



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION

2018-2019

Teacher Student Learning Objective (SLO) Handbook

5th Edition

THIS HANDBOOK SUPERSEDES AND CANCELS ALL PREVIOUS HANDBOOKS PUBLISHED

Developing Employee Effectiveness to Improve Student Achievement

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Student Learning Objectives (SLOs): Introduction

The Student Learning Objective (SLO) is defined in the state of Maryland as “A specific, rigorous, long-term goal for groups of students that educators create to guide their instruction and administrative efforts.”

Although SLOs contribute to the Student Growth component of the overall evaluation in Prince George’s County Public Schools, they are best utilized as an instructional tool. SLOs are a meaningful approach to measuring student learning because they enable teachers to determine the focus of instruction and how student learning will be measured. SLOs are not an “additional” task, but SLOs are designed for teachers to “formally” monitor what they are already doing in the classroom on a daily basis.

Teachers develop SLOs at the beginning of the interval of instruction (unit, quarter or semester) and identify the targeted amount of growth their students will make during this interval, with guidance from the content supervisor and building administrator if needed. These growth targets are set by reviewing previous performance data, identifying trends in student performance, selecting the key content and standards that students should know by the end of instruction, and choosing appropriate assessments that measure that content and student growth.

The SLO process mirrors the instructional cycle that teachers are engaged in every day, which promotes monitoring and tracking student acquisition of knowledge. In the course of an instructional cycle, teachers determine what students already know about the content to be taught by reviewing items such as previous performance data, formative assessments, and student surveys. Based on analysis of the data, the teacher pinpoints key areas and plans lessons to move students toward mastery of the concept. It is with this understanding that teachers have the unique opportunity to customize their own SLOs tied directly to the teaching and learning happening in their individual classrooms.

The SLO process provides a clear structure for setting growth goals on a multitude of assessment types, including teacher- or school-created assessments, performance tasks with a rubric, and student work samples. SLOs should address the most important content and skills students are expected to learn during the interval of instruction. Growth targets should be measurable and rigorous, but also attainable for the interval of instruction. The use of SLOs encourages better comparability and accurate demonstration of student learning across multiple teacher types.

By setting rigorous and attainable student growth goals, SLOs provide teachers with an opportunity to demonstrate the extent of academic growth of their students through assessments that are aligned to both state standards and classroom instruction. Our goal in Prince George’s County Schools is to ensure that each teacher and administrator develops a high-quality SLO that will positively impact student learning.

Definitions of Key Terms

Aligned Standards – Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, Content Specific Standards, or industry standards to which the SLO is related.

Baseball Card – A tool that can be used to find out how students performed on multiple high stakes tests across subjects and/or strands, on their benchmark assessments, and on other measures including SAT, ACT, Lexiles, and course grades.

Baseline Data – The initial collection of data which serves as a basis for comparison with data collected at a later date; the SLO Pre-Assessment is used as the baseline data in the SLO process.

Evidence of Growth – Monitoring tools used to inform instruction.

Exception - Occurs when there are circumstances that fall outside of the established SLO process and may cause the SLO calculation to differ from that of the general population.

Example 1: A teacher who is absent for more than 20% of the SLO instructional window may qualify for the Exception. If the teacher does qualify and has completed appropriate SLO activities up until the time of leave, a default score would be assigned for each SLO.

Example 2: A teacher whose class or group size falls below the established minimum of 10 students on the final roster in the SLO Closeout activity may qualify for an Exception. If the teacher does qualify, the SLO will be calculated the same as for the general population of teachers.

Exemption – Occurs when the teacher is not required to develop or complete SLOs. An example of an Exemption is a teacher who is hired after October 6, 2018. If the teacher qualifies for Exemption, the default score will be assigned.

Historical/Trend Data – Information about previous, or in some cases, current student performance to indicate the level of students’ skills or knowledge at the beginning of the instructional interval.

Instructional Strategies – Core approaches to instruction that will be utilized for attainment of SLO goals.

Interval of Instruction – A period of time during which instruction is provided relative to the SLO (unit, quarter, or semester).

Local School Progress Index (SPI) – The SPI is derived from the county’s average State Assessment growth over the past three years.

Locally Selected Assessments (LSA) – The LSA is based on available systemic reading assessments from the previous year. A “default” score will be applied to other grades where data are not available.

