



Student Learning Objectives

A Handbook for Teachers

for _____

In Collaboration With the Maine Department of Education

2015 _____

Comment [LKB1]: District: Add district name

Comment [LKB2]: District: Add month

Student Learning Objectives

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Comment [LKB3]: DISTRICT: Insert month

In Collaboration With the Maine Department of Education



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The Maine Schools for Excellence Vision

Improving student learning and educator effectiveness is at the heart of the Maine Schools for Excellence (MSFE) initiative, which is the umbrella for a five-year Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The TIF 4 grant assists selected districts in their design and implementation of comprehensive human capital management systems.

As a participating TIF 4 MSFE district, **district name** will implement strategies that address the five components of the MSFE human capital management system shown in Figure 1. Each of these five components is interrelated.

The teacher evaluation and professional growth (TEPG) program builds on strong educator preparation, selection, and induction, which, in turn, will inform recognition and rewards. Underlying all of these strategies is the necessity of building a positive, collegial school environment in which all educators can grow and thrive.

Figure 1. The MSFE Human Capital Management System



Comment [ZM4]: District: Add district name

This handbook focuses specifically on the use of student learning objectives (SLOs) as measures of student growth. SLOs are part of the evaluation and professional growth component (in red) of the MSFE initiative, and have implications for recognition and reward (in purple). In addition, the collaboration and discussion opportunities that the SLO process can provide supports the building of a positive, collegial school environment (in darker blue) in which all educators can grow, thrive, and learn from each other.

The vision of the MSFE initiative is as follows:

- **To** enhance educator effectiveness and student learning
- **For** the benefit of all stakeholders, including students, educators, parents, and the community
- **By developing** an integrated and coherent human capital management system that aligns with the district mission and includes the following key features for all educators: regular, specific measurement and feedback; ongoing, targeted professional development; and fair and equitable recognition and rewards
- **So that** schools can better attract and retain high-performing educators and benefit from a workforce of teachers and administrators who are aligned in purpose, teamed in their efforts, and motivated to succeed in delivering high-quality instruction to students

Introduction to SLOs and Their Use in MSFE

In spring 2013, teacher and administrator representatives from MSFE districts met to develop a set of recommendations and guidelines for implementing SLOs. Based on these guidelines, **district name** developed its own SLO process and timeline for implementation. This guidebook will walk teachers step-by-step through the SLO process. This document will be an important reference tool as **district name** begins to implement SLOs as part of the TEPG program.

Comment [LS5]: District: Add district name

Comment [ZM6]: District: Add district name

What Are SLOs?

- SLOs are measurable goals that teachers set for their students at the start of a course or period of study and are approved by administrators.
- SLOs target the specific learning needs of students, focusing on specific local, state, or national standards that require emphasis based on a thorough review of available data.
- Within each SLO, teachers specify a growth target—a quantifiable amount of student learning expected by the end of the course, usually measured as growth between preassessment and postassessment.
- The creation of SLOs, in most cases, is a team effort. Each SLO is the result of collaboration and consultation among teacher colleagues and administrators.

Why Are the Maine Schools for Excellence (MSFE) Districts Implementing SLOs?

The SLO process provides a valuable opportunity for teachers and principals to have rich professional conversations that are focused on educational expectations. Research demonstrates that educators who set rigorous objectives for their students often realize greater improvement in student performance. In addition, SLOs give educators, districts, and state leaders an additional means by which to understand, value, and recognize success in the classroom.

How Do SLOs Fit Into an Educator’s Evaluation?

SLOs will be used as part of each teacher’s evaluation as a measure of student growth. In the 2015–16 school year, each teacher will write two SLOs. The SLO development process will give teachers a voice in how they will be evaluated while providing a vehicle for connecting teacher-set goals to content standards, district goals, and local initiatives. Once they become available, data from the state-mandated standardized test will be used in all relevant content areas as the preassessment and postassessment for at least one of the teacher’s SLOs. At a minimum, student data from all relevant and available assessments, including the state-mandated standardized test, will be used to inform the needs assessment section of the teacher’s two required SLOs.

The SLO Cycle

The complete cycle of an SLO is shown in Figure 2, which is followed by the description of each step.

Figure 2. The Order of Events of an SLO Cycle



The SLO cycle consists of the following four steps:

1. **Developing the SLO**. The teacher collaborates with colleagues and administrators to create an SLO.
2. **Approving the SLO**. A district-designated administrator or administrator team reviews the SLO to ensure that the SLO meets minimum criteria in terms of appropriateness, rigor, and completeness.
3. **Monitoring Progress**. The teacher delivers high-quality instruction and monitors student progress throughout the course. As needed, the teacher adjusts his or her approach to ensure that all students are making progress. This step may include a formal or informal midcourse conversation between the teacher and administrator or administrator team to discuss progress thus far.
4. **Rating the SLO**. The teacher meets with a district-designated administrator or administrator team at the end of the school year to review data and determine whether students met their growth targets. The teacher and administrator use the SLO results to inform professional development and SLO development for the next school year. The administrator or administrator team assigns an SLO score.

Support

To support teachers throughout the SLO process, a variety of resources is available, including written documents, trainings, and resources.

SLO Handbook

This document is a useful reference that should contain the answers to most of your questions pertaining to SLOs. It includes [timelines and important deadlines](#), step-by-step guidance, and templates.

Additional Support

Your TEPG facilitator is your first resource and best contact if you have questions regarding SLOs. Should you have questions or require support, please contact your TEPG facilitator(s).

- TEPG facilitator name, Building, Contact

If you have questions about the MSFE initiative in general, please contact TIF 4 Professional Development Coordinator Jane Blais, at jane.m.blais@maine.gov.



Comment [LKB7]: District: Add TEPG facilitator names

Timelines and Important Deadlines

For Yearlong Courses

September/ October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and submit the SLOs
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise and resubmit the SLOs, if needed
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet to discuss student progress to date (optional)
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit list of students eligible for exemption• Administer the postassessment• Prepare for SLO rating meeting
May/June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with the evaluator for SLO rating

Comment [LKB8]: District: We provide three sample timelines: one for yearlong courses, one for first-semester courses, and one for second-semester courses. Please adjust the timeline(s) as needed and delete any timelines that would not apply to your district.

Comment [LKB9]: District: We provided a sample timeline. Please adjust timeline and deadlines as appropriate.

SLO Deadlines: Yearlong Courses

October 31—All yearlong SLOs must be submitted for review and approval

March 15—Last day to receive administrator approval of revised SLOs

November 15—All yearlong SLOs must be approved

June 13—SLO ratings are due

For First-Semester Courses

September/ October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and submit the SLOs • Revise and resubmit the SLOs, if needed
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet to discuss student progress to date (optional)
December/ January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit list of students eligible for exemption • Administer the postassessment • Meet with the administrator or administrator team for SLO rating

SLO Deadlines: First Semester

October 15—Last day to submit SLOs

October 31—All SLOs must be approved

November 15—Last day to receive administrator approval of revised SLOs

January 31—SLO ratings due

For Second-Semester Courses

January/ February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and submit the SLOs • Revise and resubmit the SLOs, if needed
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet to discuss student progress to date (optional)
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit list of students eligible for exemption • Administer the postassessment • Prepare for SLO rating meeting
May/June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the administrator or administrator team for SLO rating

