Learned From Teacher Incentive Fund Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) Implementers.” The SLO Lessons Learned section gives participants a chance to read through some common lessons learned and shared by SLO implementers who have been awarded Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grants. Participants will read, discuss in small groups, and share out some key take-aways from the activity.

This activity can take **45–60 minutes**.

### Slide 54

#### Explain:

“Despite the technical and implementation challenges presented in the last section, we do have case studies of several sites that have implemented SLOs—some for several years now. American Institutes for Research, a partner in the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Technical Assistance Network, wrote a report about the lessons learned in sites that have implemented SLOs as part of their TIF award. The paper focuses on highlighting these lessons, presenting other findings in the SLO implementation process, and discussing the ongoing challenges. It’s important to note that the TIF grant focuses on adding a performance-based compensation component to educator evaluation systems. Thus, the context of the sites’ SLOs may be different from your state or district, but this paper focuses on their SLO implementation and the lessons presented are applicable to all new SLO implementers.”



### Slide 55

#### Explain:

“This activity will allow you to learn about six major, common lessons learned among these sites and give you the opportunity to discuss a couple of the lessons learned with your group. You’ll also get to brainstorm ways that you can address these lessons in your state or district.

“So, please sit with your state or district team and read through the lessons learned. Then select two lessons that really resonate with the situation in your district or state. Some guiding questions for discussion in your group are on pages 5 and 6.



<p>Select a facilitator who will lead the discussion of the questions. Select a writer who will compile your group’s answers to the worksheet questions.</p> <p>We will share out at the end of the activity, so also select a speaker who will represent your group.”</p>	
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## Next Steps for Your Team

This final section supports Regional Comprehensive Center and state teams as they consider next steps. It is a culminating activity that blends new foundational knowledge with the context and conditions participants are experiencing as they implement SLOs. Share the handout titled “Next Steps for Your Team” and ask participants to take notes. The questions aim to support teams as they navigate the early steps of developing SLO policy. The activity ends with a group discussion, allowing teams to learn from one another and share perspectives.

Ideally, you will have **30–60 minutes** for this activity, which can complete the training day or be used at the start of a follow-up meeting.

### Slide 56

#### Explain:

“The final activity for this session allows your team some time to reflect on what you have learned today. We want you to consider your next steps as a team, so that when you prepare to engage in this work again, you have a common game plan.

“Please use the handout ‘Next Steps for Your Team’ to consider the questions on the next slide.”



### Slide 57

*Read the list of questions and tell participants that they will have **30 minutes to work in teams to complete the worksheet.***

*Check in with participants as they complete the worksheet. Walk around the room to answer questions and ensure that teams are on task.*

*When all groups are near completion, focus everyone’s attention at the front of the room and ask teams to share some of their answers with the large group. Go question-by-question to cover all aspects of the assignment. Teams will likely learn from one another through this sharing.*

*After all teams have shared at least one answer, thank the groups for their attention and complete the remaining slides.*





## Slide 58

*It would be helpful to become familiar with each of these resources prior to the discussion, so that you can describe the capacity of each resource as you walk the participants through the discussion.*

### Explain:

“This slide offers a list of some of the more recent publications that highlight a variety of ways to implement SLOs. All are free and easily accessible on the Internet.

“The SLO Implementation Scorecard allows districts and schools to determine their readiness for SLO implementation. The scorecard walks users through a series of about 10 questions on different topics that are critical to the SLO process. At the end of the questionnaire, the scorecard indicates your school or district’s readiness for SLO implementation and highlights some resources for topic areas where the school or district could use additional support.

“The Center for Assessment SLO Toolkit walks users through the SLO process. Resources in this toolkit include a PowerPoint slide presentation, an accompanying slide script, a blank SLO template, a rubric for rating the quality of SLOs, an example SLO, and an accompanying annotated SLO.

“The GTL Center has developed an online repository of state and district SLO resources. It allows you to review publications, guidebooks, SLO examples, webinars, and presentations on SLOs. Users can search by the type of resource as well as by the state, so if someone wanted to see the resources developed by Ohio, for example, they could do that on this page.

“One of these resources on the GTL Center site is an *Ask the Team* brief titled ‘Flexibility for Fairness: Crafting Business Rules for Student Learning Objectives.’ This document lists considerations for states when they are crafting business rules around SLOs.

## Resources to Share

- AIR SLO Implementation Scorecard and White Papers:  
[www.educatorstalent.org](http://www.educatorstalent.org)
- Center for Assessment SLO Toolkit:  
<http://www.ncies.org/slo-toolkit/>
- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders:  
[www.gtlcenter.org](http://www.gtlcenter.org)
- Crafting Business Rules for SLOs:  
[http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/GTL\\_AskTeam\\_FlexForFairness.pdf](http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/GTL_AskTeam_FlexForFairness.pdf)
- Colorado Department of Education Assessment Inventory:  
<http://www.coloradopic.org/assessment/assessments>
- Reform Support Network SLO Toolkit:  
<http://www.engagemy.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/rsn-slo-toolkit.pdf>

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“The Colorado Assessment Inventory is a resource developed by the Colorado Department of Education. CDE established a set of assessment criteria based on the state standards; inventoried all of the publically available assessments for different grades, subjects, and content areas; and reviewed those assessments against the criteria. The inventory allows users to search for available assessments by content, grade, or both (e.g., dance or first-grade social studies assessments). For each assessment, the state provides assessment specifications, the availability of the assessment, and the state’s report on how the assessment aligned with the criteria established.

“The final resource we are highlighting is an SLO toolkit from the Reform Support Network. This toolkit outlines a four-stage quality control framework; describes how states and districts are addressing common challenges related to quality SLO implementation; and provides links to templates, guidance documents, and other tools.”

## Slide 59

### Explain:

“Most of these references were cited in slides 12 and 13. This list includes much of the recent research conducted on SLOs.”

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## Slide 60

### Explain:

“Thank you, and please be in touch with any questions. Our mission is to advance state efforts to grow, respect, and retain great teachers and leaders for all students. We look forward to working with you in this partnership!”

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