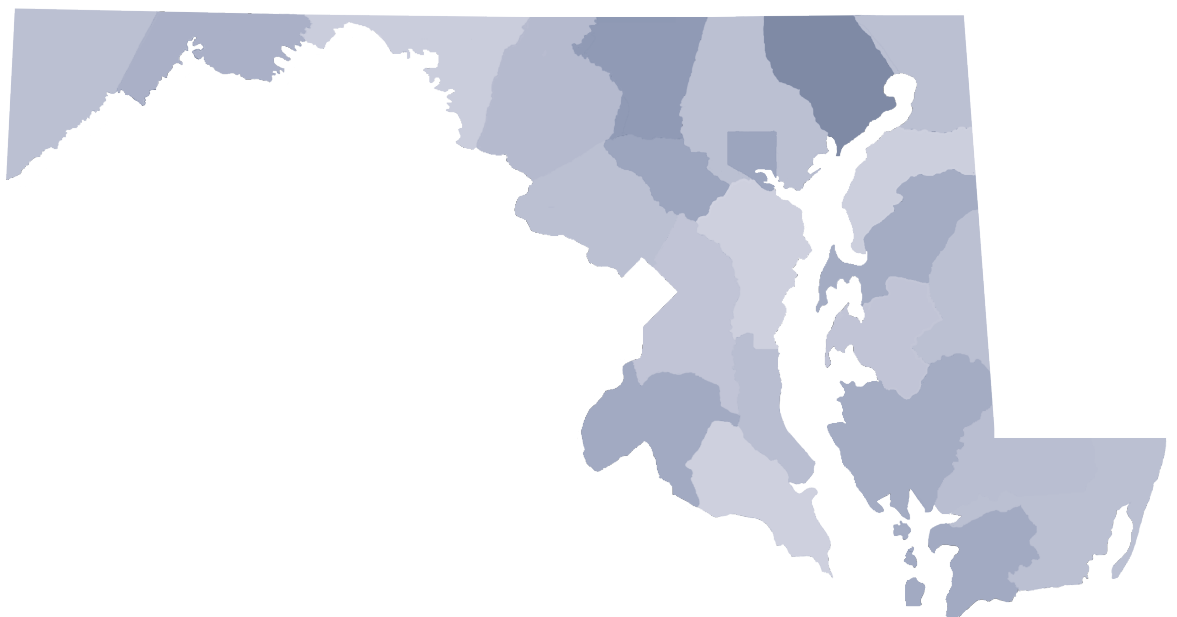


Stay the Course

Teacher and Principal Evaluation
in Maryland

SEPTEMBER 2016



ctac | COMMUNITY TRAINING
AND ASSISTANCE CENTER

www.manaraa.com

About the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center:

The Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC@WestEd) helps state leaders with their initiatives to implement, support, scale up, and sustain statewide education reforms. We work closely with state leaders in the Mid-Atlantic region of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia.

Maryland Study Authors:

William J. Slotnik, Founder and Executive Director, CTAC
Daniel Bugler, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate, WestEd
Guodong Liang, Ph.D., Research Specialist, CTAC

Editor:

Natalie Nier, Manager of Communications, CTAC

The analyses and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center.

Copyright © 2016 WestEd and Community Training and Assistance Center.
All rights reserved.

Acknowledgement:

The Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center would like to thank the senior staff of the Maryland State Department of Education for their operational support in helping make this report possible. We would also like to thank the many educators throughout Maryland for their participation in this year's statewide survey, interviews, and focus groups.

Disclaimer:

This award is a grant under prime award #S283B120026 between the U.S. Department of Education and WestEd. The findings and opinions expressed herein are those of the speaker(s) and do not reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education.

The contents of this report were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and readers of this report should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Chapter One: Introduction and Context	5
Chapter Two: Methods of Data Collection and Analysis.....	8
Chapter Three: TPE Implementation	11
Chapter Four: Quality.....	19
Chapter Five: Consistency.....	29
Chapter Six: Manageability.....	37
Chapter Seven: Transitions	43
Chapter Eight: Issues and Recommendations	47
Endnotes.....	51
Appendix.....	52

Executive Summary

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is leading and supporting the implementation of a Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) system in all school districts in the state. This study examines the progress of four years of TPE implementation, 2013 to 2016.¹

The study draws on nearly 60,000 survey responses from principals and teachers (1,905 responses in 2013, 16,314 in 2014, 19,022 in 2015, and 21,916 in 2016) and extensive interviews of educators at central and school site levels. Based on the ongoing analysis of these data, the key findings are as follows:

Overall four-year trends

TPE implementation shows strong progress over four years

Based on four years of data, educators' perceptions of TPE are improving as they gain experience implementing all components of the evaluation system. This trend has held true over all four years of the study on TPE.

- The increases in positive perceptions of principals and teachers on TPE implementation are significant.
- There is constant year-to-year growth in educators' positive perceptions of TPE on all measures tracked during the four years of implementation.
- Principals and teachers indicate that TPE has clear expectations, leads to improved instructional decisions, and is better supported with each year of implementation.
- Principals and teachers also emphasize that the instructional focus of TPE is making a significant difference in schools.

State support for TPE implementation is pivotal

MSDE is taking a building block strategy to developing educators' understanding of and ability to implement TPE. The impact of MSDE's strategy is reflected in constant year-to-year improvements in educators' perceptions during the four years of TPE implementation.

Salient elements of MSDE's sophisticated implementation effort are to:

- Create a statewide model for TPE, while communicating a vision that TPE should support continuous improvement of instruction.
- Convene and help sponsor extensive statewide and regional training sessions for teams from all 24 districts, other key district constituencies, and more than 85% of Maryland's institutions of higher education.
- Coalesce the state's eight major educational entities through a Memorandum of Understanding² (MOU) to garner widespread support for quality implementation of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). The MOU received national attention as an innovative example of educator engagement.
- Effect a collaboration of MSDE and the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) to support district and school leaders.
- Train multiple cohorts of promising principals, with participants from every district.
- Engage external partners to study educator perceptions about TPE, and actively use findings to inform TPE strategies in response to educator opinions.

School and district leadership is critical to TPE implementation

Districts have discretion to implement TPE to fit their local context. Districts vary, in the amount and types of professional development and support they provide to principals, teachers, and central administrators; in the level of involvement of teachers; and in their focus on implementing TPE to improve instruction rather than to comply with state requirements. There are marked differences in the approaches districts take to support TPE implementation.

- The districts that are making real progress in the consistency of quality implementation are doing so through concerted efforts to build principal and teacher capacity and to align TPE with the instructional framework and priorities of the district. These include districts that are advanced in their implementation of TPE as well as districts that are making progress after initial slow starts.
- There is a small subset of districts that have lower levels of educator agreement on the quality and impact of TPE implementation. These districts tend not to take advantage of state sponsored trainings, or they fail to take what is learned at those trainings and apply it in the district. Some districts take shortcuts in an effort to make the process more manageable, which often results in undercutting the power of TPE to improve instruction.

Principals and teachers still need support

Principals and teachers are developing a more nuanced understanding of what is required to implement TPE at a high level of effectiveness. They are learning from their experience.

- Principals and teachers agree that school and district support for the implementation of TPE is helpful.
- Principals and teachers want more support in all areas of TPE to increase their instructional and managerial effectiveness.
- Most districts are increasingly aware that the needs for greater capacity have to be addressed.

Quality, consistency, and manageability

Quality matters

Quality matters when implementing SLOs and teacher observations. The quality of the capacity building, the quality of dialogue related to meeting student academic needs, and the quality of the planning and delivery of instruction all matter. When SLOs and observations are implemented with fidelity in Maryland's districts, and backed by the full support of district leaders, there is increased focus and reflection on instruction and student progress.

Maryland districts with strong implementation:

- Develop their SLO process with the input of teachers in the district, and provide ongoing professional development that helps teachers use SLOs to improve their classroom practice.
- Have a pre-observation conference, the observation of the teacher in the classroom, and a post-observation conference using the same evaluator for all three tasks.
- Engage teachers in dialogue with their evaluator about instructional practice.
- Use results to make continuous improvements in instruction.

Consistency is a cornerstone of effective TPE implementation

Achieving consistency of implementation at a high level of quality is an ongoing challenge within and across districts and schools. It is a key issue that affects the reach and credibility of the evaluation system.