SLO Deadlines: Second Semester

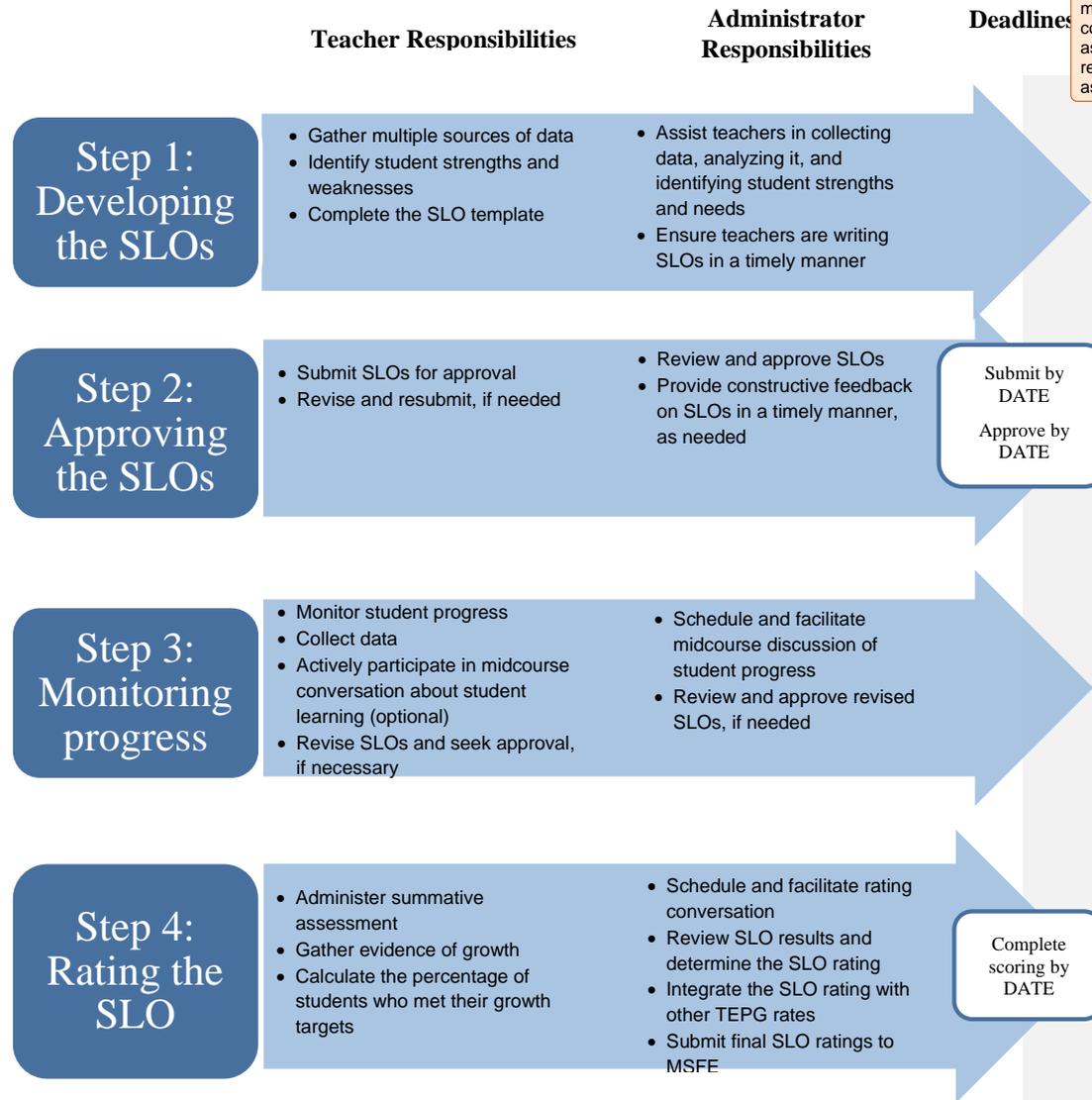
February 1—Last day to submit SLOs

February 15—All SLOs must be approved

November 15—Last day to receive administrator approval of revised SLOs

June 13—SLO ratings due

Roles and Responsibilities for Teachers and Administrators



Comment [LKB10]: District: Add deadlines and dates.

Comment [LKB11]: District: Under step 3, make sure the references to the mid-course conversations reflect any decisions you made as to whether mid-course conversations will be required or recommended. If there is a deadline associated with it, please add it.

*Deadlines listed in this diagram are for yearlong SLOs. Teachers writing second-semester SLOs will need to adhere to the deadlines listed in the [Timelines and Important Deadlines](#) section.

Developing the SLO

Begin developing the SLOs by determining how many you will need to write.

- In the 2015–16 school year, each teacher must write two SLOs. The first SLO must be an individual SLO. The second SLO can be a team SLO, a targeted SLO, or a second individual SLO.
- Once it becomes available, data from the state-mandated standardized test will be used in all relevant content areas of the pre-assessment and postassessment for at least one of the teacher’s SLOs.
- At a minimum, student data from all relevant and available assessments, including the state-mandated standardized test, will be used to inform the needs assessment section of the teacher’s two required SLOs.

Comment [LKB12]: Districts: Modify this statement based on the number of SLOs required in your district and based on district decisions regarding which types of SLOs are required or allowed.

Once you have determined how many SLOs you need to write, determine for which course(s) you will write an SLO. Generally, teachers should prioritize core classes (mathematics, reading or English language arts, science, and social studies) over noncore or elective classes.

Comment [LKB13]: District: If you have additional guidance regarding how teachers should determine for which courses they should write their SLOs, add it here.

Each SLO consists of nine components, which are highlighted in the SLO template (see [Appendix A](#)):

Comment [LKB14]: District: Change this number if you not requiring that teachers complete “Requested supports” or “Collaboration”

1. Teacher demographics
2. Student demographics
3. Needs assessment
4. Content standards
5. Summative assessment
6. Growth targets
7. Instructional strategies and progress monitoring plan
8. Requested supports
9. Collaboration

Comment [LKB15]: Districts: Delete the components from this list if you are not including these optional components in your template.

Throughout the SLO development process, please refer to the [SLO Template](#) (in Appendix A) and [SLO Approval Checklist](#) (in Appendix B). Complete the SLO template when writing your SLOs. It is strongly recommended that you review the SLO approval checklist when writing your SLOs to ensure that you are meeting the minimum quality requirements for the SLOs. After you submit your SLOs, your administrator or administrator team will review the SLOs using the SLO checklist.

The following subsections provide guiding questions and guidelines for each component of an SLO. Each subsection includes the applicable portion of the SLO Approval Checklist, which administrators or administrator teams will use to approve the SLOs.

1. Teacher Demographics

The teacher demographics section includes the following basic information about your SLOs:

Checklist Items

- Fill out fields completely and accurately.

Guiding Questions

- To what course(s) does this SLO apply?
- Did I include all sections of identified course(s) for at least one of my SLOs? (Team SLOs must include all students.)

2. Student Demographics

In this section, identify important attributes of your students as well as important contextual factors that may the students' ability to show growth. These steps include the following:

Checklist Items

- Identify appropriate type of SLO.
- Include an appropriate interval of instruction.
- Include the total number of students for the course in the SLO, consistent with the SLO type.¹
- Identify number of students with IEPs and 504 plans (if applicable).
- Describe disabilities and accommodations of students comprehensively.²
- Include descriptions of English language learner (ELL), gifted and talented, and "other" students (if applicable).

Guiding Questions

- What important contextual factors do I want to note about my students?

