

## OVERVIEW OF STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT GROWTH

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are a framework to monitor student progress across a learning progression towards critical learning outcomes. Student growth, when using SLOs, is determined by comparing a student's readiness for content at the beginning of the course (preparedness level) with his/her mastery of content at the end of a course (expectation level).

### Preparedness Levels

**Key Idea:** Preparedness levels refer to students' general understanding of the prerequisite standards, knowledge and skills.

Using multiple assessments, teachers and school leaders collaboratively determine students' preparedness levels at the beginning of the course/year.<sup>1</sup> Consideration and links should be made to students' Expectation/Command levels in the previous year, particularly where a natural feeder or prerequisite course exists.

A student's preparedness is their understanding of the prerequisite standards, knowledge and skills that are necessary to begin accomplishing the standards of the course. Preparedness is not a measure of what students already know and have mastered with respect to the standards, knowledge and skills that will be taught in the current course. (Thus, pre-tests on material to be taught are not the most effective means of determining preparedness.)

For the class(es) chosen for the SLO, all students in the class should be included in the SLO, and a preparedness level determined. Additionally, the recommended minimum number of students in an SLO is ten. If a teacher has some courses with less than ten students and others with more than ten students, they should choose the course with more than ten students. Interventionists (and a very small set of teachers) may only have courses with less than ten students. They should work with their evaluator on ways to maximize the number of students involved in their SLOs.

### Expectation Levels

**Key Idea:** Our commitment to closing the opportunity gap for under-performing students is reflected in the goal of having all students at the Met Expectations level of grade level standards.

Using a body of evidence, students' Expectation levels of the specific standards within the SLO are determined at the end of the course/year. Expectation levels are closely aligned to the specific content and grade level standards and the learning progression for the SLO.

Students who begin the year Underprepared or Significantly Underprepared may demonstrate high growth, but still not have the knowledge and skills of the grade-level Partially Met Expectations. If those students are not yet to Partially Met Expectations, then the teacher must report additional information in order to define the levels at which the students are performing. A teacher must use a body of evidence to definitively show the school leader evidence and rationale for the growth point decision they are making. A teacher will need to write a short description of the student's end-of-course knowledge, skills, and capability, based on student performance, and include rationale for how that information demonstrates a student's end of course Expectation level. Guiding questions for determining these levels are shown in the decision tree below.

Why are preparedness levels different from expectation levels? Preparedness levels measure the extent to which students have learned **last year's** content and are ready for this year's. Expectation levels are the extent to which students have learned **this year's** content. If we used the CMAS "expectation levels" for both, it would be very difficult to keep track of which standards were being referenced, this year's or last year's.

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<sup>1</sup> [Additional guidance](#) is available to assist in determining the Preparedness and Expectation levels, including protocols with guiding questions, and definitions of levels.

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### Student Growth

**Key Idea:** Students should leave the grade/course as, or more, prepared for the next course than they entered this year's course. That is, they should be making at least one year's growth.

**Key Idea:** The goal for all students is the Met Expectations level of grade-level standards. The progress of students who begin the course behind and are catching up to grade level performance will be recognized.

SLOs determine student growth by comparing a student's readiness for content at the beginning of the course (Preparedness level), with his/her mastery at the end of a course (Expectation level). Growth points are determined from the Preparedness levels and Expectation levels of students. The anchor and ideal for growth is a student who enters a course Prepared and leaves at Met Expectations – this is assigned a value of 2 growth points. Other growth points reflect similar, less, or more growth than this ideal.

[Below](#) is the matrix of Preparedness levels and Expectation levels and the corresponding growth points for each combination.

Growth points reflect our commitment to closing the opportunity gap for under-performing students by having higher growth points attainable by students who begin the year Underprepared or Significantly Underprepared. While these students may not reach mastery of the grade level standards in the SLO, if they are catching up to their peers that growth is reflected in a higher growth point value.

### LEAP

**Key Idea:** SLOs, driven by teachers' collaborative objective setting and classroom formative assessment, are the most intimately intertwined connection between effective instruction and student learning.

SLOs are an instructional framework, grounded in best-practice instruction. By having the objectives, learning progression, and a body of evidence explicitly focused on the content, standards and instruction of the grade/course, SLOs provide an intimate connection between effective instruction and each students' individual and unique learning.

Thus, in 2016-17, in Denver Public Schools, SLOs will either constitute 30% or 40% of a teacher's evaluation (for teachers with a state measure –math and literacy teachers, grades 4-9– and teachers without a state measure, respectively).