Districts that are building a consistent, quality implementation across schools are doing so through strategic efforts. Their leaders make a concerted effort to:

- Build a consistency of understanding among educators at central and school site levels so that the district has a shared view of TPE implementation.
- Use rubrics to provide both a standard and a basis for supporting the quality of SLOs and the quality of observations.
- Engage in formal training and team sessions to develop consistent approaches and inter-rater reliability for SLOs and classroom observations.

Districts need thoughtful management of the evaluation system

The leaders who are effective in implementing TPE make it a district-wide priority to thoughtfully support and manage the evaluation system.

Key requirements for making TPE manageable are to:

- Set clear expectations for TPE to improve instruction.
- Train principals and teachers on high quality implementation strategies.
- Create a meaningful principal evaluation system to better understand and address the needs of principals.
- Create technology platforms and information management systems that support TPE implementation and enable districts to identify recurring challenges across multiple classrooms or schools.

Transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

In the transition to ESSA, Maryland's educators want to stay the course

District and school leaders are characteristically making the same statement—they want the evaluation system to continue to focus on instructional improvement. Many districts have been working to change their practices and cultures. There are a number of other districts that are now moving in these directions. On a recurrent basis, many leaders and practitioners are underscoring two key points—stay the course in the focus and support of TPE, while allowing more flexibility in the weighting of the components.

Issues and recommendations

The recommendations focus on strengthening leadership and further improving implementation at central and school site levels within Maryland's districts.

Issue One: Statewide implementation of change

Recommended action

- Base the ESSA evaluation strategy on TPE's progress.
- Renew the eight organization alliance in support of evaluation and instructional improvement.
- Use the learnings from TPE implementation to inform new statewide initiatives.

Impact

Maryland is a leader in implementing new educator evaluation systems. Maryland's success to-date is based on substance and process. It should shape future TPE implementation under ESSA and inform other statewide reform initiatives.

Issue Two: District support capacity

Recommended action

- Provide advanced training to school site and district level practitioners.
- Focus on instructional improvement to increase accountability.
- Emphasize teacher voice and constituency building.
- Engage the local boards of education.
- Conduct a thoughtful reset in select districts.

Impact

Nurturing a new direction for instructional improvement and evaluation requires leaders who can change practices, mindsets, and the culture of central offices and schools. Maryland's progress to-date provides the foundation for the steps which need to be taken to deepen the impact and reach of TPE.

Issue Three: Principal leadership

Recommended Action

- Increase the capacity of principals to guide and oversee implementation.
- Make principal evaluation a greater priority in districts.

Impact

The credibility and usefulness of a new principal evaluation system lies in whether it recognizes and provides the vehicle for improving performance. Principals of all performance levels need an evaluation system that produces these outcomes.

Summary

Maryland is making significant progress in implementing the new teacher and principal evaluation systems, as reflected in survey and interview data over a four-year period. Moving forward, district- and school-based educators indicate that Maryland should stay the course in the focus and support of TPE, while allowing more flexibility in the weighting of the components. This means continuing to link TPE to instructional improvement and continuing to strengthen the quality, consistency, and manageability of implementation.

Chapter One: Introduction and Context

Purpose of this study

Since 2013, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has led and supported the implementation of a new Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) system throughout the state. For each year of implementation, MSDE has partnered with the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd (MACC@WestEd) to examine the implementation of TPE.

The MACC@WestEd study and technical assistance team in Maryland, a collaboration of WestEd and the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC), has previously released three comprehensive reports documenting the progress of TPE implementation in Maryland: *Spotlight on Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation* (2013), *Real Progress in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation* (2014), and *Change in Practice in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation* (2015).³ MSDE has used the findings and recommendations from the reports to inform the state's support to educators throughout Maryland.

This report documents the progress and current state of TPE and how it has developed over the last four years. The study examines the perceptions of educators in Maryland of the support they receive in understanding and implementing the TPE system. Findings of this study are intended to help further inform and strengthen the implementation of the TPE system in Maryland.

Background of this study

TPE began with a pilot in seven districts in the 2011-2012 school year. In 2012-2013, a field test was conducted in all schools within 22 school districts, all of which signed on to implement Maryland's Race to the Top grant. The first full statewide implementation of TPE took place in 2013-2014. Each district constructed an evaluation model based on its interests and priorities, and each local superintendent and head of the local bargaining unit signed off on the design. MSDE's ESEA flexibility waiver request, approved by the U.S. Department of Education in July 2014, recognizes school year 2014-2015 as the baseline year for student achievement. Under the waiver, Maryland will not use state assessment scores in personnel decisions during the first two years of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) assessments.

Table I-1. TPE implementation overview

School Year	Type of TPE Implementation	Participants
2011-2012	TPE Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 districts: Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Charles County, Kent County, Prince George's County, Queen Anne's County, St. Mary's County83 schools, 934 teachers, 48 principals
2012-2013	Field Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All schools within 22 districts, all of which signed on to implement Maryland's Race to the Top grant3 districts implemented the full state model19 districts developed their own local models approved by the state
2013-2016	Full Statewide Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All schools within 24 districts

Maryland's TPE system

The statewide TPE system in Maryland includes measures of both professional practice and student growth.⁴ In the overall rating of teacher effectiveness, both professional practice and student growth are given equal weight.

The professional practice portion for teachers includes four domains outlined by the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching (i.e., planning and preparation, instructional practices, classroom environment, and professional responsibilities).⁵ The four domains are further broken down into 22 components. Each of the four domains accounts for 12.5% of the professional practice section, totaling 50% of the total evaluation score. For principals, the professional practice measure consists of eight domains based on the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework and four domains from the Interstate School Leaders and Licensure Consortium. The 12 domains are weighted individually to reflect the needs of principals at varying times in their careers.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are the predominate measure of student growth for teachers and principals. The state TPE models allot 30%-50% of the total evaluation rating to SLOs, depending on the assignment of the teacher and principal. No single SLO, however, may count for more than 35% of the total performance score. (See Figures 1 and 2 in the appendix for the state's graphics that illustrate these models.)

District variations

The historical and current practice in Maryland is one of local control. The key implementation decisions and the organizational supports that reinforce those decisions are made at the district level. The local school systems in Maryland have the discretion to choose to develop local plans and include additional measures that align to their local priorities. These local plans are required to include certain criteria and measures defined by the TPE framework that every evaluation model must have (e.g., the 50/50 split between professional practice and student growth, the four Danielson-like domains for teachers, and the eight Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework domains for principals). In addition, local models need to have the endorsement of the local collective bargaining unit and must receive approval from the state. Most districts follow the state model for professional practice with some variation in the weight given to sub-measures of professional practice. All districts use SLOs, but the number and weighting in the overall teacher effectiveness rating of SLOs varies. Districts have different ways of combining the two scores for professional practice and student growth to create an overall rating of teacher effectiveness.⁶

MSDE key state strategies

MSDE has taken a proactive role in leading the implementation of TPE and purposefully utilizing a broad range of strategies to continuously and strategically address the emerging needs of stakeholders. All of these efforts demonstrate MSDE's commitment to identifying the changing needs in the field and making mid-course improvements. MSDE made it a departmental priority to provide districts with the organizational and financial resources needed to support successful implementation.

Key MSDE strategies have included: (a) engaging key stakeholders by coalescing and signing a landmark statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Maryland State Board of Education, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland State Education Association, the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals, the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Baltimore Teachers Union; (b) supporting the Promising Principals

Academy and collaborating with the institutions of higher education to build the leadership corps needed to sustain the work; (c) providing ongoing professional development (e.g., statewide and regional SLO trainings); (d) promoting open and two-way communications (e.g., the TPE Communication Bulletins; meetings); and (e) learning from external researchers and experts.

In 2015-2016, MSDE was proactive in building district capacity for high quality TPE implementation. The state TPE team worked with the MOU signatories, superintendents, an executive staff advisory group, and a principal advisory group to help them strengthen the process of implementation in all districts. MSDE also worked with district research and teachers' association representatives to review evaluation models and processes to help local teams better understand the effectiveness of their TPE rating models. In addition, MSDE and MSEA collaborated in sponsoring TPE training sessions held in the fall, winter and spring for district teams of executive staff, principals, and teachers, as well as for teacher and administrator preparation programs. These sessions focused on strengthening SLOs, observations, assessments, and equity. The district teams also received assistance in how to use action planning so they could promote fidelity of TPE implementation within and across schools.