3. Needs Assessment

In the needs assessment component, include a summary

Potential Data Sources:

- Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)
- SBAC/MEA
- Course grades
- Prior-year end-of-course assessment scores
- Preassessment data
- Portfolios
- PSAT/SAT scores
- Student work samples
- Student files
- Individualized education programs (IEPs), 504 plans, and other plans
- Behavioral data

¹ [Explain requirements for the number of students included for each type of SLO for the course.]

² Indicate specific disabilities and accommodations along with the number of students; do not include student names.

of the data you collected, describe your student population, and identify student strengths and weaknesses. This includes the following:

Checklist Items

- Identify data reviewed about current students.
- Include areas of strength and need in relevant content or skill areas.
- Support each identified strength and need with relevant content- or skill-level student data.
- Demonstrate evidence of collaboration during data analysis, when possible.
- Refrain from using student names when describing students.

Guiding Questions

- What sources of data are available to me? Data sources can include assessment scores as well as other information, such as behavioral data and observational data.
- Based on my analysis of multiple data and information sources, what are my students' strengths and needs?
- In what area(s) do my students need the most support and instruction?

Guidelines

- Gather multiple sources of data. Consider all available resources to provide a comprehensive overview of your student group. (See earlier Potential Data Sources box for examples of types of evidence you might review, if available.)
- Analyze available data for areas of strength and need by subject area, student group, concepts, skills, and behaviors.
- When possible, collaborate with peers to analyze the data.
- When describing your students, refrain from using student names. For example, it is appropriate to say that you have three students identified with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and two students identified with pervasive developmental delays in your class, but it is not appropriate to identify these students by name. Protecting student confidentiality is critical.
- The SLOs must include a preassessment, as stipulated in proposed Maine state regulations.
 - The preassessment may be administered in the prior school year (e.g., an end-of-course examination given in June may serve as a preassessment for the course the following school year). However, in most cases, you should administer a preassessment at the beginning of the school year because it provides important data on current student performance.

Comment [LKB16]: District: We have included a list of possible data sources here. Please modify the list in the call-out box as appropriate.

- If you need to create a preassessment, follow the guidelines for [assessments](#) during assessment writing.

4. Standards

In this section, identify the standards that will be the focus of your SLO. Your selection of standards should be informed by the needs assessment:

Checklist Items

- SLO addresses national or state standards appropriate for the subject
- Selected standards address essential areas of learning appropriate for the subject.
- Selected standards address a range of cognitive levels appropriate for the student group.
- Selected standards align with broader school and district goals.
- Selected standard(s) are broad enough to cover an extended interval of instruction, such as an academic year or semester.

Guiding Questions

- Which standard(s) align with the need(s) identified in the needs assessment and student population component?
- Do the identified standards represent learning over the course of the interval of instruction?
- Do the identified standards align with the assessment in terms of depth and breadth?

Guidelines

- The SLO must address national or state standards appropriate for the subject.
- The selected standard(s) must address essential areas of learning appropriate for the subject.
- The selected standard(s) must address a range of cognitive levels appropriate for the student group.
- The selected standard(s) should align with broader school and district goals.
- The selected standard(s) should be broad enough to cover an extended interval of instruction, such as an academic year or semester.

Preassessment/Postassessment

Comment [LKB17]: Districts: Please add any additional guidelines that you want your teachers to follow.

Comment [LKB18]: Districts: You likely will need to customize this section more than others. If applicable, insert information about menus of pre-approved assessments and about assessment approval procedures. Consider adding a list of pre-approved assessments either here or as an appendix.

In this section, identify and describe the assessment you will use to measure student growth. This assessment should align with your preassessment.³ If you are using a teacher-created assessment, you must attach it to your SLO. As previously noted, data from the state-mandated standardized test (if available) will be used in all relevant content areas of the preassessment and postassessment for at least one of the teacher's SLOs.

Checklist Items

- Align to all of the standards identified in the Assessed Standards section
- Use appropriate format(s) for the selected standards and student population
- Provide all students with an opportunity to adequately demonstrate their knowledge and growth
- Contain a variety of question levels, rubric levels, and/or prompt types
- Measure individual student performance
- If applicable, attach a teacher-created summative assessment to the SLO
- Include a high-quality rubric and student prompts/instructions, if assessment is performance or rubric based
- Ensure that the assessment is free of bias, avoid unnecessarily complex language, and administer the assessment fairly and consistently to all students

Guiding Questions

- What type of assessment will be most appropriate for assessing the identified standards?
- Is there an assessment I already use that assesses the standards identified in the previous section? If not, is there one already available that I could use?
- Do I need to create the assessment?
- Will this assessment permit all students to demonstrate growth?
- Is the assessment developmentally appropriate?
- Does this assessment contain a mix of question levels? For example, does this assessment focus simply on recall questions, or does it also require application of knowledge and higher order thinking?
- Is this assessment free from bias?
- Does this assessment contain appropriate language for students?

³ It is recommended that, when using teacher-created assessments, the pre-assessment and post-assessment be the same or in slightly different forms (e.g., same questions in a different order) of the same assessment. If the assessment is a vendor assessment, the pre-assessment and post-assessment may be different in accordance with test administration guidelines from the vendor.

- How will I administer this assessment fairly and consistently to students?
- Do the standards identified in the standards section of the SLO align with the assessment? If not, you must either select a different assessment or change the identified standards to match the assessment.

Guidelines

All **assessments** must meet the following criteria:

Comment [LKB19]: A note to districts: You may add additional guidelines here.

- Align to all of the standards identified in the Assessed Standards section.
- Use appropriate format(s) for the selected standards and student population.
- Measure individual student performance.
- Provide accommodations and modifications for both the preassessment and postassessment, as required in students' IEPs, 504 plans, ELL status, and other plans.
- Provide all students with an opportunity to adequately demonstrate their knowledge and growth.
- Contain a variety of question levels, rubric levels, and/or prompt types.
- Be administered similarly across classes within a district; if applicable, the postassessment must be similar to the preassessment.
- Be graded consistently between administrations and classrooms with attention to validity/fairness.
- Already be used in the classroom whenever possible or, if new, be created through collaboration.
- Be free of bias, avoid unnecessarily complex language, and be administered fairly and consistently to all students.
- Not be graded by students.
- Be kept for at least one full year.

Performance-Assessment and Portfolio-Specific Guidelines

- Attach both the performance assessment and the rubric.
- Include rubrics with all performance assessments. Include the following:
 - A minimum proficiency-level scale of 1 to 4
 - Recommended scale: 4 = exceeds proficiency, 3 = proficient, 2 = partially proficient, 1 = needs improvement
 - Specific, clear, and concise descriptions of each proficiency level
 - Positive, learner-appropriate language

- Use rubrics instructionally throughout the year unless they are content specific.
- Record performance assessments (audio or video as appropriate) whenever possible.

Test-Specific Guidelines

- With some exceptions, tests may be administered at most twice per year (once as a preassessment and once as a postassessment). Standardized assessments designed to be implemented multiple times throughout the year may be administered more than twice per year.
- Teachers may use questions similar to assessment questions during instruction, but they may use exact test questions only during testing.
- Teachers may complete answer documents for students only when this accommodation is listed on the student's IEP.

5. Growth Targets

Growth targets specify the amount of growth expected from students during the interval of instruction. The measurements are as follows:

Checklist Items

- Specify a quantitative growth or attainment target for each student on the roster.
- Use individual pre-assessment data to determine appropriate growth for each student.
- Uses a format required by the district or any appropriate format from the SLO handbook.
- Expect all students to demonstrate growth.
- Ensure targets are rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate based on students' needs.
- Ensure targets appropriately consider minimum passing scores and typical growth associated with all ability levels.
- Attach the roster with all pre-assessment scores and target scores to the SLO.