All teachers and SSPs are required to complete two SLOs. The teacher also chooses, in collaboration with their grade-level/content team and school leader, which SLO(s) are most appropriate for their course(s) and students, and then schools leaders approve teacher choices based on the appropriateness and rigor of the SLO. Each SLO will be weighted equally in calculating student growth scores. For example, for a teacher with state measures, SLOs will comprise 30% of their overall LEAP rating. Each SLO in this example is weighted at 15% for a teacher's overall evaluation.

Growth points are determined for each student from their Preparedness and Expectation levels. Points are then totaled across all students included in the SLO based on their amount of growth. A percentage of points earned out of the points possible for that SLO is calculated. The percentage of points possible is the score for the SLO. For the SLO portion of a teacher's overall LEAP rating, the percent of points possible for SLOs translate to the LEAP ratings below.<sup>2</sup>

SLO Rating		% SLO Pts. Earned
Not Meeting	→	0%
Approaching	→	33%
Effective	→	67%
Distinguished	→	95%

<sup>2</sup> These ratings only apply to the SLO portion of student growth, and may not be the teacher's overall student growth rating when other components of student growth are added.

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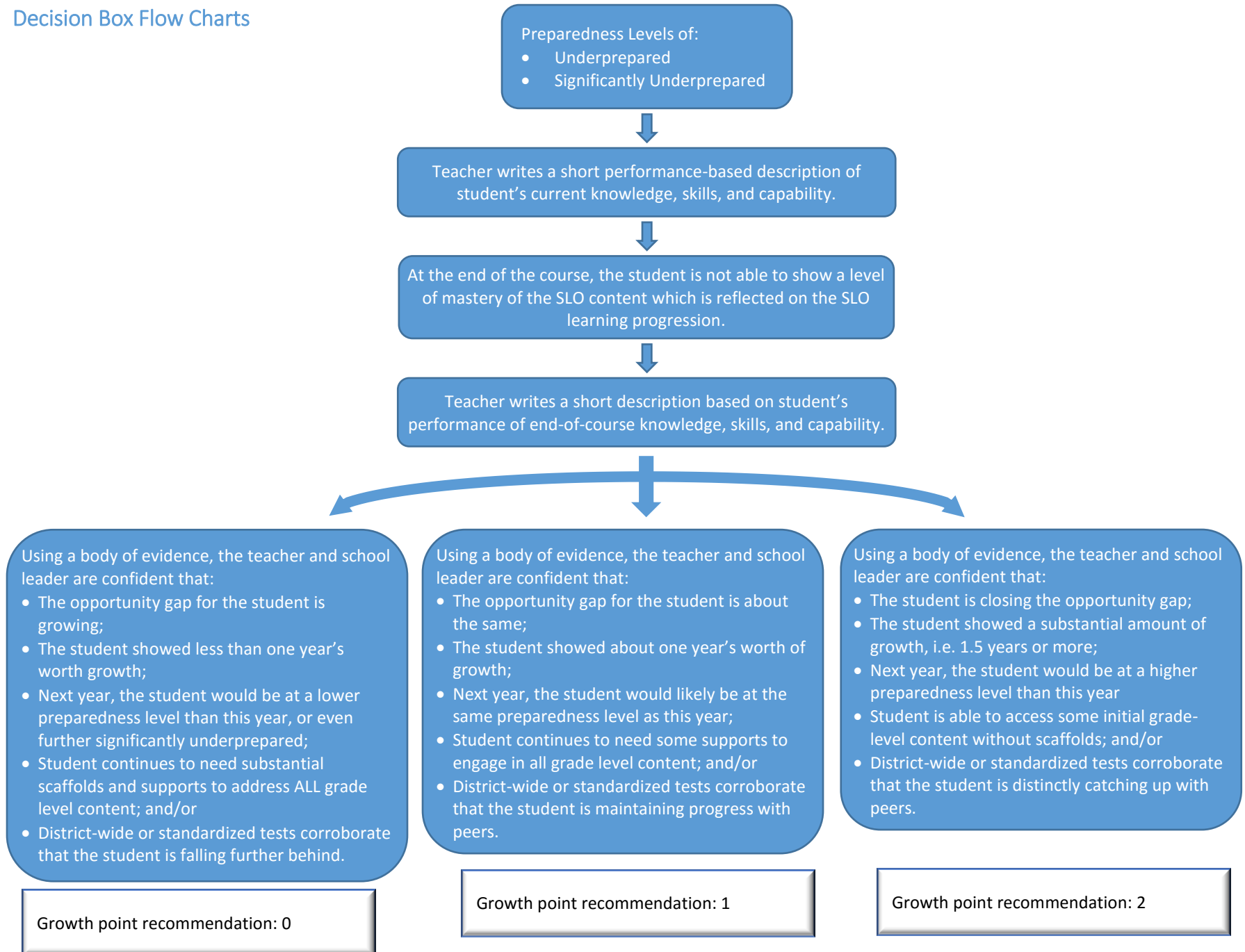
While all students in the class should be included in the SLO, some students may not have had enough contact time with the teacher (called attribution) to support the student's inclusion in the student growth component of LEAP evaluation. Students with greater than 80% attribution should be included in student growth. (Attribution differs from student attendance by accounting student absences, late add to course, teacher leave, etc.)

