

Setting Growth Targets for Student Learning Objectives: Methods and Considerations





www.dese.mo.gov

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Office of the General Counsel, Coordinator – Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 6th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Setting Appropriate and Rigorous Targets | 1 |
| Baseline Data | |
| Trend Data | |
| Details About the Assessment | |
| Feedback from Other Educators | |
| Types of Growth Targets | 7 |
| Basic Growth Targets | |
| Half-the-Distance Growth Targets | |
| Tiered Growth Targets | |
| Advanced Tiered Growth Targets | |
| Fully Individualized Growth Targets | |
| General Guidance | 11 |



INTRODUCTION

The process of setting appropriate student growth targets for student learning objectives (SLO) is both an art and a science. Artistically, teachers with varying experience levels, perspectives, and beliefs about their own capabilities to motivate all students to succeed will approach the process differently. There is also an art to combining what teachers know about students' personalities, learning profiles, and educational histories with hard data from high-quality assessments. Scientifically, teachers guided by good baseline data on each student's academic strengths and weaknesses can make informed decisions to set targets that are both challenging and developmentally appropriate for students.

The document's purposes include:

- Describing ways to set growth targets for SLOs.
- Giving direction on choosing an approach based on individual circumstances.
- Encouraging collaboration to make better decisions and promote shared responsibility for student learning.



The guidance in this document is not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive. There are many ways to develop high-quality student growth targets. Readers are free to adapt content in this document in whatever ways are most helpful to them, and may choose to adopt some, all, or none of it.

Readers who are not yet familiar with the SLO process are encouraged to first review the [SLO Handbook](#), as the concepts described in this document assume the reader already has a working understanding of SLOs.

SETTING APPROPRIATE AND RIGOROUS TARGETS

High-quality growth targets are *appropriate* and *rigorous*: appropriate in that the target is realistic for all students in the identified population, and rigorous in that the target challenges all students to perform their very best. The key is balance.

| Criteria for Appropriateness | Criteria for Rigor |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targets are informed by an understanding of what students are expected to learn.• Baseline and trend data suggest that the targets are in line with students' educational histories.• There is a clear rationale for the targets chosen for students with different learning needs.• Targets reflect the amount of learning that could reasonably take place by the end of the interval of instruction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targets require all students to demonstrate academic growth.• High-achieving students have "stretch" targets, such as a required score on a capstone project.• Growth targets are never arbitrarily lowered for students with identified learning challenges.• Expected growth will be enough to prepare students for the next semester, grade level, or phase of life. |

How does a teacher know if the right balance has been struck? In part, the answer depends on the information available to the teacher.

Baseline data

Baseline data tell a teacher what students already know.

Baseline data come in many forms. The most common kinds are listed in the call-out box to the right. Baseline data include students' scores at the beginning of the interval of instruction on the assessment or assessments that will be used to measure student growth. Often, though, there is no appropriate pre-test to gauge baseline performance. In those cases, assessments from similar courses, homework or unit tests early in the year, or even course grades from previous years can all be informative.

Kinds of Baseline Data

- Pre-tests of the essential content
- Interim data (e.g., unit tests early in the year)
- Grades or test scores from similar courses

Even when pre-tests are available, combining data from these other sources can provide a more complete understanding of the student's trajectory. In fact, pre-tests are often not the best source of baseline data, as they provide only limited information about students' growth trajectories. This is particularly the case when students have not previously been exposed to directly related content, as may be the case in foreign language courses or some electives. Data from several different sources should be sought out so that students' present levels of performance and growth trajectories may be more precisely estimated.

Generally, student growth targets should be set above students' baseline level of mastery and require students to demonstrate improvement. Without baseline data, it can be difficult to set appropriate targets because more guesswork is necessary.

Trend data

Trend data are any data collected over time on the same student or on similar students. Trend data might include students' prior year Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores, reading Lexiles, and prior year-end grades. Baseline data over a number of years can also be used as trend data. Viewed in isolation, data from any of these sources may be inadequate for estimating expected growth. When several measurements taken at different points in time are pieced together, however, a pattern of academic growth may become evident. By extrapolating those patterns into the future, teachers can identify attainable targets.