Guiding Questions

- What do I know about student learning or information from the test provider (if applicable)? What information can I use to inform my setting of growth targets? [These questions are about your prior experience in giving the assessment.]
- What have other teachers learned about growth from administering this assessment in the past?
- What is my rationale for setting these growth targets? How do I know that they are rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate?

Guidelines

- Specify a quantitative growth or attainment targets for each student on the roster.
- Use individual pre-assessment data to determine appropriate growth for each student.
- Use a format required by your district, or any appropriate format from the SLO handbook.
- Expect all students to demonstrate growth.
- Ensure targets are rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate based on students' needs.
- Ensure targets appropriately consider minimum passing scores and typical growth associated with all ability levels.
- Attach the roster with all pre-assessment scores and target scores to the SLO.
- Follow state and district guidelines (see handbook) to ensure that SLO growth targets are rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate. For example, if your district has a preferred growth target or provides a formula for setting growth targets, follow these guidelines.

Student growth targets may be formatted in a variety of ways. For examples of target formats, see [Appendix C](#).

Comment [LKB20]: District: If you have a preferred or a standardized format that you would like teachers to use, please delete this text and add your guidance here.

6. Instructional Strategies and Progress Monitoring Plan

Strong instructional practices are the foundation for a successful SLO. In this section of the SLO template, describe the instructional strategies you intend to use throughout the school year to help students reach their growth targets as well as how you will monitor student progress. These steps include the following:

Checklist Items

- Describe instructional strategies that appropriately consider student demographics and associated learning styles, ability levels, and student needs identified in the needs assessment (Section 3) and the standards (Section 4).
- Identify methods for monitoring student progress that are aligned to the SLO standards.
- Identify multiple ways the teacher will monitor student progress throughout the interval of instruction, including both formal and informal as well as short-term and long-term formative assessments/data as appropriate.
- Explain how the teacher will use progress data to inform instructional planning.

Guiding Questions

- What instructional strategies have I used in the past that led to student growth?
- Are there other instructional strategies I can use to help students reach these growth targets?
- How will I know if students are making sufficient progress toward their targets?
- How will I use formative data to inform modifications to my instruction?
- How frequently will I collect formative data?

Approving the SLO

Once you have developed the SLO, submit it for approval. A district-designated administrator or administrator team will review the SLO using the [SLO Approval Checklist](#) to ensure that the SLO meets minimum criteria in appropriateness, rigor, and completeness. If the SLO does not meet the criteria for approval, you will have an opportunity to review and resubmit the SLO.

Monitoring Progress

Once your SLO has been approved, continue to monitor student progress throughout the school year and adjust instruction as needed. Between SLO approval and rating, analyze and reflect upon the success of instructional strategies, and adjust instruction as needed. In some rare cases, you may need to adjust your growth targets.

Discussing Student Progress

This conversation provides a valuable opportunity to celebrate success to date and brainstorm ways to address challenges. During this conversation, teachers and administrators might discuss professional development opportunities, new instructional strategies, or specific student needs.

Revising the SLO

If unique circumstances warrant revisions, you may change the SLO at or before the middle of the interval of instruction. Table 1 provides a list of circumstances that may warrant a revision to the SLO and identifies the components affected by the revision.

Table 1. When SLO Revisions Are Permitted After Approval

Circumstance	Components Affected
Change in teaching assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher demographics ▪ Student demographics ▪ Content standards ▪ Summative assessment ▪ Growth targets ▪ Instructional strategies and progress monitoring plan ▪ Request supports (optional) ▪ Collaboration (optional)
Change in student population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher demographics ▪ Student demographics ▪ Content standards ▪ Summative assessment ▪ Growth targets ▪ Instructional strategies and progress monitoring plan ▪ Request supports (optional) ▪ Collaboration (optional)
Maternity or other extended leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth targets

Comment [LKB21]: District:

1) If you are not requiring or recommending this step, we recommend leaving this section in, but tweaking it so that this conversation occurs among teachers, teams, etc. instead of with administrators.

2) If you are recommending or requiring a mid-course discussion, we strongly recommend that you add questions here that you want teachers and administrators to consider and discuss.

Comment [LKB22]: District: You may add additional circumstances to this table.

Circumstance	Components Affected
Natural disaster	▪ Growth targets
Extensive snow days	▪ Growth targets

If one of these circumstances has occurred, gather evidence that justifies the change in the SLO. Present to your administrator or administrator team your evidence and articulate your reasoning for your proposed SLO revisions. Your administrator or administrator team and district will determine whether to accept your proposed revisions to the SLO.

Comment [LKB23]: District: You may want to further develop the procedure or parameters for revising the SLO. If you do develop additional information, add more details here.

Rating the SLO

At the end of your course, you will meet with your administrator or administrator team to discuss the SLO rating. The rating is based on the percentage of students who met their growth targets. As the teacher, you are responsible for collecting data on student progress prior to meeting with the administrator or administrator team.

A particular student's results may be included in the calculation of the SLO rating if one of the two following conditions is met:

- The teacher is a teacher of record for that student, meaning that:
 - The student was enrolled in a course or other learning experience taught by that teacher.
 - The student was present and was subject to instruction by that teacher at least 80 percent of the scheduled instructional time for that course or learning experience with that teacher.
 - The student took both the pretest and the posttest designed to measure achievement in that course or learning experience.
 - The student is included on a team SLO with shared accountability, which has been agreed to by the teacher pursuant to the process set by the district.

Preparing for the SLO Rating

Prior to the end of the interval of instruction, identify and discuss with your administrator or administrator team any students who are eligible for exemption from rating. These students are those with extenuating circumstances that may have affected their ability to demonstrate progress. The following are allowable reasons for exemption:

1. The student was absent for 20 percent or more of the interval of instruction. State regulations stipulate that students can be included in student growth measures only if they are present for 80 percent or more of the instruction that occurs between the preassessment and postassessment. Students who do not meet this criterion, including students who joined the course late and were not present for 80 percent of the interval of instruction, **must** be excluded from the SLO rating. The teacher's attendance records should be used to calculate the percentage of absences in order to take into account tardiness, in-school suspensions, and so on.
2. The student experienced a significant disruption in his or her education. Circumstances include but are not limited to homelessness, extended illness, change in foster care, natural disaster, and death in the family.
3. The student is in his or her first year of English as a second language status.

At the end of the interval of instruction, the administrator or administrator team will rate the postassessment. Test administration should comply with the assessment guidelines outlined in the [Summative Assessment](#) section in this document.

Comment [PS24]: District: If mandating a written Exemption Request form, please add that information here.

After scoring the students' postassessments, calculate the percentage of students who met their growth targets. A table can be helpful during calculations and when presenting information to the administrator or administrator team, such as the sample shown in Table 2.

Comment [LKB25]: District: If you develop a standard template for teachers to use, please add that information here.

Table 2. Sample Completed Scoring Template

Student ID	Preassessment Score (Out of 100)	Growth Target	Postassessment Score	Met Growth Target?
12345	54	Increase score by 20 points	70	No
67890	23	Increase score by 30 points	59	Yes
09876	42	Increase score by 20 points	69	Yes
54321	39	Increase score by 30 points	70	Yes
01928	49	Increase score by 20 points	60	No
			Percentage of students who met growth targets	60%

If desired, gather other evidence of student progress to discuss with the administrator or administrator team during the SLO rating conversation.