There are three decision boxes in the SLO scoring matrix where a teacher and school leader should collaboratively determine the growth points a student in that box has earned for student growth. Guidance on this decision is below.

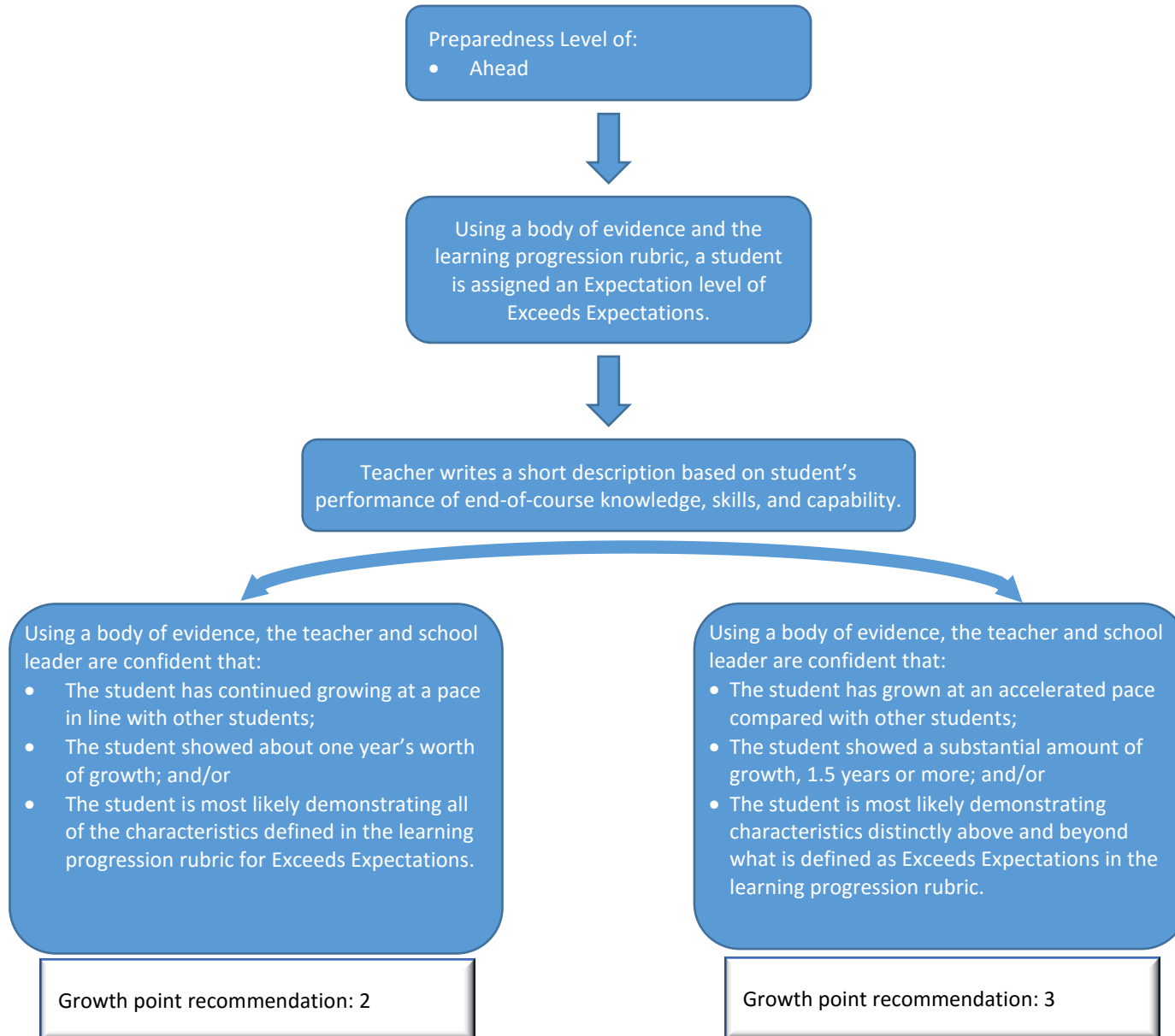
Three boxes in the upper right of the [scoring matrix](#) note additional evidence is needed. These combinations represent extremely high levels of growth, up to 3 years of growth or more in one year. Teachers will need to provide additional rationale and evidence before placing students in these combinations. This ensures that preparedness and expectation levels are appropriately understood, the learning progression and body of evidence are appropriately rigorous, and that student growth is appropriately reflected.