MyPPS – The online platform for Prince George’s County Public Schools where SLOs are developed

Pre-Assessment – A test given at the beginning of an instructional interval to indicate what the students need more instruction on and what they may already know; SLO pre-assessment data will be compared with post-assessment scores to indicate student growth.

Post-Assessment – A test given at the end of an instructional interval to indicate student progress throughout the instructional interval or in selected component areas of a course.

Student Learning Objective (SLO) – Defined in the state of Maryland as “a specific, rigorous, long-term goal for groups of students that educators create to guide their instruction and administrative efforts”.

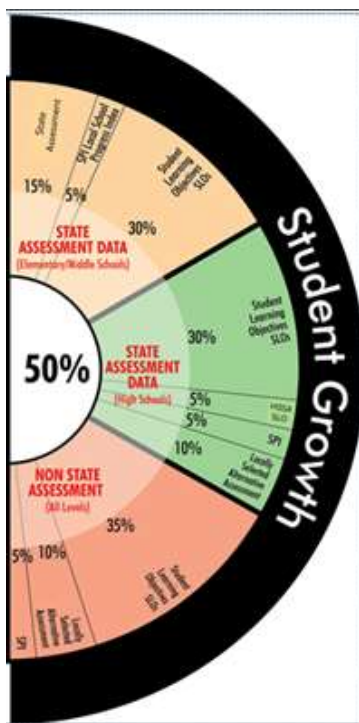
Unify – A technology platform used for the development, review, and administration of quality assessment content (formerly Performance Matters).

Student Growth Measures

Improving student learning is at the center of the work of all employees in Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) and teachers have the greatest school-based impact on student learning. Research has shown that high quality Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are associated with higher student achievement. SLOs recognize and encourage the work that excellent teachers are already doing in their classrooms and are an integral part of a teacher's evaluation.

Student growth measures comprise 50% of the overall evaluation (see Figure below). SLOs are one piece of data used to calculate Student Growth.

Figure. Student Growth Measures for Prince George's County Public Schools



All PGCPS teachers who are evaluated using the Framework for Teaching (FFT) model who are employed at least .5 (part time) or greater and hired before October 1, 2018, are required to develop and implement two SLOs, regardless of on-cycle or off-cycle status. High school teachers who are evaluated using the FFT model will develop two SLOs, and a third district SLO will be drafted by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction for high school teachers who were responsible for Biology, English 10, Algebra I, Algebra II, and Government High School State Assessment (HSSA) courses during the previous year. The HSSA data will be factored into the following year's evaluation.

A teacher's student growth score is based on the category into which he/she falls. For more detailed information about these categories, please reference the Teacher Evaluation Handbook or the SLO At-A-Glance document, located in the Staff Portal.

Developing SLOs in MyPPS

This section of the SLO Handbook addresses the planning process and steps for developing SLOs. It is important to follow the SLO Timeline, located in the Resources tab in MyPPS, and to meet all deadlines. Teacher SLO Development activities cannot be submitted in MyPPS after the established deadline as there is a system lock after the posted date. Administrators have a window of time after teachers submit in order to review and provide feedback. However, they can only ‘accept’ SLOs that have been submitted by the deadline. Teacher SLOs that are not submitted within the appropriate timeframe will not be scored and may negatively impact the overall evaluation rating.

To begin the SLO Development process, access the PGCPs Staff Portal by clicking <https://staff.pgcps.org>, and from the Applications Menu (or Quicklinks) select MyPPS from the drop-down menu. The Resources tab in MyPPS has many supporting documents to assist teachers in the development of SLOs, including the ‘SLO Development Walkthrough for Teachers’ which provides step-by-step directions on entering SLO information in MyPPS.

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (Required Activity in MyPPS)

The Prince George’s County Board of Education’s policy on test security and data reporting provides the security and storage of all testing materials before, during, and after test administration in addition to the adherence to approved state testing guidelines. Because this policy applies to SLO pre- and post-assessments, teachers must click “accept” at the bottom of the Non-Disclosure Agreement to indicate understanding of test security protocols and agreement to adhere to the guidelines. **Teachers must click ‘accept’ at the bottom of the Non-Disclosure Agreement in order to access other SLO activities in MyPPS.**

DATA REVIEW (Activity 1 in MyPPS)

At the start of the school year, teachers determine students’ performance levels in order to set instructional goals. The Data Review activity is where this information is recorded. In MyPPS, teachers provide information about how students in their class(es) have performed prior to, or in some cases at the beginning of, the current school year.