MSEA support under the MOU

In support of the MOU, the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) received a grant from the National Education Association to build the capacity of educators to implement TPE. MSEA also created a cadre of teacher member leaders (i.e., Student Learning Objectives Leadership Cadre, or SLOLC) from around the state to deliver professional development on SLOs and build local capacity. In July 2014, MSEA sponsored leadership training in which cadre members were provided two full days of content specific support on SLOs. The MSEA SLOLC members also participated in the statewide training sessions co-sponsored by MSDE in the 2014-2015 school year. Cadre members became resources supporting or leading professional development in several districts. MSEA provided additional support and resources to cadre members throughout the year.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was signed into law. ESSA signifies another major development in the broader context of TPE. Under ESSA, states are no longer required to set up teacher evaluation systems based in significant part on students' test scores. However, states are still required to adopt "challenging" academic standards.⁷

In Maryland, MSDE is working with the ESSA Stakeholder Committee to review the new law and develop Maryland's ESSA Plan. The ESSA Stakeholder Committee is charged with providing guidance on the transition to ESSA; and providing recommendations for the State Superintendent of Schools and the State Board of Education on Maryland's ESSA Plan.

Chapter Two: Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

For this descriptive study, a mixed methods approach is used with both quantitative data and qualitative data collected from educators across the state. The multiple sources of data include statewide survey responses provided by teachers, principals, and other educators from all 24 school districts, phone interviews of educators from six districts and the state level education association, and site visits to three districts.

Maryland teacher and principal evaluation survey

A web-based confidential survey, developed by the study team, was launched on March 1, 2016. This was the fourth annual administration of surveys by the study team. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) sent an invitational email with the link to the survey to all superintendents in the state, asking them to share this information with the principals, teachers, and other school-based staff in the local school districts and encourage them to respond. The study team alone had access to survey responses. MSDE updated the superintendents regularly on the progress of survey participation. The survey was open seven weeks until April 22, 2016.

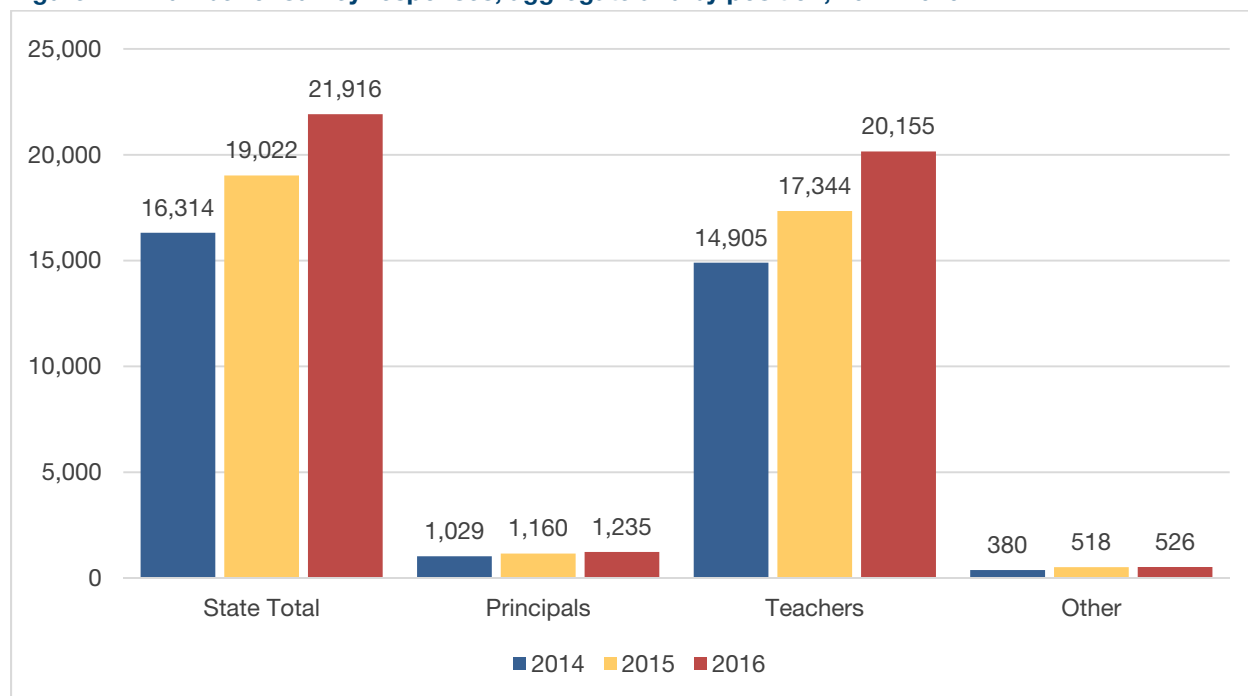
The multiple choice questions centered on: (a) the systemic context for the implementation of the TPE system; (b) the quality of the TPE frameworks and processes; (c) classroom observations; (d) supports teachers receive on Student Learning Objectives (SLOs); (e) educators' experience with the TPE system during the 2015-2016 school year; and (f) additional supports educators need. An open-ended question was included which provided an opportunity for the respondents to share any comments they had concerning the TPE system.

The statewide response rate to the TPE survey has increased over the years. It was 31.3% in 2014 with 16,314 responses, and 30.3% in 2015 with 19,022 responses. For the 2016 TPE survey, originally 22,072 educators responded to the survey. A total of 156 surveys are excluded from the study for not identifying their district affiliations. The final analysis is based on the responses of 21,916 educators from all of the 24 local school districts. The district response rates range from 10.2% to 85.3%, with a state average of 34.6%.

The majority of the respondents are classroom teachers (68%), and nearly two-thirds of the teachers have 10 or more years of teaching experience (67%). Most of the survey respondents have a Master's degree (76%). A total of 713 principals completed the survey, constituting 49.3% of all school principals in the state, as well as 522 assistant principals. The respondents to the 2016 TPE survey are very similar to those to the 2014 and 2015 surveys based on such observable characteristics as TPE experience, school level, position, subject area, experience as a teacher, experience as a principal, and highest educational degree (see Table 2 in the appendix for more detail on the characteristics of the survey respondents).

The survey analysis includes an examination of the responses by three teacher categories: classroom teacher, non-classroom teaching staff, and special educator. Since teachers' responses were very similar across their categories, they have been grouped into one category, "Teacher," for the purposes of discussion in the report. For similar reasons, the principal and assistant principal responses have been grouped into one category, "Principal." Cross tabulations and figures were used to describe educators' perceptions. Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to examine the statistical significance of the differences across groups and years. This study's analysis is based on responses from teachers and principals as described above.

Figure II-1. Number of survey responses, aggregate and by position, 2014-2016



Note: *Principals* refers to principals and assistant principals; *Teachers* refers to classroom teachers, non-classroom teaching staff, and special educators; and *Other* refers to other administrators, central office staff, and those who did not report their position.

Key leader interviews

Confidential phone interviews, using interview protocols developed by the study team, were conducted from late March to mid-June 2016 with 15 key stakeholders in six districts and one statewide association. Districts selected for stakeholder interviews were based on district size geographic representation throughout the state. Each interview was approximately one hour long.

The six districts vary by district enrollment, the percentage of ethnic minority students, and the numbers of schools, teachers, and administrators. Comparisons based on these observable characteristics suggest that the six districts constitute a diverse cross-section of all of the districts in the state.

Site visits to three districts

In-depth site visits were conducted in three districts in early 2016. The site visit in each of the three districts consisted of individual interviews and focus groups. Districts selected for site visits had high, medium, and low levels of agreement, respectively, among teachers and principals in the previous year's survey results. The purpose of the site visits was to add context to the survey findings. Each individual interview was approximately one hour long.

The study team conducted focus groups within each district with, respectively, teachers and principals. Districts were asked to select 8-10 participants for each focus group, making sure the teacher and principal focus groups had representatives from elementary, middle, and high schools. For the teacher focus groups, the study team also requested a mix of teachers in tested and non-tested grades and subject areas. Each focus group was approximately ninety minutes long. All interviews and focus groups were conducted using protocols developed by the study team.