There is an important distinction between trend data gathered on **current** students and trend data gathered on **previous** students. Data on current students are usually more relevant to the process of setting growth targets because those students comprise the population included in the SLO. Students in the middle or upper grades may have several years of MAP scores or prior-year grades in similar or related content that can be charted visually to make it easier to determine an overall trajectory of growth. Data on previous students can be invaluable for students in lower grades who have not yet established an educational history. Even when trend data on current students is available, supplementing it with an analysis of previous students is often beneficial. For example, teachers could consider looking back on the growth data collected as part of a previous SLO and comparing outcomes for similarly-prepared students. Any large differences between previous students' target scores and their actual posttest assessment scores could indicate the need for adjustments.

Trend data can be especially beneficial for students with disabilities. The data captured in the IEP often provides rich, detailed information that establishes a long-term growth trajectory. The IEP is especially relevant when the student is identified at a young age.

Details about the assessment

Details about the assessment or assessments to be used for measuring growth also can be helpful for setting appropriate targets. Sometimes, vendor assessments include guidelines for setting learning targets. For example, some assessment publishers provide a table of typical spring assessment scores for every range of performance on the fall administration of the assessment. This gives teachers an idea of the expected growth for each student during the course of the school year.



The type of assessment used also influences the amount of growth expected for differently-prepared students. Some assessments, for example, focus on foundational knowledge acquisition, while others focus on extended learning and critical thinking skills. Some assessments include several items that measure different types or levels of learning. Depending on the assessment, a large gain in points or percentile ranking for lower-performing students may primarily represent gains in foundational knowledge, whereas a

small gain for higher-performing students may represent more refined application or extended learning. For these reasons, it is usually inappropriate to determine expected growth without knowledge of the assessment and of the student population included in the SLO.

While this document does not focus on helping teachers choose appropriate assessments for their SLOs, it can be very challenging to set growth targets when the assessment is invalid, unreliable, or designed without input from other teachers. Particularly with assessments for students with disabilities, teachers should consider how the assessment is scaled, and whether the assessment is accessible. If the assessment cannot capture small amounts of growth, it may not be possible to set an appropriate growth target for all students. Similarly, any assessment may provide an inaccurate measure of growth for students with disabilities when appropriate accommodations are lacking. In those cases, it may be impossible to set a meaningful growth target for every student.

Feedback from other educators

Feedback from other educators can be especially helpful for setting growth targets that are in line with the school's overall educational goals. In many schools, professional learning communities and data teams have been established to facilitate collaboration among teachers, encouraging collective responsibility for student outcomes. These communities provide regular opportunities for sharing classroom data with colleagues. Groups of teachers who work as a team may be able to reach consensus about their shared goals by reviewing data, discussing student needs, and developing plans to ensure that each student succeeds. Team-level goals, however, do not rule out the possibility of individualized growth targets. In fact, teacher teams can provide an opportunity to set targets that are appropriate to each student, each teacher, and to the team as a whole.

Strategy: Align SLO Growth Targets with Shared Learning Goals

Goals set collaboratively by teacher teams provide a sense of shared responsibility for student learning. They facilitate professional dialogue and sharing of best practices to improve instruction. Since students often only have a single teacher for a given course, however, differences in classroom composition and professional practice make it equally important for teachers to consider individual circumstances when setting student growth targets. The following example illustrates how the growth targets for individual teachers' SLOs can be aligned with an overarching learning goal of a grade-level teacher team to ensure that progress on either goal translates into progress on both goals.

Ms. Robinson is a fourth-grade teacher, one of three in the elementary school where she teaches. The three teachers meet regularly, setting academic goals for their students to achieve and monitoring their students' progress along the way. The teachers are familiar with setting specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals.

While creating their SMART goals last year, the teachers placed their students into four levels of performance based on the results of a pretest given at the beginning of the unit. Although they wrote goals throughout the year, they wrote those goals for shorter intervals and did not connect them to a broader goal for the school year. This year, the three teachers decided that the SMART goal approach could apply to an assessment cycle covering the entire school year and they developed a goal for fourth-grade science that they could strive to meet together.

