

## Conference Guidance for Appraiser with Teachers

### Beginning-of-the-Year Conferences:

#### Before the Conference

1. Before scheduling a conference, ask teachers to submit the completed SLO form and Student Growth Tracker(s), as well as any documentation that could support the SLO. This should include examples of what they will include in their body of evidence (BOE) at the end of the SLO interval to determine student growth.
2. Review the documentation and consider the following factors in your review:
  - Appropriateness of content selection: Is it a foundational skill? Will it be addressed throughout the year? Does it align to TEKS?
  - Clarity in the profiles: Can one level easily be distinguished from the other?
  - Evidence: Are the measures appropriate for the content?
  - Expectations: Are teachers' expectations for growth rigorous but attainable?
3. Review the SLO process using the SLO Success Criteria. This tool will provide you with guidance for expectations about SLO development.

#### During the Conference

1. Where possible, combine the SLO conference with existing goal-setting and professional development planning conferences or fall semester observation pre-conferences. If that is not possible due to timing, consider reviewing common SLOs together in grade-level teams or content-area teams. Even if they do not share a common SLO, their SLOs are likely to be similar in focus, and working together as a team will help refine the SLOs.
2. Always start and end on a positive note. Encourage teachers by focusing on the strengths of the SLO as it currently stands.
3. The prompts below highlight the kinds of questions you might want to ask teachers during the beginning of the year conference:
  - How did you decide the focus area for your SLO? What personal knowledge or experience led to the selection? How did you use focus area to lead to a strong Skill Statement?
  - What data did you review to make the selection for a focus area? How did it guide the Skill Statement?
  - How was the Initial Student Skill profile created? How did you assign students to descriptors? Were there any challenges in that process?
  - Select one or two students and ask about the targets set for them. Focus on targets that may not be consistent (higher or lower than others). What factors went into making that differentiation?
- a. What is the plan for instruction to address all of the students?
4. If you feel the SLO is not reflective of high yet reasonable expectations for student growth, or not grounded in sufficient evidence, return the SLO requesting revisions. It may be best to meet with the teacher to discuss your requests. In fact, changes may be made during that conference to eliminate the need for another meeting.
5. Review the SLO Rating Rubric to be used by the district with the teacher. This will help them understand how their work with SLOs will be evaluated based upon the thoughtfulness of the SLO design, willingness to adapt instruction throughout the interval, student growth, and reflection on outcomes. This will also help reinforce that SLOs are a process, focusing not only on the end but also on monitoring and adjusting instruction throughout the interval and planning for the next cycle.

## Middle-of-Year Conferences:

A best practice is to check in during the school year to ensure teachers are supported in tracking student growth and monitoring progress towards goals.

### Before the Conference:

1. In advance of the meeting, ask teachers to submit the current Student Growth Tracker(s), including any assessments, essay prompts, lab instructions, and performance task directions.
2. Upon reviewing the tracker and assessments, ask the teacher to bring in student work on any of the measures the students have completed thus far. The goal will be to review a few samples of student work to determine how the work is being scored, where students are in relation to their goals and for the teacher to reflect on that progress.

### During the Conference:

1. Review progress on BOE and look at student work/data so that the appraiser can be sure that the BOE (body of evidence) is on track to be as accurate and robust as possible to accurately measure student growth.
2. Encourage teachers to reflect on key questions centered on student growth, including:  
Based on the current evidence for each student:
3. Which students are on track to meeting their targeted growth goals?
4. What is the plan to address students that are off track?
5. Set a date and time to follow-up on the plan to address students who are off track within the next grading period.

## End-of-Year Conferences:

### Before the Conference:

1. In advance of the meeting, ask teachers to submit the Student Growth Tracker (with calculations of percentage of growth) and measures used as evidence at the end of the SLO interval, including any assessments, essay prompts, lab instructions, and performance task directions.
2. Upon reviewing the tracker and assessments, ask the teacher to bring in student work on those measures for a few students. This way the appraiser can verify all outcomes or “check the math” of how the teacher mapped every single student to the targeted profile. Rather, the goal will be to review a few samples to determine how the teacher determined end-of-year skill levels, based on those students’ individual bodies of evidence.
3. Consider whether you want teachers to review the reflection questions in their implementation guide. This may assist the teacher in preparation for the meeting.

### During the Conference:

1. As before, begin with a positive statement about the SLO (e.g., “I was really impressed with how you and your team worked on this SLO. I think you showed strong leadership in this process, guiding the team through the development of the SLO as well as monitoring progress”).
2. Then, work through the following protocol and questions, adjusting to your context as appropriate:
  - a. Overall – how did the SLO process go for you this year? What did you learn?
  - b. Let us talk about the three students whose work you brought in – walk me through how the BOE captured the skill(s) in question. How did you determine where these three landed on the targeted skill profile?
  - c. Tell me about your students’ growth. Who did better than you expected? What do you think about that? Why did they do so well? Are there any learnings from these students that you might be able to transfer to other students in the future? How did all of your students end the year on the TSP?

- d. Let's talk about the reverse – were there some who did not progress as you expected? Why do you think that happened? What could you do differently with this type of student in the future?
  - e. Overall, what was the percentage of students who met or exceeded their targeted growth goals? What do you think you would do differently the next year in your SLO process?
  - f. Did you notice any place this year where there were gaps in support – is there anything else that I can do or any PD we can offer that might help you in the future?
  - g. Combining your experience with the SLO this year and what we've discussed through the appraisal process in general, what should we focus on moving forward as your goals for next year?
- 3. After the conference concludes, the appraiser should have enough information about the teacher's SLO work to rate him or her on the SLO Rating Rubric. The appraiser will share the rating with the teacher after the conference concludes and with the rest of the teacher's appraisal ratings.
  - 4. Avoid duplication of conferences wherever possible. If the SLO closeout can be combined with an end-of-year evaluation conference, please do so.