Table II-1. Surveys and interviews, 2016

Method of Data Collection	Details/Participants
Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launched March 1, 2016, closed April 22, 2016• Statewide response rate: 34.6% with 21,916 responses
Key Leader Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phone interviews with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 5 superintendents○ 5 local teacher association leaders○ 1 statewide teacher association leader○ 1 teacher association representative○ 1 central office administrator○ 1 principal○ 1 teacher
Site Visits to Three Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual interviews and focus groups• Total of 50 participants:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2 superintendents○ 3 local teacher association leaders○ 7 central office administrators○ 16 principals (in focus groups)○ 22 teachers (in focus groups)

Limitations of the data

In order to gain actionable information and timely insights to further inform the implementation of the TPE system, data were collected and studied within a relatively short time frame. Although the study team analyzed educators' survey responses from all 24 districts in the state, the response rates and number of respondents by district vary considerably. Meanwhile, the data are perceptual in nature. No student performance data were available to the study team for analysis.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that the survey data are not strictly longitudinal because the surveys across the years have been anonymous. It is therefore not possible to identify whether the same teachers and principals are responding from one year to the next. Consequently, although the characteristics of the respondents have been highly comparable across the years (i.e., Appendix Table 2), it is still possible that some of the changes observed can be functions of the different samples in different years.

Furthermore, although the nine districts for the phone interviews and site visits cover a broad range of district characteristics in terms of enrollment and the numbers of schools, teachers, and administrators, the findings in those districts may not be generalizable to all of the districts.

Despite these limitations, consistent findings and trends across the years emerged from the survey responses, interviews, and focus groups. Together they draw a clear picture of what respondents see as the strengths and areas of improvement of TPE, SLOs, and classroom observations. These findings have important policy and practice implications for the continued implementation and improvement of teacher and principal evaluation.

Chapter Three: TPE Implementation

Four years tell the story of TPE implementation in Maryland. Principals and teachers are primarily positive in describing their overall perceptions of TPE and the type of progress that is being made. They also have perspectives on what is needed to further strengthen the quality, consistency, and manageability of implementation.

Among the key findings:

- TPE implementation shows strong progress over four years.
- Improvements continue in 2016.
- Instructional focus makes the difference in schools.
- School and district support for TPE is critical to effective implementation.
- Principals and teachers still need support.

TPE implementation shows strong progress over four years

With each year of implementation, principals and teachers are increasingly positive about the evaluation system. This trend in survey responses has held true over all four years of the study on TPE.

Educators' perceptions of TPE are improving as they gain experience implementing all components of the evaluation system. Table III-1 shows the percentage of educators who agree with the seven statements that have been used in all four surveys from 2013 to 2016. For every survey item, there has been a year-by-year increase in the percent of principals and teachers who agree with the statements on "Systemic Context," the "Quality of TPE Frameworks and Processes," and "Student Learning Objectives."

MSDE is taking a building block strategy to developing educators' understanding of and ability to implement TPE. The data indicate that this approach is proving distinctly successful.

These responses show a pattern that continues through many survey items. Principals and teachers are both increasingly positive with each year of implementation and principals' levels of agreement are generally higher than those of teachers.

Table III-1. More educators agree TPE has clear expectations, leads to improved instructional decisions, and is better supported, 2013-2016

	Principals					Teachers				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013-16 Change	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013-16 Change
Systemic Context										
The expectations are clear for teachers and principals in the TPE system.	55%	70%	82%	88%	+33%*	41%	50%	63%	68%	+27%*
Quality of TPE Frameworks and Processes										
Teacher evaluation frameworks and processes...										
Lead to improved decisions related to instructional approaches.	66%	79%	82%	83%	+17%*	38%	48%	53%	58%	+20%*

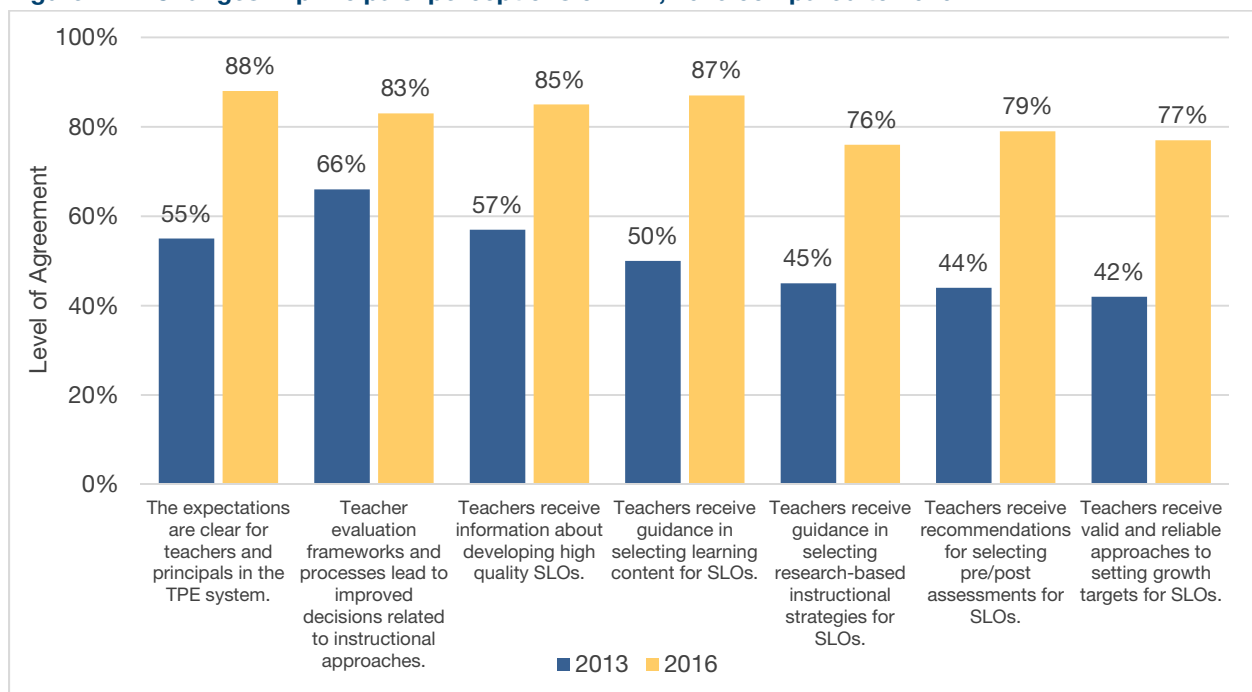
Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) Teachers receive...	Principals					Teachers				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013-16 Change	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013-16 Change
Information about developing high quality SLOs.	57%	70%	76%	85%	+28%*	42%	50%	57%	64%	+22%*
Guidance in selecting learning content for SLOs.	50%	76%	79%	87%	+37%*	32%	50%	56%	63%	+31%*
Guidance in selecting research-based instructional strategies for SLOs.	45%	63%	70%	76%	+31%*	27%	37%	45%	52%	+25%*
Recommendations for selecting pre/post assessments for SLOs.	44%	71%	75%	79%	+35%*	29%	48%	53%	57%	+28%*
Valid and reliable approaches to setting growth targets for SLOs.	42%	60%	65%	77%	+35%*	28%	40%	47%	54%	+26%*

Note: Throughout this report, *Principals* refers to principals and assistant principals; *Teachers* refers to classroom teachers, non-classroom teaching staff, and special educators; *Agree* is a composite of strongly agree/agree; and *Disagree* is a composite of strongly disagree/disagree. * indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level. N (principal, 2013 = 173; 2014 = 1,029; 2015 = 1,160; 2016 = 1,235); N (teacher, 2013 = 1,657; 2014 = 14,905; 2015 = 17,344; 2016 = 20,155).