At the very beginning of the year, the teachers administered a common assessment of critical thinking and analytical skills essential to scientific inquiry. Table 2 shows the results of this assessment.

Table 2. Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills Assessment Results

| Tier | Pretest | Robinson | Jacobs | Purcell | Total |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Score Range | #Students | #Students | #Students | #Students |
| Proficient or Higher | 70–100 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 15 |
| Close to Proficient | 51–69 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 24 |
| Far but Likely | 41–50 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 12 |
| Intervention | 0–40 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 19 |
| Totals | | 22 | 24 | 24 | 70 |

15 students (21%) are proficient

After reviewing several kinds of baseline data, the teachers agreed that a score of proficient or higher is an appropriate goal for many of their students, and that growth targets should be progressively more challenging the higher a student scored on the pre-test. For their chosen assessment, a score of 70 or higher is needed in order to demonstrate proficiency. In reviewing individual student data, the teachers found that students in the "Far but Likely" (41-50 points) range demonstrated some of the prerequisite knowledge necessary to access the essential content of the course. The teachers reasoned that a year's worth of growth should bring these students into the proficient range. The growth targets for students in the "Close to Proficient" and "Proficient or Higher" tiers were determined in a similar manner, by carefully considering how much students are likely to learn over the course of the year. Where possible, the team consulted trend data to verify that their growth expectations were in line with students' established trajectories. Table

(cont'd)

3 presents the growth targets the teachers chose.

Students who scored 40 points or lower on the pre-test were identified for special interventions. The teacher team discussed the importance of challenging every student so that they are engaged in the content, but also agreed that they should not discourage students with unrealistic expectations. After careful deliberation, the teachers set fully individualized growth targets for their “intervention” students, ranging from 20 to 60 points. The decision to set targets below the proficiency cut-off was not an easy one, but the team’s consensus was that remediation should be the priority for these students.

Table 3. Target Assessment Scores

| Tier | Pretest | Posttest | Robinson | Jacobs | Purcell | Total |
|----------------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Score Range | Target | #Students | #Students | #Students | #Students |
| Proficient or Higher | 70–100 | 90 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 15 |
| Close to Proficient | 51–69 | 80 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 24 |
| Far but Likely | 41–50 | 70 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 12 |
| Intervention | 0–40 | Custom | 8 | 5 | 6 | 19 |
| Totals | | | 22 | 24 | 24 | 70 |

The teachers wrote these targets and described their students in an [SLO template](#).

The teachers noted that 51 students (73 percent) were assigned a target score at or above the threshold for proficiency. Applying the concept of SMART goals, the team articulated its shared goal for the school year as shown in Figure 1, showing that they are striving to increase the proficiency rate of all fourth-graders from 21 percent to 73 percent by the end of the school year.

Figure 1. SMART Goal for School Year

| Master SMART Goal Statement | |
|---|--|
| The percentage of <u>Grade 4</u> students scoring proficient or higher in <u>scientific inquiry skills</u> will increase from <u>21%</u> to <u>73%</u> by the end of the school year as measured by the summative assessment administered on <u>3/20/15</u> | |

As the year progresses, they will be administering common assessments after each unit, making sure that a subset of items on these assessments measures essential skills of scientific inquiry common to each unit. That way, the unit assessments will allow the teachers to gauge their students’ academic growth and adjust instruction as needed. The teachers will also meet with the building principal midway through the year to review progress and receive feedback about their instructional effectiveness. By the time the teachers administer their final summative assessment for the course, they are confident that their students will achieve their SLO growth targets. Consequently, the teachers also are equally confident that they will reach their master SMART goal for the year.

Regardless of the service delivery model, general education teachers and special education teachers can work together to ensure that all students have appropriate and rigorous growth targets. In co-teaching situations, it can be particularly advantageous for the general education teachers and special education teacher to collaborate when setting growth targets. The ideal of a co-taught environment is that both teachers take full ownership and accountability for all learners in a shared classroom, regardless of disability status. Reaching this ideal is not without its challenges, however, as it requires time, hard work, the full investment of both co-teachers, and support from the school administration.