Meeting With the Administrator or Administrator Team

After calculating the percentage of students who met their growth targets, submit that information, as well as any other contextual information or data, to the administrator or administrator team, who will meet with you to discuss SLO rating. This conversation may occur in conjunction with another evaluation-related meeting or can be a stand-alone meeting.

Calculating the SLO Rating

During the SLO rating conversation, you and your administrator or administrator team identify which, if any, students should be excluded from SLO rating because of extenuating circumstances. The administrator or administrator team has the discretion and responsibility for approving all exemptions.

The administrator or administrator team determines the SLO rating on the basis of the percentage of students, rounded to the nearest whole number, who met their growth targets. Table 3 provides the percentage ranges that correspond with each final SLO rating.

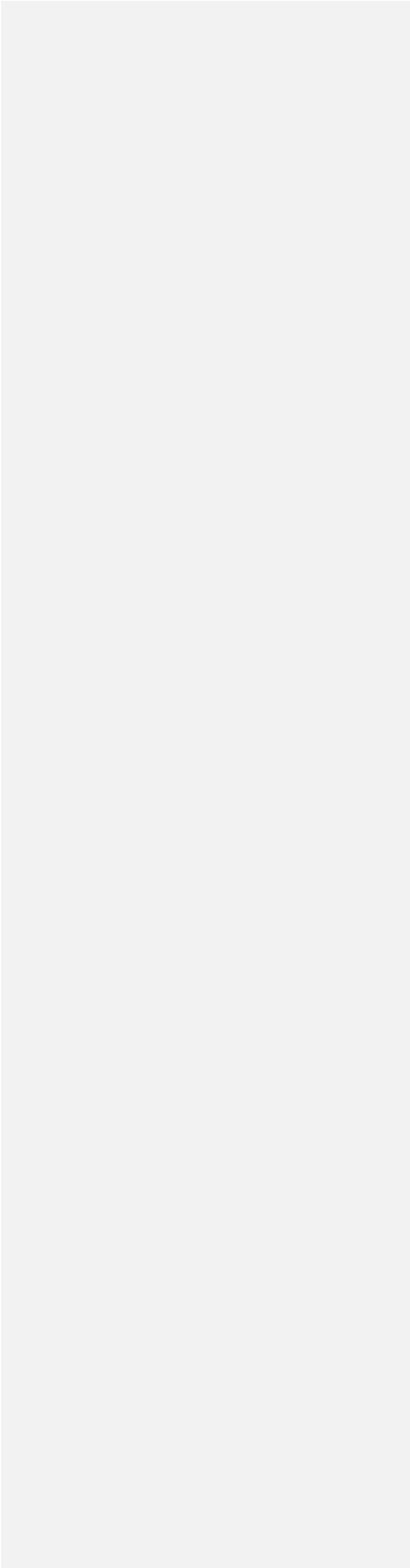


Table 3. SLO Rating Lookup Table

Percentage Ranges of Students Who Met Their Growth Targets	SLO Score
85–100%	4
71–84%	3
41–70%	2
0–40%	1

For example, consider the following scenario. A teacher’s SLO covers a course with 42 students. The administrator or administrator team approves the exemption of two students. Of the remaining 40 students, 30 students (75 percent) meet their targets. On the basis of this information, the administrator or administrator team would determine the SLO rating to be 3 because 75 percent falls in the 71 percent–84 percent range on the lookup table.

Discussing Student Progress

The purpose of the meeting with the administrator or administrator team, beyond calculating the SLO rating, is to have a meaningful conversation about student progress. With your administrator or administrator team, analyze the data and identify strengths or weaknesses in student progress. Sample questions are included in [Appendix D](#).

For example, if students in your class demonstrated exceptional growth, the discussion might focus on how you can mentor or share instructional strategies with colleagues. If a particular subgroup of students did not demonstrate sufficient growth, you and your administrator or administrator team might brainstorm reasons why and identify potential opportunities for professional learning, especially in thinking about professional learning goals for the following year.

Integrating the SLO Score With Other Evaluation Measures

The administrator or administrator team determines the SLO rating and calculates the summative rating. After gathering multiple sources of evidence, the administrator or administrator team organizes the measurements into distinct categories or dimensions of performance: professional practice, professional growth, learner perceptions, and learner growth. SLOs fit within the learner growth measurement category.

After analyzing and rating the evidence gathered, the administrator combines the categories of measurements to determine a summative effective rating, applying weights, priorities, or performance thresholds as appropriate. Once the summative score has been calculated, you and your administrator or administrator team should discuss the results of summative rating and implications for future practice.

Appendix A. SLO Template

For use with MSFE SLO Student Handbook, which provides additional guidance regarding minimum approval requirements and suggested practices.

Section 1: Teacher Demographics		
Teacher Name:	Position:	Date:
Subject:	Grade(s):	

Section 2: Student Demographics	
Pre-assessment date: _____	Check one: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Team (shared student data)
Post-assessment date: _____	If team, list other teacher(s) included. _____
Course Type: Year-long Semester Trimester Other _____	Number of students included in the SLO: _____ (Include all sections of course, if applicable.)
Number of students with following status: <i>Descriptions of students should be provided in list form to retain the anonymity (e.g., “one student has an identified reading disability, two students have identified learning disabilities in math, and one student has an identified hearing disability that requires auditory instructional supports”).</i> _____ 504 plans (Describe specific accommodations.) _____ _____ IEPs (Describe specific needs.) _____ _____ Gifted and talented (Describe.) _____ _____ ELL (Describe.) _____ _____ RTI interventions _____ _____ Title I (math) _____ _____ Title I (reading) _____ _____ Other (Describe.) _____	

Section 3: Needs Assessment

What data did you review about the CURRENT students? (Check all that apply.)

- NWEA
- SBAC/MEA
- Grades
- Prior year, end of year assessment scores
- Preassessment data (other)
- Portfolios
- PSAT/SAT
- Student work samples
- Student files
- IEP, 504 plan, etc.
- Behavior
- Other

Summarize the areas of strength for the student population, referring to data sources. Support this with an analysis of student data at the appropriate skill or content level.

Summarize the areas of need for the student population, referring to data sources. Support this with an analysis of student data at the appropriate skill or content level.

Describe how you collaborated with other individuals to analyze student data when you developed your SLO.

Section 4: Standards

What is (are) the source(s) of the standards (CCSS, MLR, ASCA, etc.)?

List all standards measured in your SLO assessment. Include both the identifier (standard number) and the description (text of the standard).

Note: The standards must address an essential area of need identified in the needs assessment. & include process as well as content.

Section 5: Pre-assessment/Post-assessment

_____Teacher created ___Pre-approved from menu

*Teacher-created assessments (with assessment blueprints) must be attached, when applicable.
High-quality scoring rubrics and student prompts should be attached, when applicable.*

If preapproved, identify the assessment(s) used.

If not preapproved, attach an electronic version of your assessment and answer the following questions: What type is it? What is the scale? If a rubric, how is it being scored? (If you attached an assessment blueprint, you may reference that document.)

Section 6: Growth Targets

Please attach a roster or table of student names, their preassessment scores, and their target scores.

Identify the growth target formula or format that will be used for this SLO (See appendix in the SLO handbook).

Section 6: Growth Targets

Please attach a roster or table of student names, their preassessment scores, and their target scores.

Describe your rationale for selecting this growth target formula or format (include consideration of the minimum passing score, if applicable, such as with courses in which students enter with little to no prior knowledge).