MSDE is taking a building block strategy to developing educators' understanding of and ability to implement TPE. The data indicate that this approach is proving distinctly successful. Table III-1 shows **the impact of MSDE's strategy: there is constant year-to-year growth in educators' positive perceptions of TPE on all measures tracked during the four years of implementation.**

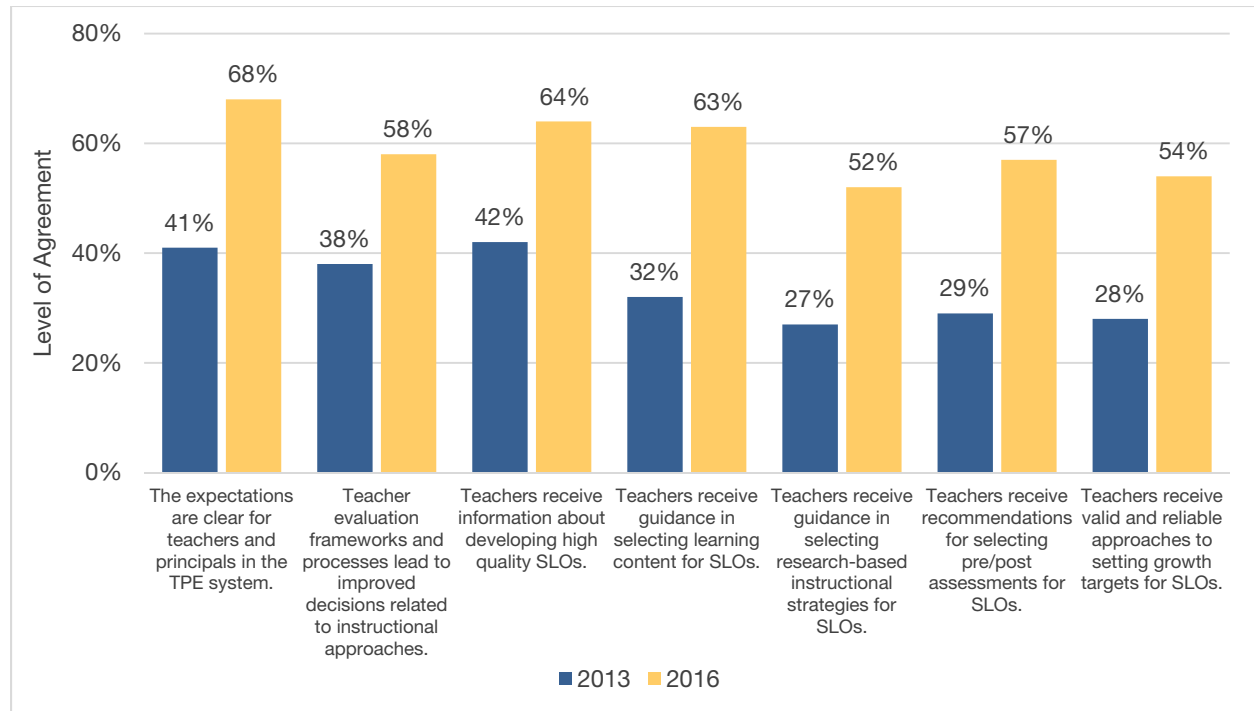
Moreover, as Figure III-1 shows, the increase in the percent of respondents who agree with these statements over the full four-year period—comparing 2013 responses to 2016 responses—are significant. The increases in principals' positive perceptions of TPE implementation range from 17 to 37 percentage points over four years.

Figure III-1. Changes in principals' perceptions of TPE, 2013 compared to 2016



As Figure III-2 shows, teachers have similar growth in positive perceptions of TPE implementation from 2013 to 2016. The increases in teachers' positive perceptions of TPE implementation range from 20 to 31 percentage points over four years.

Figure III-2. Changes in teachers' perceptions of TPE, 2013 compared to 2016



Improvements continue in 2016

Reflecting MSDE's emphasis on continuous improvement, a deeper look at survey responses from 2015 to 2016, the most recent two-year comparison, shows that **changes in practice and changes in perception are both positive and continuing** during the period under study. Table III-2 shows that principals and teachers have higher levels of agreement on nearly all factors in the survey related to implementation. As educators gain experience with the TPE system, and the districts and schools start to more systematically address challenges related to implementation, educators are more likely to have positive perceptions about the system and its implementation. This is consistent with findings from the prior year's study of TPE.⁸

As shown in the "Systemic Context" section, both principals and teachers show an increase in positive perceptions, from 2015 to 2016, of the expectations of the TPE system and of the support they receive.

Table III-2. More educators agree on TPE progress, 2015-2016

	Principals			Teachers		
	2015	2016	Change	2015	2016	Change
Systemic Context						
The expectations are clear for teachers and principals in the TPE system.	82%	88%	+6%*	63%	68%	+5%*
My district's support of the implementation of the TPE system is helpful.	81%	88%	+7%*	46%	57%	+11%*
My school's support of the implementation of the TPE system is helpful.	88%	91%	+3%*	57%	63%	+6%*
Quality of TPE Frameworks and Processes						
Teacher evaluation frameworks and processes...						
Provide useful feedback to teachers.	87%	89%	+2%*	54%	62%	+8%*
Encourage reflection on instructional practices.	90%	89%	-1%	70%	72%	+2%*
Lead to improved decisions related to instructional approaches.	82%	83%	+1%*	53%	58%	+5%*
This Year's Experience						
This year, I believe...						
There were opportunities to confer with my principal about my SLOs.	88%	90%	+2%*	67%	68%	+1%*
There were opportunities to review and refine my SLOs.	79%	91%	+12%*	64%	75%	+11%*
Reflection on my instructional practices deepened.	71%	77%	+6%*	50%	54%	+4%*
There was more instructionally focused dialogue with my colleagues.	75%	79%	+4%*	48%	54%	+6%*
There was more instructionally focused dialogue with my supervisor.	78%	81%	+3%*	44%	48%	+4%*
The results of my evaluation will be used to inform my professional development plan for next year.	75%	76%	+1%*	49%	51%	+2%*

Note: * indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

Instructional focus makes the difference in schools

Both principals and teachers increasingly indicate that TPE processes provide useful feedback to teachers and lead to improved instructional decisions.

The intent of the TPE system is for districts to own the model and use it to improve instructional practice, not just comply with the state requirements. The responses in “This Year’s Experience” (Table III-2) show that both principals and teachers are more likely to agree in 2016 than in the previous year that there are opportunities to confer with the principal, to refine SLOs, to reflect on practice, to have instructionally focused dialogue, and to base professional development on TPE. These responses all relate directly and positively to TPE’s intended instructional focus.

The intent of the TPE system is for districts to own the model and use it to improve instructional practice, not just comply with the state requirements.

In interviews, educators indicate that TPE is helping improve classroom practices.

“There is more substantive discussion on what is happening in the classroom. With TPE, principals and teachers are really looking at student progress. They focus on instruction more than they used to.”

-Superintendent

“There is a very strong relationship in the model between TPE and instruction. It gets teachers to dig down and focus on instruction and what good instruction looks like. I do think there is a strong relationship where we break the framework down to components. It allows teachers to show what they do and discussions between administrators and teachers as a process developed.”

-Union Leader

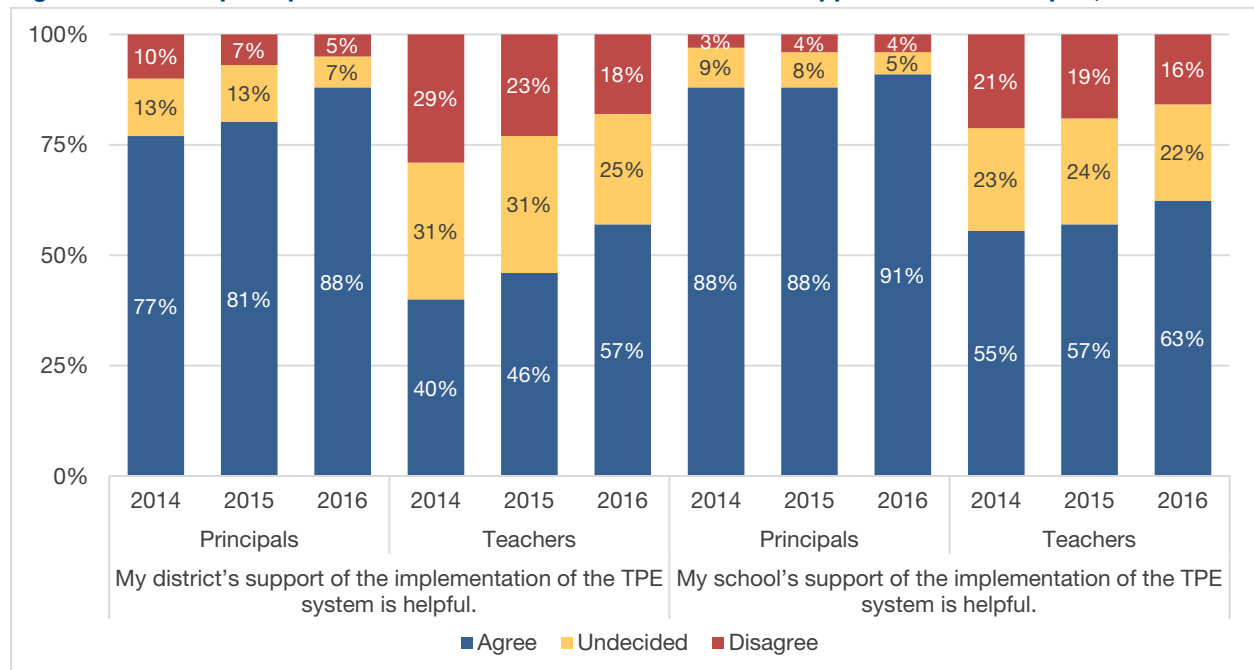
“What TPE is doing for teachers is its impact on instruction. It forces me to look at the strategies I use in the classroom. I have to look closely and I am looking at the new standards. The part that is key to success of the process is that once we establish our target, we focus on how to achieve that to the best of our students’ capabilities and that leads to differentiated strategies.”