TYPES OF GROWTH TARGETS

Growth targets can be set in many ways. Choosing a method for setting targets is in part a matter of personal preference and in part an exercise in critical thinking. Five types of growth targets are considered here: Basic Growth Targets, Half-the-Distance Growth Targets, Tiered Growth Targets, Advanced Tiered Growth Targets, and Fully Individualized Growth Targets.

Basic Growth Targets

Basic Growth Targets are the simplest type. They are set by deciding how much growth is expected of students and then adding that amount to students' pre-test scores. Basic Growth Targets can be expressed by statements like "all students will grow by 10 percent," or "all students will improve by one proficiency level." For example, a teacher who chooses "all students will grow by 20 points" as his or her goal would set a post-test target of 80 points for a student who pre-tested at a score of 60 points because $60 + 20 = 80$.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to develop • Good choice for populations with uniform performance and learning characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of analysis • Rarely ensures appropriate rigor for all students |

Basic Growth Targets are easy to develop. Most of the time, calculating a student's target is instantaneous. In some cases, Basic Growth Targets may even be the preferred method due to the low level of effort involved. Teachers whose students have very similar academic preparation may conclude that Basic Growth Targets are the best choice because the teacher has no reason to differentiate his or her expectations—a "year's worth" or a "semester's worth" of growth is the same for every student.

In diverse classrooms, however, Basic Growth Targets are rarely appropriate. A teacher will usually want to consider how much growth to expect based on students' learning characteristics and academic histories, and adjust those expectations when different groups of students begin from different baselines. Another disadvantage is that Basic Growth Targets require minimal analysis. A deeper analysis of student data may sometimes lead to a more complete understanding of students' needs, ultimately resulting in better instruction. Finally, care must be exercised so that high-achieving students are assigned growth targets that are within the

range that the assessment allows; a student expected to grow by 20 points from a pre-test score of 90 points ends up with an impossible score expectation if 100 points is already a perfect score.

Half-the-Distance Growth Targets

The Half-the-Distance Growth Targets method gets its name from the fact that it produces targets by halving the distance between two numbers: a pretest score and the maximum possible score for the assessment. The Half-the-Distance method uses a formula to set student growth targets:

$$\text{Target} = (\text{Maximum Possible Score} + \text{Pretest Score}) / 2$$

For example, the target would be 70 if a student pretested at a 40 on an assessment whose maximum possible score is 100 because $(100 + 40) / 2 = 70$.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to develop• Ensures rigorous targets for low-performing students• Formula method makes targets comparable across teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ignores individual student data• Does not consider what one year (or semester, etc.) of growth looks like for all students• No room for high-performing students to grow |

Generally, the Half-the-Distance Growth Targets method is a straightforward method for ensuring rigorous targets are set for low-performing students. It also is well suited to educators who prefer a simple set of calculations that can be applied to nearly any assessment. For students close to a perfect score, however, Half-the-Distance Growth Targets provide little opportunity to show growth. Also, since the Half-the-Distance Growth Targets method is formula-based, it does not take into account the specifics of the assessment or the students included in the SLO. This means there will be situations in which the formula does not correctly predict the amount of growth needed for different students.

Tiered Growth Targets

Tiered Growth Targets are created by grouping students together based on their preassessment scores. Teachers should divide students into three or more categories or tiers. Then, teachers should identify growth targets for each tier and apply them to each student in the tier. The [SLO Progress Tracker](#), available from the [Educator Growth Toolbox](#), provides an option for setting Tiered Growth Targets. Table 4 shows an annotated set of Tiered Growth Targets for purposes of illustrating this concept.