Section 7: Instructional Strategies and Progress Monitoring

What are two or three key strategies you will embed into instruction to specifically address the needs assessment (Section 3) and the variety of ability levels and learning styles represented in your student population (Section 2)? These strategies should include differentiation based on student need and relate directly to the selected standards (Section 4).

How will you monitor progress throughout the interval of instruction (consider both short and long term). Identify any specific formative assessment strategies you will use, how frequently you will monitor progress, and how you will document progress over time.

Section 7: Instructional Strategies and Progress Monitoring

How will the progress-monitoring data you collect drive your instructional plans? Consider how different results might impact your decision to use or modify certain elements such as instructional strategies and student groupings.

Teacher Signature _____

Date _____

Administrator Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix B. SLO Approval Checklist

Teacher Name: _____ Date of Submission: _____

For use with MSFE SLO Student Handbook, which provides additional guidance regarding minimum approval requirements and suggested practices.

SLO Component	Evaluator Checklist
Teacher Demographics	<input type="checkbox"/> Fill out fields completely and accurately
Student Demographics	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify appropriate type of SLO <input type="checkbox"/> Include an appropriate interval of instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Include the total number of students for the course in the SLO, consistent with the SLO type ⁴ <input type="checkbox"/> Identify number of students with IEPs and 504 plans (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Describe disabilities and accommodations of students comprehensively ⁵ <input type="checkbox"/> Include descriptions of ELL, gifted and talented, and “other” students (if applicable)
Needs Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify data reviewed about current students <input type="checkbox"/> Identify areas of strength and need in relevant content or skill areas <input type="checkbox"/> Support each identified strength and need with relevant content- or skill-level student data <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate evidence of collaboration during data analysis, when possible <input type="checkbox"/> Refrain from using student names when describing students
Standards	<input type="checkbox"/> SLO addresses national or state standards appropriate for the subject <input type="checkbox"/> Selected standards address essential areas of learning appropriate for the subject <input type="checkbox"/> Selected standards address a range of cognitive levels appropriate for the student group <input type="checkbox"/> Selected standards align with broader school and district goals <input type="checkbox"/> Selected standard(s) are broad enough to cover an

⁴ Explain requirements for the number of students included for each type of SLO for the course

⁵ Indicate specific disabilities and accommodations along with the number of students; do not include student names.

SLO Component	Evaluator Checklist
	<p>extended interval of instruction, such as an academic year or semester</p>
<p>Pre-assessment/ Post-assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Align to all of the standards identified in the Assessed Standards section <input type="checkbox"/> Use appropriate format(s) for the selected standards and student population <input type="checkbox"/> Provide all students with an opportunity to adequately demonstrate their knowledge and growth <input type="checkbox"/> Contain a variety of question levels, rubric levels, and/or prompt types <input type="checkbox"/> Measure individual student performance <input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, attach a teacher-created summative assessment to the SLO <input type="checkbox"/> Include a high-quality rubric and student prompts/instructions, if assessment is performance or rubric based <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the assessment is free of bias, avoid unnecessarily complex language, and administer the assessment fairly and consistently to all students
<p>Growth Targets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specify a quantitative growth or attainment target for each student on the roster <input type="checkbox"/> Use individual pre-assessment data to determine appropriate growth for each student <input type="checkbox"/> Expect all students to demonstrate growth <input type="checkbox"/> Uses a format required by the district or any of the formats from the SLO Handbook <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure targets are rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate based on students' needs <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure targets appropriately consider minimum passing scores and typical growth associated with all ability levels <input type="checkbox"/> Attach the roster with all pre-assessment scores and target scores to the SLO
<p>Instructional Strategies and Progress Monitoring Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Describe instructional strategies that appropriately consider student demographics and associated learning styles, ability levels, and student needs identified in the needs assessment (Section 3) and the standards (Section 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Identify methods for monitoring student progress that are aligned to the SLO standards <input type="checkbox"/> Identify multiple ways the teacher will monitor student progress throughout the interval of instruction, including both formal and informal as well as short-term and long-term

SLO Component	Evaluator Checklist
	formative assessments/data as appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Explain how the teacher will use progress data to inform instructional planning
SLO Component	Evaluator Checklist
Teacher Demographics	<input type="checkbox"/> Fill out fields completely and accurately.
Student Demographics	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify appropriate type of SLO. <input type="checkbox"/> Include an appropriate interval of instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Include the total number of students for the course in the SLO, consistent with the SLO type. ⁶ <input type="checkbox"/> Identify number of students with IEPs and 504 plans (if applicable). <input type="checkbox"/> Describe disabilities and accommodations of students comprehensively. ⁷ <input type="checkbox"/> Include descriptions of ELL, gifted and talented, and “other” students (if applicable).
Needs Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify data reviewed about current students. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify areas of strength and need in relevant content or skill areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Support each identified strength and need with relevant content- or skill-level student data. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate evidence of collaboration during data analysis, when possible. <input type="checkbox"/> Refrain from using student names when describing students.
Standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Include the state or national standards to which the SLO must be aligned. <input type="checkbox"/> Include standard(s) explicitly linked to an essential area of need identified in the needs assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> Use standards broad enough to represent learning over the course of an interval of instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Use standards focused enough to be measured using the selected assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> Include standards that address a range of cognitive levels appropriate for the student group (i.e., include higher cognitive levels than simply knowledge/recall).

⁶ [Explain requirements for the number of students included for each type of SLO for the course.]

⁷ Indicate specific disabilities and accommodations along with the number of students; do not include student names.

SLO Component	Evaluator Checklist
Preassessment/ Postassessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify an assessment that aligns with standards you selected in Section 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide all students with an opportunity to demonstrate growth. <input type="checkbox"/> Include a variety of item types (e.g., selected response, constructed response). <input type="checkbox"/> Include a high-quality rubric and student prompts/instructions, if assessment is performance or rubric based. <input type="checkbox"/> State what accommodations are necessary for each student with an IEP or a 504 plan. <input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, attach a teacher-created summative assessment to the SLO. <input type="checkbox"/> Administer assessment similarly across classes within a district and, if applicable, administer a postassessment that is similar to the preassessment. <input type="checkbox"/> Grade assessment consistently between administrations and classrooms, with attention to validity/fairness. <input type="checkbox"/> When possible, use an assessment that is already used in the classroom or, if using a new assessment, create it through collaboration. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the assessment is free of bias, avoid unnecessarily complex language, and administer the assessment fairly and consistently to all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not allow students to grade the assessment.
Growth Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specify a quantitative growth or attainment target for each student on the roster. <input type="checkbox"/> Use individual preassessment data to determine appropriate growth for each student. <input type="checkbox"/> Use an appropriate approach to target setting that is identified in the handbook. <input type="checkbox"/> Expect all students to demonstrate growth. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure targets are rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate based on students' needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure targets appropriately consider minimum passing scores and typical growth associated with all ability levels. <input type="checkbox"/> Attach the roster with all preassessment scores and target scores to the SLO. <input type="checkbox"/> Follow state and district guidelines (see handbook) to ensure that SLO growth targets are rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate. For example, if the district has a preferred growth target or provides a formula for setting growth targets, use these guidelines.
Instructional Strategies and Progress Monitoring Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Describe instructional strategies that appropriately consider student demographics and associated learning styles, ability levels, and student needs identified in the needs assessment (Section 3) and the standards (Section 4). <input type="checkbox"/> Identify methods for monitoring student progress that are aligned to the SLO standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify multiple ways the teacher will monitor student progress throughout the interval of instruction, including both formal and informal as well as short-term and long-term formative assessments/data as appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Explain how the teacher will use progress data to inform instructional planning.

