



Texas Student Learning Objectives (SLO) Refinement Year

TEA is seeking districts for volunteer participation in the SLO refinement year

In 2016-2017 the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in partnership with the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC), will implement a refinement year for the use of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in teacher appraisal systems. Refinement year participants will help guide and shape this instructionally focused student growth option.

TEA is piloting SLOs with approximately 10 districts during the 2015-2016 school year. Based on feedback from those districts, TEA and CTAC will implement a revised SLO process during the 2016-2017 school year in preparation for the statewide requirement to include a measure of student growth in teacher appraisals starting with the 2017-2018 school year.

What are SLOs?

SLOs are long-term goals for student learning crafted by teachers and administrators. Often in teams with peer, school, and district support, teachers analyze data to determine student needs and devise instructional strategies to meet those needs and improve learning.

The SLO process strives to bring together the varied pedagogical considerations a teacher juggles throughout the year – curriculum, instruction, assessment, adjustment, and evaluation. The SLO process encourages and prompts continual reflection and self-assessment so that teachers can focus on aligning curriculum, instruction, and student performance.

TEA has developed a framework for SLO implementation, including recommended policies and procedures, and will engage participating districts in conversations to improve the framework throughout the refinement year.

Participation

Participation can be an entire campus or as small as a single grade or subject on a single campus, although it is recommended, for the sake of efficiency, that districts participate with no less than 10 teachers. The SLO process is designed to align well with formative appraisal processes focused primarily on professional growth and support.

Benefits

Districts participating in the pilot year will benefit from opportunities to:

- Send representatives to the free SLO training from content experts;
- Receive continued SLO support throughout the refinement year from TEA, ESC staff, and CTAC, including webinars and support sessions to assist in implementation;
- Customize policies and procedures to fit the local context while using a general framework; and
- Provide feedback for refinement of the SLO process.

Requirements

Districts participating in the refinement year will be asked to commit to the following:

- Adopting a general SLO framework as defined by TEA;
- Ensuring that representatives of participating school attend a one-day SLO training in the summer of 2016, including principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, and relevant district personnel;
- Participating in surveys and focus groups designed to collect data for the improvement of the SLO process;
- Documenting SLO implementation processes, including policies and procedures enacted;
- Providing access to SLOs, including outcomes, to the SLO evaluation team; and
- Implementing the SLO process with fidelity.

Training

Trainings in each region throughout the state will be held in the summer of 2016. During the one-day training, participants will be provided with an overview of the purpose, process, and value of SLOs, and training on how campus and district leadership can best support SLO implementation. Support from the ESCs and the consultants will continue throughout the year in the form of videos, webinars, and drop-in support chat rooms.

Data and Portal Use

TEA will provide a portal that will be the primary source for materials and support for the SLO system. The site will include templates, quality instruments, process guidelines, and video training modules. All will be available for download.

Districts will choose a method for crafting, approving, and storing SLOs, based on TEA guidance. Instructions will be provided to the refinement districts on where and how to upload SLOs. These data will provide the basis for analyzing and refining the SLO process.

Use of Student Growth

Refinement-year SLO outcomes will not be counted in a teacher's overall evaluation rating. Districts should view the refinement year as a year to familiarize themselves with the SLO process and the value of the feedback it yields.