See the short video *Completing SLO Data Review* or the *Data Review Tips* document located in the Resources tab in MyPPS for specific information about the Data Review process.

Historical/Trend Data

One Historical/Trend Data point is required in MyPPS. Include the name of the data point and how students performed. A second Historical/Trend Data point is optional.

SLO Informed by State Assessment

This information is shared with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Teachers should select ‘yes’ if they used information from a State Assessment (PARCC, HSA, MSA, MSAA, MISA, or other State Assessment) as part of the Data Review activity, regardless of what content or grade they teach. Otherwise, select ‘no.’

SLO Pre-Assessment for Current School Year

The SLO Pre-Assessment provides baseline data at the start of the instructional interval that will be compared with SLO Post-Assessment data to measure student growth.

Refer to the *Data Measures Table* in the Resources section of the SLO Handbook or in the Resources tab in MyPPS for specific information about SLO assessments.

SLO Pre-Assessment Category

Use the dropdown menu to indicate whether your SLO Pre-Assessment is in Unify, not in Unify, or if you are using the DRA.

SLO Pre-Assessment Baseline Data for Selected Students

Describe student performance on the SLO Pre-Assessment (current year assessment) for this SLO.

Select Choice

Use the dropdown menu to indicate whether you will use scores from the entire assessment, or scores from selected standards for this SLO.

SLO INFORMATION **(Activity 2 in MyPPS)**

In this activity in MyPPS, teachers provide information about the school, subject area/course, and the grade level(s) *that are related to the SLO*. For example, an elementary teacher might have reading, math, and science classes, but would only include information about students in the math class for a math SLO.

Exception Criterion

Only teachers who provide instruction to fewer than 10 students should select ‘yes’ for the Exception Criterion. All students must be included in the SLO for teachers who qualify for the Exception. The Exception must be approved by an Appraiser (Principal or Assistant Principal) and communicated to the Office of Employee Performance and Evaluation (OEPE) by the Appraiser.

IMPORTANT: Teachers who provide instruction to more than 10 students should note the following:

- You must have 10 or more students on your final roster (SLO Closeout roster).
- If the final roster falls below 10, and you do not qualify for the Exception, the SLO will not be scored and your final evaluation rating could be negatively impacted.
- It is recommended that you select a minimum of 15 or more students to accommodate for ‘challenges’ that may occur during closeout due to withdrawal or excessive attendance concerns.
- If your class size falls between 10-15 students, it is strongly recommended that you select all students for your SLO.
- Keep in mind that you do not have to challenge students during SLO Closeout if it means that the final roster will have fewer than 10 students.

STUDENT SELECTION
(Activity 3 in MyPPS)

This activity is used to indicate which students have been selected for the SLO. It is important to check the box in the “Include Student in SLO” column to indicate which students you want to appear on the SLO roster.

See the short video *Completing Student Selection and Manage SLO Roster*, located in the Resources tab in MyPPS for guidance on selecting students for your SLO.

MANAGE SLO ROSTER
(Activity 4 in MyPPS)

In MyPPS, teachers provide students’ SLO pre-assessment scores and Target scores. The pre-assessment scores provide the baseline data that is compared with the SLO post-assessment to measure student growth. The Target scores indicate intended student growth from pre- to post-assessment. Target scores are determined by the teacher, with guidance from the content supervisor and building administrator if needed, and should be measurable and rigorous, but also attainable for the interval of instruction.

It is important to check the roster to make certain that all student names were selected correctly in the previous activity. If there are any omissions, return to the Student Selection activity.

See the short video *Completing Student Selection and Manage SLO Roster*, located in the Resources tab in MyPPS for guidance completing the SLO roster.

SLO STATEMENT
(This is no longer a required activity in MyPPS)

INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS
(Activity 5 in MyPPS)

In MyPPS, teachers will provide information about three instructional components that support student attainment of the SLO goal(s):

- Aligned Standards – Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, Content Specific Standards, or industry standards to which the SLO aligns
- Instructional Strategies - Core approaches to instruction that will be utilized for attainment of SLO goals
- Evidence of Growth – Monitoring tools used to inform instruction

Aligned Standards

Provide a description of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, Content Specific Standards, or industry standards to which the SLO aligns. Provide the grade and subject (e.g., Grade 4 ELA) or, in some cases, elective titles (e.g., Introduction to Keyboarding) or other class titles (e.g., Physics).