Appendix C. Sample Formats for Growth Targets

Comment [LKB26]: District: If there are particular formats that you want teachers to consider, please delete those that you do not want teachers to use.

When setting growth targets, teachers use baseline and pretest data to set developmentally appropriate expectations for students on the summative assessment. Teachers should follow state and district guidelines to ensure that SLO growth targets are rigorous, attainable, and developmentally appropriate. Growth targets should be informed by the teacher’s knowledge of students, content, and assessment. All students, regardless of their preassessment score, should be expected to demonstrate significant and appropriate growth.

Student growth targets may be formatted in a variety of ways. The following are sample formats, but not the only formats, for growth targets. All examples listed below have benefits and limitations. Please review your student data closely and select a format with care.

Growth Target Format 1: Expected Growth in Points

All students will increase their preassessment score by 18 points on the postassessment.

Potential Strengths of This Format

- Clear, uniform expectations for all students.
- Each student’s growth target will be based on his or her preassessment rating. For example, a student with a rating of 50 on the preassessment would be expected to increase his or her rating to 68; another student with a rating a 62 would be expected to increase his or her rating to 80.

Limitations or Considerations to This Format

- Assumes that it is developmentally appropriate to expect all students to demonstrate the same amount of growth.
- Assumes that 18 points is “typical” growth, though it is not clear that 18 points is “typical” for any or all students in the class.
- Assumes that the assessment design allows for the same amount of growth throughout the scale (that an 18-point movement from 20 to 38 is the same as movement from 52 to 70).

Growth Target Format 2: Differentiated Growth in Points

Baseline Score (Out of 100)	Growth Target
35–50	Increase baseline score by 20 points
51–70	Increase baseline score by 18 points
71–82	Increase baseline score by 16 points

Strengths of This Format

- Tiered targets enable teachers to differentiate expectations for students based on what is developmentally appropriate.
- Each student’s growth target will be based on his or her preassessment rating. For example, a student with a rating of 50 on the preassessment would be expected to increase his or her rating to 68; another student with a rating of 62 would be expected to increase his or her rating to 80.

Limitations or Considerations to This Format

- Assumes that it is developmentally appropriate to expect all students to demonstrate the same amount of growth.
- Assumes that 16, 18, and 20 points are “typical” growth for these students, though it is not clear that this level of growth is “typical” for any or all students in the class.
- Assumes that the assessment design allows for similar amounts of growth throughout the scale (that a 20-point movement from 35 to 55 is the same as movement from 50 to 70).

Growth Target Format 3: Differentiated Cut Scores

Baseline Score (Out of 100)	Growth Target Score (Out of 100)
35–50	59
51–70	79
71–82	91

Strengths of This Format

- Tiered targets enable teachers to differentiate expectations for students based on what is developmentally appropriate.
- It is easy to determine each individual student’s growth target because no

Limitations or Considerations to This Format

- Depending on how the targets are structured, expectations around the cut points vary and can be arbitrary. In the example above, students with ratings of 50 need to increase their ratings only to 59, but students with ratings of 51 need

calculation is needed.

to increase their ratings to 79.

Growth Target Format 4: Advanced-Tiered Target

Preassessment Score	Growth Score
0–45 points	65 or +35 points, whichever is greater
46–70 points	75 or +15 points, whichever is greater
70+ points	85 or + 20 points, whichever is greater

Strengths of This Format

- Tiered targets enable teachers to differentiate expectations for students based on what is developmentally appropriate.
- This format attempts to reduce the variation in expectations around the cut scores seen in Growth Target Format 3.

Limitations or Considerations to This Format

- It is more difficult to determine each individual student's growth target.

Growth Target Format 5: Individual Targets

Student Number	Baseline Score (Out of 100)	Growth Target Score (Out of 100)
1234	50	75
5678	25	50
9012	25	55
3456	34	54
7899	60	85

Strengths of This Format

Limitations or Considerations to This Format

- This format articulates a specific growth target for each student.
- This format enables teachers to adjust targets for individual students based on what they know about the individual student.
- Growth targets are not the same across students. To ensure that teachers are not “cherry-picking” students, it may be important to require teachers to include reasons why expectations for two students with the same preassessment score are different.

Growth Target Format 6: Formula

All students will increase their scores by one half the difference between 100 and the preassessment score. For example, a student who received a rating of 50 on the preassessment would be expected to receive a rating of 75 on the postassessment.

Strengths of This Format

- If assessments are formatted and scaled differently across teachers, a uniform approach like a formula may not be appropriate.

Limitations or Considerations to This Format

- Assumes students who begin with more knowledge and skill will demonstrate less growth in their score than their peers.
- Assumes that the assessments are developed on a 100-point scale.
- Assumes that proficiency is not a requirement for some students.
- Assumes that half the distance is an appropriate target.

Appendix D. Questions to Inform SLO Conversations

These questions are intended to guide conversations. They are not intended to be protocols.

- Did student performance of the SLO on the postassessment meet your expectations in the SLO targets?
- What do you think contributed to these results?
- How might you use the SLO results to inform your goals for next year?
- Which colleagues could you learn from, either through discussions or observations, about helping students meet these standards?
- Which colleagues could you support with the lessons you learned from this year?
- Did any students greatly exceed their targets? Do those students have common characteristics (e.g., baseline performance, gifted and talented or special education status, or students who received interventions)?
- Which students did not meet their growth targets? Do those students have common characteristics?
- How could you use these results to inform goals, instruction, and professional learning plans for next year?

Appendix E. SLOs: Frequently Asked Questions

Last update: May 2015.

General Questions

Q. Why is the SLO template and approval checklist different from those used in 2014–15?

A. After a year of using the SLO framework, the 35 member cross-district SLO Workgroup reconvened in May 2015 to reflect on and refine the template and approval checklist.

Q. Do all teachers have to have two student learning and growth measures?

A. Yes. According to the Rule that governs State law (Chapter 508 of Title 20-A of the Maine Revised Statutes) “multiple measures of student learning and growth must be used for each educator being evaluated.” When it becomes available, data from the State mandated standardized test will be used in relevant content areas for the pre- and post-assessment for at least one of the two required SLOs.

Q. Who approves SLOs?

A. District-determined administrators or administrator teams review and approve SLOs.

Q: To what extent may a district or school administrator mandate components of the SLO (assessment tools, growth targets, content area, etc.)?

A. MSFE recognizes the importance of balancing overall requirements with district and school needs and trusts its educators to use their professional judgment to make informed decisions. The SLO Framework outlines specific decisions that districts can make related to the SLO process. In some cases, districts may allow school administrators to also make certain decisions related to the SLO process.

Q: Can the district require the use of team SLOs with shared attribution or another collective measure of student growth?

A. Districts may require one of the SLOs to be a team SLO with shared attribution of students. According to State law (Chapter 508 of Title 20-A of the Maine Revised Statutes), “In recognition that a student’s academic achievement may be affected by teachers other than the student’s teacher of record, a PE/PG system may include academic achievement of students outside the teacher’s instructional cohort. Any use of such collective measures must: A) Be agreed to by teachers to whom it will be applied, under the agreement process set forth in the PE/PG system plan; and B) Comprise not more than one-fourth of the total student growth measure.” Otherwise, the administrator

or administrative team might set parameters for the SLO based on building or district priorities.