Table 4. Tiered Growth Targets

| Preassessment Score | | Posttest Target |
|---------------------|--------|------------------|
| Score Range | | Minimum Expected |
| Tier { | 0–40 | 60 |
| | 41–55 | 70 |
| | 56–70 | 80 |
| | 71–85 | 90 |
| | 86–100 | 95 |

- Preassessment scores are used to define tiers. A range of scores designate the “bookends” of a tier. Students whose scores fall within the specified range are placed in the corresponding tier.
- Posttest targets are the scores on the summative assessment that students are expected to reach. For a given tier, the score listed is the minimum needed on the posttest for students to have met their growth target.
- Note that the score ranges for tiers and the minimum posttest targets presented in this table are for illustration purposes only. A number of criteria, such as the assessment used and the learning characteristics of the student population, impact the ranges and targets appropriate to a particular the SLO.

Using this method, all students have growth targets they are expected to reach, but the teacher does not calculate those targets based on a formula. Instead, the teacher sets growth targets based on a concept of the amount of learning he or she expects over the instructional interval, with each tier serving to organize the teacher’s expectations. If the tiers are established so that the range of scores they encompass represents comparable academic preparation, a single growth target that is carefully crafted will usually predict expected growth reasonably well for each student in the tier.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of analysis • Tiers can be used to differentiate instruction • Targets can be adjusted by comparing performance of last year’s students in the same tiers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students just above or below the cut-points between tiers can have very different targets • Stretch (e.g., capstone project) may need to be added for high-performing students |

Tiered Growth Targets can be helpful when the available assessment already places students into categories based on their scores. Many assessments, for example, use the student’s score to assign classifications such as below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced. Using these classifications as tiers for SLO growth targets can be very sensible when evidence exists that the categories accurately describe what students know and can do.

However, since Tiered Growth Targets are not generated based on a formula, targets may not be comparable across teachers or across schools. Teacher and evaluator judgment introduce subjectivity into the process of defining tiers and estimating expected growth. Common assessments and strong communication among teachers within and across grade levels are therefore critical to ensuring fairness. In addition, students just above or just below the cut-off points between tiers—like Sam and Carlos in the scenario described in the “Strategy: Advanced Tiered Growth Targets” sidebar—may have very different growth targets even though their scores are virtually indistinguishable.

Advanced Tiered Growth Targets

Advanced Tiered Growth Targets are similar to Tiered Growth Targets because they are initially created by grouping students into tiers based on their preassessment scores. However, Advanced Tiered Targets take into account that students earning similar scores just above or just below the cut-off points between tiers may be

held to very different growth expectations. Advanced Tiered Growth Targets address this challenge by pushing students to achieve either a constant growth target or a variable growth target, whichever is higher. Consider the following scenario—

Originally, Mr. Jordan considers using the standard Tiered Growth Targets approach to set academic expectations for his students. Upon examining his pretest data, however, Mr. Jordan notices that two of his students, Sam and Carlos, would have targets that are too spread apart, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Original Tiered Growth Targets

| Tier | Student | Pretest Score | Posttest Growth Target |
|-------|---------|---------------|------------------------|
| 41–55 | Sam | 55 | 70 |
| 56–70 | Carlos | 56 | 80 |

In this case, a difference of one point on the pretest is enough to give Carlos a target that is fully 10 points higher than Sam’s. Mr. Jordan does not want to set disparate expectations for two students as academically similar as Sam and Carlos, so he considers an alternative.

In order to make the targets more in line with each other, Mr. Jordan adds some rules to adjust students’ targets based on where they fall within a particular tier. Advanced Tiered Growth Targets use the same concept of placing students into tiers, but set an individual student’s target at the higher of two numbers: a constant target, such as 70, or a variable target, such as (Pretest Score + X). A good rule of thumb for choosing the formula for variable targets is to subtract the maximum value that defines the tier from the constant target from the next tier up.

For example, in the tier in which Carlos is placed, the formula for variable targets is determined by taking **80** (the constant target for the *next* tier up) and subtracting **55** (the highest possible score to be included in the tier). The difference is **25**, so this is the amount that will be added to students’ pretest scores if the result ends up being greater than 70 (the constant target for *this* tier).