-Teacher

School and district support for TPE is critical to effective implementation

Increasingly more principals and teachers agree that school and district support for the implementation of TPE is helpful. As Figure III-3 demonstrates, a preponderance of principals agree that district support of TPE implementation is helpful (88%) and even more agree that school level support is helpful (91%). The majority of teachers have favorable perceptions regarding district support (57%) and school support (63%) of TPE implementation, though not at the same level as the principals’ responses.

Figure III-3. Both principals and teachers see district and school support of TPE as helpful, 2014-2016



Note: Throughout this report, *Agree* is a composite of strongly agree/agree and *Disagree* is a composite of strongly disagree/disagree.

In interviews and focus groups, educators indicate that their perceptions of the merits and overall implementation of TPE is a function of the level and type of support educators receive. For most educators, that support comes from the district and the school, while many have also participated in state and/or association trainings sponsored by MSDE and MSEA.

There are districts that have approached supporting implementation strategically from the very start. There are also some districts which started more slowly, but then made TPE a greater institutional priority and reset the process of implementation. Yet there are still several districts that need to take a hard look at their current implementation efforts.

At key junctures, some districts recognize the need to revisit their TPE system and see what needs to change to be more effective. **Several districts re-cast their approach to SLOs to better support instructional improvements in the classroom and to increase the levels of teacher and principal buy-in.** Others realize that teacher and principal turnover means that districts must provide the same level of training and professional development to new hires as it originally offered to staff in past years. Many districts are also seeing that the TPE process requires ongoing improvement in the quality, consistency, and manageability of implementation.

"We had to rebuild the processes that just were not there. We had a really collaborative arrangement with the association. We were in a position to have conversations on how to make it better, not just checking boxes, so we could have a thoughtful process around how we drive the work."

-Superintendent

"I believe that the TPE system has made great strides toward improvement since last school year. I appreciate the effort that the administrators (county and school) have made to make the evaluations more meaningful and have more substance and clarity."

-Teacher

"My SLOs went very well this year due to the enormous support from my principal, AP, and teammates. We did use data to guide the SLOs and monitor progress. We also tried to focus on borderline students."

-Teacher

"The process seemed much more seamless and reflective this year."

-Teacher

Many district leaders indicate that TPE has brought significant changes to their school systems. They cite a number of positive changes including, specifically, the focus on instruction and on student academic growth:

"There have been significant signs that we are moving from the checklist mentality to growth mentality and using rubrics gives us a nice chance. It also helps to have more goal setting – it's leading to more reflections. That's really helpful. On the student growth side...it has caused people to be more specific in their goal setting and look at student data in a different way."

-Superintendent

“Getting specific to the evaluation, I think we have learned that in general, we do a better job than we did before because we have more instructional conversations with teachers, and we have data to talk about it.”

-Superintendent

“I feel there has been, in many schools, a more collaborative coaching style approach to the evaluation process.”

-Union Leader

Principals and teachers still need support

Principals and teachers show in their survey responses that they are developing a more nuanced understanding of what is required to implement TPE at a high level of effectiveness. Simply put, they are learning from their experience. In this context, **principals and teachers are now identifying the areas in which they need more support.**

Table III-3 shows a number of areas where principals and teachers agree they need more support. These needs are discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

Table III-3. Principal and teacher levels of agreement on capacity and support, 2016

Capacity Building To increase my effectiveness as a teacher or a principal, there needs to be more support at my school in...	Principals (n=1,235)	Teachers (n=20,155)
Analyzing student data for action.	71%	49%
Using assessments to measure growth.	70%	45%
Using Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards.	65%	44%
Linking SLOs to Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards.	64%	43%
Receiving SLO feedback from school administrators (for teachers only).	N/A	46%
Receiving SLO feedback from district administrators (for principals only).	57%	N/A
Using data from SLOs and observations to strengthen school improvement planning.	69%	47%
Using data from SLOs and observations to make improvements in my instructional practices (for teachers only).	N/A	49%
Using data from SLOs and observations to make improvements in my instructional supervision (for principals only).	69%	N/A

As educators' knowledge about the TPE system increases, they are becoming more aware of the additional capacities they need to strengthen their practice. **Most districts are increasingly aware that the needs for greater capacity have to be addressed.**

“If you evaluate me but do not see where my needs are, and nothing is done about it, eventually the process will be of no value.”

-Superintendent

“While our district has conducted numerous trainings on approvable SLOs, more work needs to be done in building teacher capacity to use data to drive instruction as well as the best research-based instructional practices.”

-Principal

“I'd like more meetings about good instructional strategies. I'd like to hear from colleagues about what is being done in their classrooms. I'd like to participate in teacher-driven walkthroughs that foster meaningful collegial conversations about instructional practice.”

-Teacher

Summary

With each year of TPE implementation, more principals and teachers are positive about TPE. In addition, as educators increase their knowledge about and comfort with the TPE system, they are becoming more aware of where they need to strengthen their capacities. Many districts are providing more support to help educators increase their effectiveness with all aspects of the TPE system. Interviewees indicate that there are also districts that are struggling with TPE implementation. Where the TPE system is not being implemented well, there is value for leaders in re-examining their district's approach to TPE and conducting a thoughtful re-start with renewed training and intensive support. Across all districts, the priorities of district leaders play a significant role in determining the quality, consistency, and manageability of TPE implementation. These issues are examined in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Chapter Four: Quality

Quality matters. When implementing SLOs and teacher observations, the quality of the capacity building, the quality of dialogue related to meeting student academic needs, and the quality of the planning and delivery of instruction all matter.

Quality of SLO implementation

When SLOs are implemented with fidelity in Maryland’s districts, and backed by the full support of district leaders, there is increased focus and reflection on instruction and student progress. The challenge for districts and schools is to continue to improve the quality of implementation so that both teachers and students benefit. This is an evidence-based approach as research shows that high quality SLOs are positively associated with higher student achievement.⁹

MSDE has made concerted efforts to bolster district understanding of SLOs and to increase the quality of SLO implementation. Survey data show that these efforts are paying off. Continuing a four-year trend, principals and teachers in 2016, compared to 2015, increasingly agree that teachers are receiving more support on all aspects of implementing SLOs. More than half of the teachers and nearly three-quarters of principals agree.

As the survey data in Table IV-1 shows, there continue to be increases in the percentage of principals who agree that teachers are receiving information, guidance, and recommendations on the use of SLOs in classrooms. Principals have higher levels of agreement in 2016 compared to 2015 on the support teachers receive, ranging from 71% of principals who believe teachers receive information about connecting Maryland’s College and Career-Ready Standards to SLOs, to 85% of principals who agree that teachers receive information about developing high quality SLOs.

Teachers have higher levels of agreement in 2016 than they had in 2015 about the support strategies they receive for SLOs. Teachers’ agreement on the support they receive ranges from 51% who believe they receive information about connecting Maryland’s College and Career-Ready Standards to SLOs, to 64% who agree that they receive information about developing high quality SLOs. Across the range of SLO support strategies, teachers’ levels of agreement continue to increase, although principals’ levels of agreement remain higher.

Table IV-1. More educators agree on SLO support for teachers, 2015-2016

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) Teachers receive...	Principals			Teachers		
	2015	2016	Change	2015	2016	Change
Information about developing high quality SLOs.	76%	85%	+9%*	57%	64%	+7%*
Guidance in selecting learning content for SLOs.	79%	87%	+8%*	56%	63%	+7%*
Guidance in selecting research-based instructional strategies for SLOs.	70%	76%	+6%*	45%	52%	+7%*
Information on connecting Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards to SLOs.	65%	71%	+6%*	45%	51%	+6%*
Recommendations for selecting pre/post assessments for SLOs.	75%	79%	+4%*	53%	57%	+4%*
Valid and reliable approaches to setting growth targets for SLOs.	65%	77%	+12%*	47%	54%	+7%*
Professional development that is informed by the SLO process.	71%	73%	+2%*	49%	53%	+4%*

Note: * indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

Educators indicate that the power of SLOs lies in their ability to focus teacher attention on students who need more instructional support.

