



AchieveNJ for Teachers

Student Growth Objectives

Top 5 Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How can teachers who instruct in semester blocks or nine-week cycles set SGOs?

A: These teachers should set SGOs as early in the semester as possible. If the instructional period is less than nine weeks (e.g. 30-day cycles), teachers should set goals for several of these short cycles and then aggregate performance on these goals into their SGOs when possible.

Q: How should SGOs be handled for a teacher on a leave of absence or otherwise away from teaching for a period of time?

A: Teachers should be present for at least a nine-week continuous period of time during the year to set an SGO. A teacher who has not set an SGO before the November 15 deadline due to an extended leave should set an SGO as early as possible after his or her return to the classroom.

Q: I am a school counselor. Do I need to set SGOs? Do you have exemplars for SGOs for that I could take a look at?

A: SGOs are not required for school counselors, but only for teachers with an assigned class roster. Educational specialists such as academic coaches, CST professionals, librarians/media specialists, paraprofessionals, athletic trainers, health workers and counselors, etc. may set SGOs at the discretion of local district leadership. However, the Department encourages all educators to set SGOs to help improve their performance by goal setting. Office of Evaluation staff members have worked with several professional organizations that represent these educational specialists to

develop SGO samples that may be useful reference documents. Please contact your professional organization for these samples.

Q: I teach Special Education. How will my SGOs be different than a general education teacher's?

A: Like a general education teacher, your SGO should be tailored to meet the needs of your students. As much as possible, your SGOs should encompass the curriculum and students for which you are responsible. The IEPs of the students you teach contain added guidance to help you provide the type of instructional support that will help your students succeed. You may use this guidance to help inform your SGOs. For example, you may set an SGO that includes standards for reading comprehension. The IEP of a student may include strategies to improve the comprehension skills that the individual student has not yet learned. In this case, the IEP and SGO for that student are aligned.

Q: Are teachers required to use a pre-assessment?

A: No. Pre-assessments may be used to collect baseline data, but there are several other ways to determine students' starting points as mentioned in the preceding question. Additionally, unless they are carefully constructed, pre-assessments may not provide the type of information that will be useful for setting appropriate goals. For instance, a pre-assessment that is identical to a post-assessment may be so challenging for students that most score very poorly and some become discouraged by their test performance early in the school year. Additionally, a pre-assessment on content in a subject area to which students have never been exposed (e.g. German 1) may provide little useful information. At the beginning of the school year, it may be challenging to motivate students to do their best on a pre-assessment. However, some teachers are using carefully crafted and rigorous pre-assessments effectively and have worked to overcome some of the problems associated with pre-assessments noted above. In consultation with their supervisors, these teachers may opt to continue using such pre-assessments.