

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, as well as any documentation that could support the SLO. This could include examples of evidence or measures they will use at the end of the SLO interval to determine 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?
 - 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. Consider reviewing the SLO using the SLO Quality Tool. This tool will provide you with guidance for expectations about SLO development. As a rule of thumb, any SLOs that fall in the far right column on the SLO Quality Tool do not meet the basic requirements and should be sent back for revision.

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 applicable. If that is not possible due to timing, consider reviewing common SLOs together. This could include 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 were decisions made about the focus? What personal knowledge or experience led to the selection?
 - Was data reviewed to make the selection for a focus? What data was used? How did it guide the focus?
 - 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 sufficient, return the SLO requesting revisions. It may be best to go ahead and 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. Consider reviewing the SLO Rating Rubric to be used by the district with the teacher. This will help them understand that when SLOs become part of the appraisal system, teachers' 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 help reinforce implementing an SLO is a process, focusing not only on the end but also on monitoring and adjusting throughout the interval as well as planning for the next cycle.

End-of-Year Conferences:

Before the Conference:

1. In advance of the meeting, ask teachers to submit the Student Growth Tracker 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 results on those measures for a few students. The intention is not that the appraiser will verify all outcomes or check the “math” of mapping students 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.
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’s talk about the three students whose work you brought in – walk me through how this assessment/these assessments 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?
 - 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 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.