Provide the district-approved document from which standards are located (e.g., *Maryland’s College and Career-Ready Standards*) or indicate the most specific level of course content articulated in applicable standards (e.g., “SL.1.1.a” for Grade 1 ELA). Include essential knowledge and skills (critical content) that students must master in the course.

Instructional Strategies

Provide the name of the core approaches to instruction that will be utilized throughout the interval. Explain how the instructional strategy will be used and why it will be effective in helping students reach the SLO goal.

Not all classroom activities are instructional strategies. For examples of instructional strategies, see the Resources section of this Handbook or go to the Resources tab in MyPPS.

Evidence of Student Growth

Provide the name of the monitoring tools, how often they will be used to collect performance data, and how they will inform instruction.

REVIEW **(Activity 6 in MyPPS)**

The Review activity provides teachers with the opportunity to address minor issues that need to be resolved before submitting SLOs for Appraiser approval.

Error Messages in MyPPS

Data entry errors are checked each night. If any of the applicable errors are identified, the user will be notified. Clicking the error in MyPPS will provide additional information about the specific error.

Data Entry Error(s)

- A target score that is less than or equal to the Pre-Assessment score for one or more students
- The number of students included on the roster does not match the number of students entered in the SLO Information activity
- A Target score is a zero for one or more students
- No Pre-Assessment and/or Target score for one or more students on the roster
- Duplicate names on the roster
- Number of students included for SLO is greater than the number shown in “SLO Information” activity
- Fewer than twenty students included, but teacher marked “no” for the Exception Criterion in the “SLO Information” activity
- Students from two or more assessments included on SLO
- Teacher has not selected any students for the SLO roster

NOTE: The Data Entry Error check is not all encompassing and does not necessarily mean the SLO is error-free.

SUBMIT **(Activity 7 in MyPPS)**

When this activity is complete, the Appraiser (Principal or Assistant Principal) will be notified via email to review and accept the SLO.

SLO ACCEPTANCE **(Appraiser completes this activity in MyPPS)**

This activity in MyPPS does not require input from the teacher, but is the location where the Appraiser (Principal or Assistant Principal) will ‘accept’ the SLO. Once the SLO has been accepted, it is locked and cannot be edited. Teachers can see an overview of their SLOs in this location.

IMPORTANT: An Appraiser’s acceptance of the SLO does not necessarily mean that it is error-free, but indicates that the teacher has submitted the SLOs within the appropriate time frame.

SLO CLOSEOUT

SLO Closeout occurs after the post-assessment has been administered and scores have been added to the student roster.

NOTE: Teachers may not remove students from the SLO roster. However, during the closeout process, adjustments may be made, with the approval of the Appraiser, in the following situations:

Approved Revisions to Student Learning Objectives	
Student Withdrawal	If a student withdraws from a given class or course, student’s name will be removed from the target population.
Student Attendance	If a student is absent <u>from school</u> (not from an individual class) for more than 20% of the days between the Student Learning Objective pre-assessment and the post-assessment, the student’s name will remain on the roster, but the teacher may “challenge” the inclusion of that student on the SLO. This requires administrative approval.
Hire Date	Teachers hired on or after October 1, 2018, are not required to write SLOs.

See the *SLO Closeout Walkthrough* document in the Resources tab of MyPPS for step-by-step directions to the closeout process. Refer to the *SLO Timeline*, located in the Resources tab in MyPPS, for dates applicable to the closeout process.

IMPORTANT: Once the SLO has been accepted by the Appraiser, it is locked and cannot be edited.

REFLECTION

This is an optional activity in MyPPS where teachers may choose to keep notes throughout the year to record student progress, strategies used, etc. The Appraiser does not have access to this activity.