Q. Is a growth target similar to an IEP goal?

A. SLO growth targets and IEPs are similar in that they both are goals for students designed to meet student need using baseline data. SLO growth targets can be differentiated for students, but they are different from individualized education programs (IEPs) or individual student goals in that a whole course or classroom of students is targeted and assessed.

Q. Does a teacher have to write an SLO for each course taught?

A. No. The teachers' two SLOs might involve different courses; but there is no requirement to have an SLO for each course.

Q. In 2015–16, if a teacher writes two SLOs for the same course or class of students, can the standards in the two SLOs overlap?

A. No, if the same group of students is included in two SLOs, the content of the two SLOs should differ. For example, a teacher cannot have one SLO that focuses on all the informational text standards for her Grade 4 reading students and then a second, targeted SLO that focuses on the craft and structure subset of informational text standards with eight of her Grade 4 reading students - this would result in the teacher being doubly rewarded or penalized for those eight students' growth on craft and structure informational text standards.

Q. If the teacher provides instruction for multiple courses, how does the teacher select the course for the SLO?

A. Districts and schools may specify the courses for which teachers should write SLOs. Principals will have discretion over whether they advise teachers to select a course with the most sections or a course with the greatest student needs. In general, teachers with multiple courses should consider writing an SLO for a core subject before a noncore subject or elective course.

Q. What is the average page length of an SLO?

A. The length of the SLO is not a relevant factor. Administrators will review SLOs for the quality of the content—not the length of the document. Teachers should use the SLO checklist to ensure that the SLO contains all the required information needed for approval.

Q. What if students in the student population are absent frequently? Will they be excluded from the calculation of the SLO score?

A. Section 7 of the proposed state regulations (<http://www.msmaweb.com/Stories/proposed-language.pdf>) stipulates that students may

be included in measures only if they are present “80% of the scheduled instructional time for that course or learning experience with that teacher.” It is strongly recommended that teachers clearly document student absences throughout the year.

Q. Are there instances when students will be excluded from an SLO because of unique circumstances?

A. Administrators may use their professional judgment and determine whether a student should be excluded from calculations of the SLO score. That said, teachers are responsible for identifying a student as eligible for exclusion and discussing that student with administrators prior to the administration of the post-assessment. After the post-assessment has been administered and during the SLO scoring conversation, a teacher may request an exemption and the administrator will use professional judgment to determine whether that student should be excluded from the SLO score calculation. Students may be eligible for exclusion in the following circumstances:

- The student was absent for 20 percent or more of the interval of instruction. State regulation stipulates that students can be included in student growth measures only if they are present for 80 percent or more of the instruction that occurs between the pre-assessment and post-assessment. Students who do not meet this criterion **must** be excluded from the SLO scoring. This also pertains to students who joined the course late and were not present for 80 percent of the interval of instruction.
- The student experienced a significant disruption in his or her education. Circumstances include but are not limited to homelessness, extended illness, change in foster care, natural disaster, and death in the family.
- The student is in his or her first year of ESL status.

Q. How do I write SLOs as a teacher of students with special needs?

A. Teachers of students with special needs will follow the same SLO guidelines and procedures as other teachers. All teachers, including but not limited to those working with students with special needs, will consider the unique needs of students when selecting standards, identifying an appropriate assessment, and setting growth targets. Teachers of students with special needs are encouraged to include relevant student background information in the Student Demographics and needs assessment section of the SLO to help evaluators understand the classroom context and how that informed the growth targets.

Q. How do teachers in alternative settings develop SLOs?

A. Teachers in alternative settings often work in unique situations that may make it difficult to set a meaningful goal for a single group of students for an extended period of time. Teachers in such settings should work with districts and administrators to determine a solution that will make sense with the configuration of their classes and the degree of turnover in their student population. For example, a teacher in alternative

setting may need to set growth targets for a particular group of students for a shorter period of time than a semester.

Needs Assessment

Q. Do teachers have to administer a pre-assessment?

A. Yes, regulations specify that student growth must be based upon growth between a pre-assessment and a post-assessment. The pre-assessment does not, however, have to be administered in the current school year. The pre-assessment could be an end-of-course assessment from the prior year.

Q. Should teachers consider only data from standardized tests when conducting a needs assessment?

A. The creation of SLOs should be informed by data from multiple data sources, including but not limited to standardized tests, portfolios of student work, and district-created assessments.

Q. Can teachers use data that is two or three years old in the needs assessment?

A. Yes. Trend data can provide valuable information. Data on how current students have performed in the past can alert teachers to areas where students have persistently struggled over time. In addition, data on how students historically perform in the teacher's class can help the teacher identify important content or skills that the teacher might want to focus on during the year. However, growth targets should be set based on recent preassessment data, not solely historical or trend data.

Q. Can a teacher use words like “most,” “several,” and so on when describing students?

A. These terms can be open to interpretation, and so, whenever possible, use specific numbers and reference specific data.

Q. Can teachers exclude students from the SLO?

A. The student population of the SLO should include all students in that course. In rare cases, a school administrator may exclude students for extenuating circumstances.

Q. Should teachers include student names in the SLO?

A. Teachers should maintain the privacy of their students when possible. It is acceptable to summarize your students' needs overall, but not to call attention to specific students. For example, a teacher may mention that she or he has three students with IEPs (dyslexia, emotional disturbance, and concomitant disorders) and two homeless students, but the teacher cannot say that John, Mary, and Skylar have IEPs and that Lisa and Eric are homeless.

Standards

Q. What is the difference between a process standard and a content standard?

A. Process standards describe skills that students should develop or refine. Content standards describe specific learning. SLOs should identify both process and content standards. Teachers must include standard(s) that address both process and content.

Summative or Postassessment

Q. What types of assessments can we use in our SLO?

A. Assessments used in SLOs can be pencil-and-paper tests or performance tasks graded with rubrics. Assessments can be vendor-created or teacher-created, but all assessments should follow the guidelines for assessments.

Q. Do teachers need to attach copies of the assessment to the SLO?

A. Teachers must include a copy of any non-standardized assessments with the SLO when they submit it for approval, unless the assessment has been preapproved by the district.

Q. Do teachers need to describe the assessments they use throughout the year with students?

A. Not in the summative assessment portion of the SLO. Teachers who use formative assessments to assess student progress in the content and skills in the SLO can describe these assessments in the progress monitoring section of the SLO template.

Q. How do we assess students with disabilities?

A. Assessments should be designed to assess as many students as possible. In most cases, students with disabilities should be assessed using the same assessment as students without disabilities. All students with individualized education programs and 504 plans should receive the modifications and accommodations specified on those plans.

Growth Targets

Q. How do teachers set growth targets for their lowest-performing students?

A. All targets should be developmentally appropriate. Expecting a student to demonstrate three years' worth of growth in one year may be very difficult and not developmentally appropriate. Teachers may need to set a goal for a student that is below what is considered "proficient" in order to ensure that the goal is developmentally appropriate for the student. In some cases, however, more than a year's worth of growth is both possible and necessary to close the achievement gap. When determining

appropriate growth targets, teachers should consult with colleagues, curriculum directors, administrators, special educators, and instructional coaches.

Q. Can teachers revise the growth targets after the SLO has been approved?

A. Teachers may revise growth targets only in extenuating circumstances. Districts have discretion to determine whether a teacher may or may not revise growth targets. Sample extenuating circumstances are changes in teaching assignments, changes in student population, maternity or extenuated leave, natural disasters, and extensive storm days. Any changes to the SLO growth targets after the SLO has been approved must be made prior to the midpoint of the course and be approved by a school administrator.