“I think the SLO is a powerful piece. If you really have the opportunity to say to a teacher, ‘your group of children lags behind students at other schools and I want you to focus on that group,’ it can be used in that powerful way.”

-Superintendent

“SLOs force teachers to justify why they chose specific measures. In the conversations with the principal or the assistant principal, they have to justify why they chose the measure for their students and how it would lead students to success.”

-Teacher

“The whole process has totally changed the way we talk at school. It allows us to be more focused, but it also gives us more of an idea of where we need to go from where we are. It allows us to align what we are doing. If they come in and observe me and they know my SLOs, they are able to see the evidence that our SLOs are improving. They talk about it at our conference, and they talk to our students about what our goals are. What I really like is they talk about students when they come in. The discussions on students then transfer back to the classroom and parents.”

-Teacher

Districts and SLO support strategies

There are marked differences in the approaches districts take to support SLO implementation. Districts vary, in the amount and types of professional development and support they provide to educators; in the level of involvement of teachers; in their approach of using teacher-developed versus centrally-defined SLOs; and in their focus on using SLOs to improve instruction versus using SLOs simply to obtain a teacher rating.

Ongoing support and professional development for SLOs

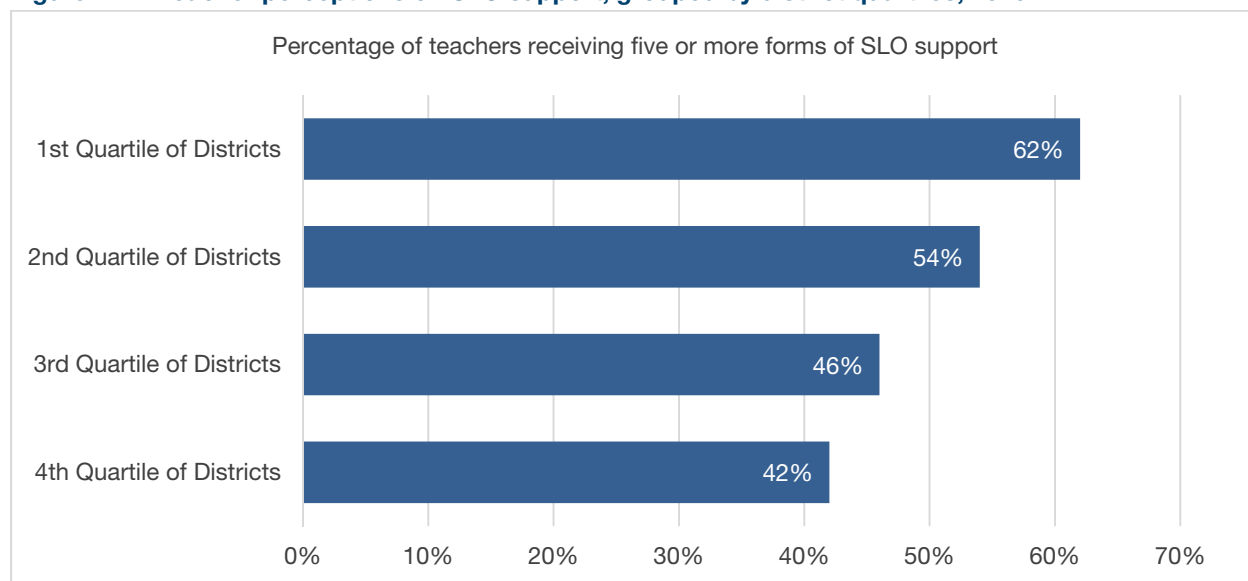
One way to measure the relative strength of the SLO implementation process is to determine the percentage of teachers who receive SLO support in seven key areas, as identified in Table IV-1:

- Information about developing high quality SLOs.
- Guidance in selecting learning content for SLOs.
- Guidance in selecting research-based instructional strategies for SLOs.
- Information on connecting Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards to SLOs.
- Recommendations for selecting pre/post assessments for SLOs.
- Valid and reliable approaches to setting growth targets for SLOs.
- Professional development that is informed by the SLO process.

The survey responses on these items make it possible to determine the percentage of teachers who agree that they have received at least five of these forms of SLO support in their district. Results are aggregated to the district to show how many teachers in each district received at least five SLO support strategies. Districts are then rank ordered and aggregated by quartile.

Figure IV-1 shows the results for each of the four quartiles of districts on the percentage of teachers who receive at least five SLO support strategies. In the top quartile of districts with stronger SLO implementation, 62% of teachers agree that they receive at least five SLO support strategies. At the other extreme, in districts with weaker SLO implementation, only 42% of teachers agree that they receive at least five SLO support strategies. This difference of 20 percentage points means that some districts are better preparing their educators for successful results than other districts.

Figure IV-1. Teacher perceptions on SLO support, grouped by district quartiles, 2016



Note: The above graph shows districts grouped in quartiles by their level of agreement on select survey item(s) related to SLO support strategies. Districts grouped in quartiles in this graph may not be the same as districts grouped in quartiles in the other graphs in this report.

Districts with stronger implementation provide extensive and ongoing professional development on all aspects of SLOs, including: how to judge SLO quality; how to select a target population; how to identify learning content linked to standards and research-based instructional strategies; how to select assessments and set growth targets; and how to use the SLO process to identify teacher professional development needs. Districts with weaker implementation short circuit the teacher and principal thinking process that makes these steps meaningful.

One of the key tasks for district and school leaders is to help teachers understand what high quality means in an SLO, and how it differs from low quality. Training sessions sponsored by MSDE and MSEA have emphasized the importance of annotating high and low quality SLOs so teachers and principals can learn what comprises better practices. A number of leaders have replicated these training sessions in their own districts. In these districts, educators indicate that they are making progress in determining and improving the quality of the SLOs.

Districts with stronger implementation provide extensive and ongoing professional development on all aspects of SLOs.

“Our administration team will have principals bring SLOs, put them on screen, and have a discussion right there. That helps to balance what is working, what is not working, what makes it a strong SLO, and getting principals on board. If we get our principals on board, they deliver it back to schools.”

-Superintendent

“Our annotations were done by us – what was wrong and what worked. We had to meet across subject areas and critique each other’s SLO.”

-Teacher

“We had a lot of SLOs that we pulled apart. We examined what was good, what was bad.”

-Central Administrator

One area where teachers and principals need additional professional development is in selecting growth targets in their SLOs.

“SLO targets are often set arbitrarily and more guidance on appropriate growth targets based on historical data or statistical formulas would make that process less wishy washy.”

-Teacher

“As an administrator, I highly value the opportunity to discuss in detail the instructional strategies and implications with the teachers as we review an observation or talk about the SLO data. The concern is that teachers want to exceed on the SLO and so selecting the goal of an SLO and establishing the criteria is a struggle. More guidance and support is needed to help teachers set goals that are stretches for them as well as their students.”

-Principal

“I think one area [in which] teachers really struggle is target setting...We have had the information, but I just think that’s an area that is still confusing.”

-Union Leader

Engaging teachers in meaningful collaboration

Districts with stronger SLO implementation share a number of strategies in common. They develop the district’s SLO process with the input and support of teachers (such as engaging teachers as true partners on the task forces that developed the process) and they review progress regularly and collaboratively in order to make continued improvements.

“We worked really hard to build relationships because I am a firm believer that if we are in the same boat, we need to row in the same direction. We don’t need to agree with the district on everything, but if we are not talking to each other, we are not going to make progress.”

-Union Leader

“We share SLOs and see what other schools are doing, helping them to come up with more rigorous SLOs.”

-Superintendent

"I think we do still have some challenges, but I think we developed a really good process between district and association – the key players come together and talk through issues at the table, hammering out every issue we may have. We have a process where we are not ignoring each other or not talking to each other about issues. We have the right people at the table to address issues."

-Union Leader

"We have a strong TPE system that leverages the partnership between central office administrators and teacher leaders. Our SLO work has been consistent and constantly focused on student learning. We need to support our teachers in using data to improve instruction."