SLO CALCULATION

The SLO score is calculated based on the number of students who meet the target, as measured from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment. For example, if one SLO has 25 students on the roster, and 5 are ‘challenged’ due to withdrawal or excessive absenteeism (documented during SLO closeout), only 20 students will count toward that SLO score. If 15 of the remaining students met the target and 5 students did not, then 75% (or .75) of the students met the target. For Category 1 and 2 teachers, SLOs constitute 30% toward the Student Growth Measures (each SLO 15%). Therefore, the calculation would be $.75 \times 15$ to equal a score of 11.25 for one of the two SLOs.

NOTE: The calculation above applies also to Category 3 teachers, but the SLOs constitute 35% of the Student Growth Measures (each SLO 17.5%) for Category 3. The calculation would be $.75 \times 17.5$ to equal a score of 13.125 for one of the two SLOs.

REVIEW AND DOCUMENTATION PROCESS

It is recommended that school leadership teams create a standardized review and documentation process for SLOs. Teachers may request the following meetings with an Appraiser if there is no review process established:

Review Meeting

Teachers and Appraisers meet to discuss and review an SLO. The Appraiser may request supporting documents, such as student needs assessments, baseline and trend data, assessments used, and documentation forms. The Appraiser may review the materials, ask clarifying questions to ensure an SLO is appropriate, and provide suggestions for improving it.

Mid-Point Check-In Meeting

Often held in conjunction with a pre- or post-observation meeting, the teacher and the Appraiser discuss the formative assessment results and the progress toward meeting the growth target. In rare cases, the meeting may include making mid-interval adjustments to an SLO.

SLO Closeout Meeting

The teacher and the Appraiser should meet to discuss and review the final SLO results. The teacher should submit the relevant assessment data compiled in an appropriately summarized format. In addition, the Appraiser should consider asking the teacher to reflect on the results as well as his or her experience with the SLO process. Based on this final review, the teacher and the Appraiser should discuss which instructional practices produced the most evidence of student growth and which instructional practices need refinement for next year's SLO to further improve student learning.

Data Verification Process

In the event that discrepancies occur in the final evaluation, teachers should contact their administrator and present supporting documentation. If the administrator is unable to provide a resolution, the teacher may submit a Data Verification Request form to request review of the data outcomes presented in the final evaluation report that adversely affect the final evaluation calculations rating.

Steps for Data Verification

- **May** - Data Verification forms become available to employees via the Staff Portal
- **May/June** - Employees submit verification request form. Supporting documentation from an 'official' source (such as Performance Matters) must be provided in order for the request to be reviewed. The information should not require interpretation by Office of Employee Performance and Evaluation (OEPE) reviewers. The deadline for receipt of requests is announced via the Staff Portal when the process opens.
- **June/September** - OEPE reviews submissions
- **End of September** - Employees are notified by OEPE regarding outcomes by this date

Issues that are not addressed through the data verification process include, but are not limited to: correcting data entry user errors; correcting pre- or post-assessment errors; appealing the evaluation under 6-202 or 4-205 of the Education Article. If an Ineffective' final evaluation report is received by a teacher after June 1, a grievance must be forwarded by the teacher to the Employee and Labor Relations Office (ELRO) for resolution.

Resources in MyPPS

There are many useful tools located in the Resources tab in *MyPPS* that are designed to provide support for developing and completing the SLO process. Here is a brief description of the resources posted in the Resources tab as of August 20, 2018. More resources will be added throughout the school year as needed:

- **Teacher SLO Timeline** – Provides deadlines and windows for the SLO process
- **SLO Development Walkthrough** – A step-by-step guide with screenshots for SLO Development
- **Data Measures Table** – SLO pre- and post-assessments approved by Curriculum and Instruction (C&I)

- **Best Practices for SLO Assessments** – Tips from the Department of Testing, Research, and Evaluation (DTRE)
- **Using Baseball Card** – DTRE document to assist in locating relevant data for use with SLOs
- **Data Review Tips** – Information to guide the data review process
- **FAQs for SLOs** – A collection of questions asked by teachers

- **Manually Adding Students for Resource Teachers** – A guide for teachers who are not the primary instructor
- **SLO Data Entry Errors** - Description of errors found in the Review activity in *MyPPS* once the teacher has clicked ‘mark complete’ in the Manage SLO Roster activity

- **Instructional Strategies and Look Fors** - C&I document to assist with Instructional Components activity
- **Instructional Strategies Examples** - C&I document to assist with Instructional Components activity

- **SLO Closeout Walkthrough** - A step-by-step guide with screenshots for SLO Closeout