



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is an SLO?

An SLO is an instructional goal, for specific students and, for a specific time interval.

Who writes SLOs?

All elementary, middle, and high school teachers (including teachers of tested and non-tested subjects) and principals create SLOs.

Which teachers will write SLOs?

All teachers who are responsible for the achievement of a group of students will write SLOs.

How many SLOs?

Teachers and principals are required to write a total of two SLOs per year.

Do all teachers and principals write SLOs every year or only teachers and principals in their evaluation year?

All teachers and principals will write SLOs every year.

Do teachers need to write their SLOs individually or can they write them in teams?

It is recommended that teachers write their SLOs in their professional learning communities (PLCs) such as grade-level teams or course-alike teams. Each individual teacher will identify his/her own students and data in the student selection process.

Are less than full-time teachers required to write two SLOs?

All teachers, including less than full-time teachers, will write two SLOs.

Will new teachers need to write SLOs?

New teachers will write SLOs.

Where can I find sample SLOs?

Sample SLOs and other information about SLOs can be found on the myMCPS SLO web page at:

<https://mymcps.mcpsmd.org/sites/SLO>

- Click on the folder you want to use: Teacher SLO, Training Materials, or Principal SLO.
- Hover over the document you want to open and double click.

How will SLOs be incorporated into teachers' evaluations and principals' evaluations?

During the 2013–2014 pilot school year, SLOs will not be incorporated into teacher and principal evaluations. During the 2014–2015 school year, information about SLOs will be included in the narrative in principal evaluations in Standard I and Standard II and in the narrative in teacher evaluations in Standard II and Standard IV. Due to the possibility of an additional *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) waiver from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to the Federal Department of Education, the status of the use of SLOs in the 2014–2015 school year may change.

Who approves SLOs?

Associate superintendents approve principals' SLOs. Principals approve teachers' SLOs.

Can a principal delegate approval of SLOs to assistant principals, resource teachers, or staff development teachers?

The principal may delegate initial review and approval of SLOs to assistant principals, assistant school administrators, or resource teachers. The principal is responsible for final approval of SLOs. Staff development teachers can assist teachers in developing their SLOs, but they are not assigned responsibility for approval of SLOs.

What happens if a principal or a teacher does not achieve the goals of their SLOs?

SLOs are only one of the many data sources which will be used to determine if a principal or teacher meets standard.

What are the components of a Teacher SLO?

The components of a Teacher SLO are:

Identify the SLO (Area of Growth, Student Selection, Target)

Evidence of Need

Plan Your Actions (Instructional Focus, Resources, Evidence of Progress) Analysis and Reflection

What are the components of a Principal SLO?

The components of the principal SLO are aligned with the Baldrige Guided School Improvement Plan (BGSIP) Linkages Chart as summarized in the table below:

| Components of the Principal SLO | BGSIP Linkages Chart |
|---|--|
| Objective Summary Statement | Strategic Planning |
| Data Review and Baseline Evidence | Root Cause Analysis |
| Student Population | Strategic Planning |
| Learning Content | Student/Stakeholder Focus |
| Instructional Interval | Strategic Planning |
| Target | Organizational Performance Results |
| Evidence of Growth | Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management (Action Plan) |
| Leadership and Professional Development | Faculty/Staff Focus and Process Management |

Associate superintendents and directors of school support and improvement will work with principals to set goals about leadership practices to lead school improvement. These conversations will begin in October 2013 and continue throughout the fall.

Do counselors, staff development teachers (SDTs), media specialists, and assistant principals (APs) who work with groups of students create SLOs?

Counselors, media specialists, and full-time SDTs will not write SLOs. However, if SDTs or media specialists are responsible for the achievement of a group of students (i.e., provide a grade to classroom teacher), then they write SLOs. APs do not write SLOs unless they are teacher a group of students and are responsible for their achievement.

Will fully-released resource teachers in special education (RTSEs) be responsible for writing SLOs?

Fully released RTSEs will not write SLOs.

Do resource teachers and special education teachers write SLOs? Can general education and special education teachers, as co-teachers, can write common SLOs.

Resource teachers and special education teachers will write SLOs. General education and special education teachers, as co-teachers, can write common SLOs.

If a teacher is in multiple schools, does he/she write his/her SLOs at the base school where the evaluation is being written?

A teacher in multiple schools will write his/her SLOs at the base school where the evaluation is being written.

How do teachers who are in multiple schools determine where to focus their two SLOs?

A teacher who sees a pattern or trend of a student growth need in more than one school can choose to write SLOs applicable for multiple schools. The principal of the base school approves the SLO.

Do therapists (e.g., speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist) write SLOs?

At this time, therapists will not write SLOs. However, a teacher writing an SLO may collaborate with a therapist on an academic goal for a group of students.

Can school community-based (SCB) and learning for independence (LFI) special education teachers use behavior or personal/functional skills for SLOs for students with special needs?

SCB and LFI teachers will write SLOs for their students based on the curriculum.

Do SLOs replace Professional Development Plans (PDPs)?

SLOs include a section on professional development. Therefore, during the 2013–2014 school year, a principal’s SLOs will meet the requirement for a principal’s PDP, and a teacher’s SLOs will meet the requirement for a teacher’s PDP. All other administrators and teacher-level employees who are not required to write SLOs will continue to write PDPs as outlined in the PGS Handbooks.

Can an SLO be implemented in a short-time period? (e.g., if an SLO is skill specific, can it be analyzed in just a few weeks?)

A rigorous SLO should last for a significant amount of time to help determine student proficiency.

Can SLOs be changed during the year based on data and reflection?

SLOs can be revised collaboratively during the year based on analysis of student learning needs.

Can a team of teachers write a year-long SLO focused on a specific group of students (e.g., English Language Learners in Algebra 1) although the students change teachers at each semester?

A team of teachers can write a year-long SLO focused on a specific group of students and their academic needs. However, each teacher is responsible for assessing their students' progress during the time they teach them.

Do principals write both School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals and SLOs? Do principals write their SLOs based on teacher growth or student growth?

Principals' SLOs are the same as their SIP goals. The Instructional Focus section of the SIP and SLO relates to teacher practice. The Target section of the SIP and SLO relates to student growth.

Can a principal require that teachers' SLOs align with the SIP?

It is recommended that teachers' SLOs align with the school's SIP where appropriate. SLOs must be aligned with academic/curriculum goals.

Can a school tailor the suggested teacher SLO timeline/sequences to meet the school's needs? Is the principal timeline for creating SLOs the same as the teacher timeline?

There is flexibility during the 2013–2014 pilot year with the timeline for teachers and principals.

Since Curriculum 2.0 includes formative assessments that utilize both quantitative and qualitative data, must data in SLOs always be quantitative?

Data used in SLOs can be either quantitative or qualitative. All data needs to provide evidence of progress towards meeting the SLO targets

What happens if a teacher or principal writes an SLO that does not reflect high expectations for students?

Principals or associate superintendents are responsible for approving SLOs. If, in the principal's or the associate superintendent's judgment, the SLO is not sufficiently rigorous, or does not meet students' needs, then the principal or associate superintendent may decide not to approve the SLO. The principal and teacher or the associate superintendent and principal will then work collaboratively to craft an SLO that would better benefit student achievement.