Using Advanced Tiered Growth Targets, Sam is given a much more reasonable posttest score to reach: rather than aiming for 70 points, he is now aiming for 80 points because $55 + 25 = 80$. This target is selected rather than a goal of 70 points because 80 points is greater than the constant target of 70 points. Notice how this target is now identical to the target set for Carlos. With this advanced method, Carlos still has a target of 80 points because this is a higher target than the score calculated using the variable approach: $56 + 20 = 76$, which is less than 80. Putting it all together, Mr. Jordan revises his original Tiered Growth Targets as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Revised Tiered Growth Targets

| Tier | Pretest Score | Advanced Posttest Target | |
|------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | Score Range | Whichever is Greater ... | |
| | | Constant Target | Variable Target |
| 1 | 0–40 | 60 | Baseline +30 |
| 2 | 41–55 | 70 | Baseline +25 |
| 3 | 56–70 | 80 | Baseline +20 |
| 4 | 71–85 | 90 | Baseline +10 |
| 5 | 86–100 | 95 | Baseline +5 |

One caveat of the Advanced Tiered Growth Targets is that teachers must be careful that the student’s target does not exceed the maximum possible score on the applicable assessment (i.e., if the variable method would set an impossible target, teachers should instead set the target as high as the assessment will allow a student to score).

| Pros | Cons |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of analysis • Tiers can be used to differentiate instruction • Targets can be adjusted by comparing performance of last year's students in the same tiers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More complex than other approaches |

Fully Individualized Growth Targets

Sometimes, the very best way for teachers to set student growth targets is on a case-by-case basis. *In the Fully Individualized Growth Targets approach, all students may have unique targets tailored to their specific needs.* In the “Rationale” section of the SLO, teachers should note how the targets chosen for each student address such needs while remaining appropriate and rigorous. It can take a lot of work to set growth targets this way, but in situations in which the teacher is responsible for relatively few students, the process can be very manageable. Gifted or special education teachers may find the Fully Individualized Growth Targets approach particularly attractive because the nature of their work already requires focused interventions or enrichments.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of analysis and attention to individual learning needs promotes effective instruction, intervention, and enrichments • Individual focus may result in more accurate estimates of expected growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More work than other approaches • Requires a strong rationale so that struggling students do not receive arbitrarily low growth targets |

Another advantage of using Fully Individualized Growth Targets is the opportunity it can afford teachers to deeply analyze the academic strengths and deficits of each student. By using this information to develop highly differentiated instructional strategies, teachers may have a better chance of ensuring that their students succeed. Unless fully individualized growth targets are explicitly connected to a strong and detailed rationale section, however, a potential pitfall is that this approach might encourage educators to set arbitrarily low targets for struggling students without sufficient rationale. For example, simply having an IEP is never sufficient rationale for an adjusted growth target; it is the specific information contained in the IEP that justifies the educator’s decision to adjust the individual target.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Teachers and administrators are encouraged to consider the following information in setting appropriate and rigorous student growth targets for SLOs:

- Anchor the process of setting growth targets in a concept of a year’s worth of learning, a semester’s worth of learning, etc., with the specific time span determined by the interval of instruction for the SLO.

The amount of learning expected often depends on students' baseline mastery of the content, so teachers should consider students at all performance levels.

- For a teacher's second SLO and beyond, it may be possible to evaluate the accuracy of a previously used method for setting growth targets in estimating expected growth for students at different performance levels. If all students, or a subset of students, consistently fell short of or exceeded their growth targets by wide margins, there may be a defensible rationale for adjusting growth targets in the future for similarly prepared students. The case for making such adjustments is strengthened by reviewing other forms of evidence, such as classroom observations and student surveys, that yield a consistent interpretation of the teacher's effectiveness when considered apart from student performance.
- Collaboration among teachers may improve their confidence in the use of SLOs as measures of student growth when non-standardized methods of setting growth targets are used. By working closely with one another and with their administrators, teachers may be able to reach consensus about the amount of growth that is expected of students, particularly where common assessments are used. As long as those expectations are applied consistently, teachers can be better assured that they will be evaluated fairly.
- In some career and technical content areas, proficiency on a certification exam is an important outcome for all students. In those cases, it may be appropriate to set a single target for all students to reach, regardless of baseline ability.





The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education would like to offer a special thank you to the following education organizations for providing support and resources towards the development of this guidance:

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

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

Rhode Island Department of Education