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Decision Box Flow Charts



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## Decision Box Conversation Guidelines for School Leaders

### Decision Point:

Significantly Underprepared to Not Yet Met Expectations

Decision Choice:

0, 1, or 2 student growth points/per student

Underprepared to Not Yet Met Expectations

Decision Choice:

0 or 1 student growth point/student

### Guiding considerations/questions:

*Our goal is to close the opportunity gap.*

- Is the opportunity gap closing? Would this student be in a higher preparedness level next year?
- Is the opportunity gap the same?
- Has the opportunity gap grown bigger? Would the student be in the same or a lower preparedness level next year?
- Has the student made “expected growth”? Can you demonstrate the student made a year’s worth of growth or more?

*The body of evidence for a student in this range may include standards and evidence at an appropriate grade level for the student (below the assigned grade level for the course).*

- What are you seeing in the student’s work?
- Can you align the student’s work to a learning progression for a different grade that may enable you to show student growth?

*Rationale for the student growth point decision<sup>3</sup>:*

- Why is this student worth a 2 and not a 1?
- Why is this student worth a 1 and not a 0?
- Did you agree with the district recommendation of growth points for this student’s situation (see flow chart above)? Why or why not?

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<sup>3</sup> See [Decision Flow Chart](#)

**Decision Point:**

Ahead to Exceeds

Decision Choice:

2 or 3 student growth points/student

**Guiding considerations/questions:**

*Our goal is that these students continue growing at a pace in line with other students and are appropriately challenged based on their current skill level.*

- What instructional moves did you make to ensure that this student was not plateauing in your course?
- What strategies did you take to identify how to move the student forward in your course?

*The body of evidence for a student in this range may include standards and evidence at an appropriate grade level or depth of knowledge appropriate for the student*

- Can the student transfer or apply standards expectations across contents and in multiple contexts?
  - *Students will typically display higher depth of knowledge (DOK) levels (DOK 3 and 4).*
- What pieces of evidence do you have to back the decision they made regarding level of growth?

*Rationale for the student growth point decision<sup>4</sup>:*

- Why is this student's growth worth 2 points instead of 3 (or 3 points instead of 2)? What are you seeing in the student's work that represents greater depth of knowledge?
- How does this student's work look different from other students' work? In what ways are they above and beyond the standards expectations for this grade level/course?
- Did you agree with the district recommendation of growth points for this student's situation (see flow chart above)? Why or why not?
- For students earning 3 points: How has this student shown accelerated growth (not just continued higher performance) in comparison to peers?

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<sup>4</sup> See [Decision Flow Chart](#)

Preparedness – Expectation Level SLO Scoring Matrix

	Did not Yet Meet Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Approached Expectations	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations
Significantly Underprepared	<i>Teacher &amp; Evaluator Decision: 0, 1, or 2</i>	3	3	Additional Evidence Needed	Additional Evidence Needed
Underprepared	<i>Teacher &amp; Evaluator Decision: 0 or 1</i>	2	3	3	Additional Evidence Needed
Somewhat Prepared	0	1	2	3	3
Prepared	NA*	0	1	2	3
Ahead	NA*	0	0	1	<i>Teacher &amp; Evaluator Decision: 2 or 3</i>

**Teacher & Evaluator Decision Cells:**

- Growth can look different for individual students falling in these cells. For example, a Significantly Underprepared student can demonstrate substantial growth, but still not meet the criteria for Partially Met Expectations of the current year standards.
- In these cells, teachers and evaluators determine the student's growth based on the individual student's body of evidence.

**Additional Evidence Needed Cells:**

- Teachers will need to request of their evaluator, through the SLO Application, the ability to place students in these extreme-growth combinations.
- Once access to the extreme-growth combinations is provided, teachers will need to supply additional individualized evidence for students that achieve these levels of growth.