-Principal

Teacher-developed SLOs and instructional dialogue

Districts with stronger SLO implementation emphasize teacher-developed SLOs. Drawing from lessons learned from the national and statewide research on SLOs,¹⁰ they emphasize the importance of the dialogue about student needs between teacher and principal, and provide teachers with the opportunity to reflect on the learning content, instructional strategies, and their impact on improving student performance.

"It has made people talk about outcomes. Whether they like it or don't like it, the conversations, in my view, were not happening in the state before SLOs were brought in. I think it is a very positive outcome."

-Superintendent

"There are now conversations which were not normally taking place. Those are cool conversations across multiple content areas."

-Principal

"It's much more instructional. If you have fidelity to the evaluation system, you have to have instructional conversations."

-Superintendent

"SLOs have been a great way to open up a dialogue with others about instructional techniques and reflection."

-Teacher

As the school staff increase the focus on instructional dialogue, interviewees indicate that the culture in the schools begins to change.

"The culture is changing. There are more conversations formally and informally on instruction tied to our common instructional language. I guess I would say since we adopted this as a coaching model, the SLO process makes teachers know they are responsible for student achievement. Teachers and principals have conversations outside the formal process. Those are positive attributes."

-Superintendent

“In some schools, at least in our school, we start to look at a data wall, tracking things. We spend a lot of time doing data reflections, checking SLOs to see how we are doing. A lot of schools incorporated that and the principal discussed with teachers their concerns and their successes. It has opened more conversations and you are not in isolation anymore.”

-Union Leader

“It’s mandated. There is no argument. So let’s make it meaningful. We are beyond the functionality of SLOs. It took us three years. For teachers in the content areas, they are in. They get SLOs and how it works. We want it to be a year-long expectation. Our effective teachers all say they saw value in SLOs. ‘Hey, what is the best way to raise your student performance and what is your evidence to support that?’”

-Principal

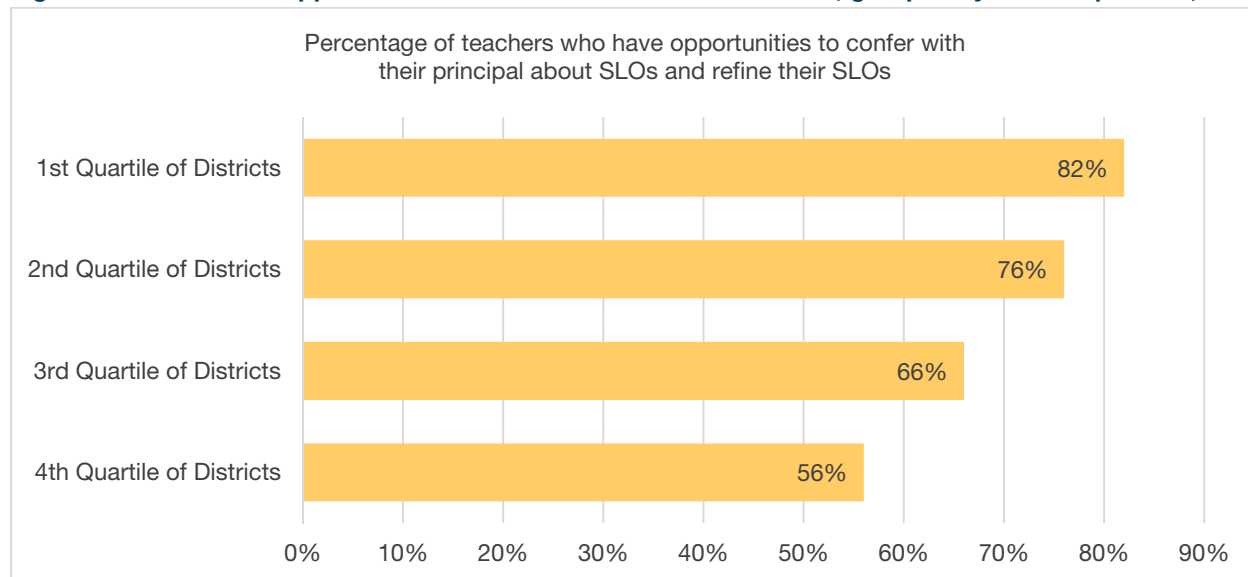
Opportunities to confer and refine SLOs

Where districts encourage teachers to have ownership of SLOs, teachers have the opportunity to engage in dialogue with their principal about their SLO, and teachers have the opportunity to revise their SLO where necessary based on the analysis of data.

In survey responses, teachers indicate if they agree that they have opportunities to confer with their principal about their SLOs, and to review and refine their SLOs. Results are aggregated at the district level to show how many teachers in each district had both opportunities. Districts are then rank ordered, and aggregated by quartile.

Figure IV-2 shows the results for each of the four quartiles of districts on the percentage of teachers who confer with their principal about SLOs and have the opportunity to refine SLOs. In the top quartile of districts with stronger SLO implementation, 82% of teachers agree that they have both opportunities. At the other end, in districts with weaker SLO implementation, only 56% of teachers have both opportunities. This difference of 26 percentage points means that **critical parts of the SLO process are valued highly in some districts and less so in other districts**. This difference affects the quality of implementation.

Figure IV-2. Teachers’ opportunities to confer about and refine SLOs, grouped by district quartiles, 2016



Note: The above graph shows districts grouped in quartiles by their level of agreement on select survey item(s) related to SLOs. Districts grouped in quartiles in this graph may not be the same as districts grouped in quartiles in the other graphs in this report.

Focus on improved instruction

Ultimately, **the districts with stronger implementation recognize that the SLO process is about improving instruction.** The focus is on student learning and professional growth. The teacher ratings are a helpful output of the process, but not the central driving force of the process.

"We have deliberately tried to focus on the student learning piece. We talked about student engagement and student response much more so than teacher behavior. I see good growth."

-Superintendent

"You have to recognize what is happening, you have to go back to the question: are kids learning and how do you know? If you know that and can write it into an SLO and quantify it, you can map out the growth strategies."

-Superintendent

"It takes strong leadership to keep people from going through the motions. I have one principal who told me that really good teachers don't even need to plan. I said, 'Really? Tell me who your best teachers are in the building.' That principal later said, 'Well, they do plan.' It's not about filling out forms or checking boxes. It is about taking information you have about what your kids know and are able to do, and incorporating that, matching it with content, and helping them to be engaged."

-Superintendent

"I do love the SLOs. It helps to keep a school grounded and focused on goals."

-Superintendent

Where districts have been able to show teachers how the SLO process supports the broader instructional goals of the district, educators report they can better make sense of how to use SLOs to improve their classroom practice.

The districts with stronger implementation recognize that the SLO process is about improving instruction.

"We recognize that we need to make sure that our teachers know the relationship between the content they are teaching and what we want students to learn. The curriculum work has to be the driver. We are still working to align what is taught with what the standards are and what the assessments cover."

-Central Administrator

"I am diligently completing the SLO work and there is value in the process. It gives me the opportunity to reflect on teaching practices and student performance."

-Teacher

"The logical connection to SLOs is the College and Career-Ready Standards."

-Principal

Districts with weaker SLO implementation fall short in one or more areas. They provide inadequate professional development. They sometimes centrally mandate the content of SLOs regardless of the student needs in individual classrooms. They tend not to involve teachers in the process in substantive ways beyond contractual obligation. Or they focus on the SLO as a compliance activity. The net effect of poor implementation is lack of teacher buy-in and knowledge about SLOs, poorly developed SLOs, and a focus more on the rating or score produced by the SLO than on instructional improvement.

“At our school, we have no choice in selecting learning content and setting growth targets for SLOs. Our principal tells us exactly what content area and growth targets we’re using for the SLO.”

-Teacher

“We end up focusing on compliance and not on meaningful reflection on teaching and learning.”

-Principal

“The system seems well-designed but poorly implemented. It isn’t used to inform instruction in my building and seems to just be extra work and not useful to me or the school.”

-Teacher

“There was very little support to develop and refine the SLO. Administrators were not there to guide new staff through the process.”

-Teacher

Quality of classroom observations

Teacher observations are a central component in determining the quality of instruction at the schools. They also comprise 50% of the overall teacher ratings in Maryland. Districts have different models or protocols they use in conducting observations. Most districts aspire to implement the most commonly accepted practice of a pre-observation conference of the teacher and the evaluator, the actual observation of the teacher in the classroom by the same evaluator, and a post-observation conference of the teacher and that same evaluator.

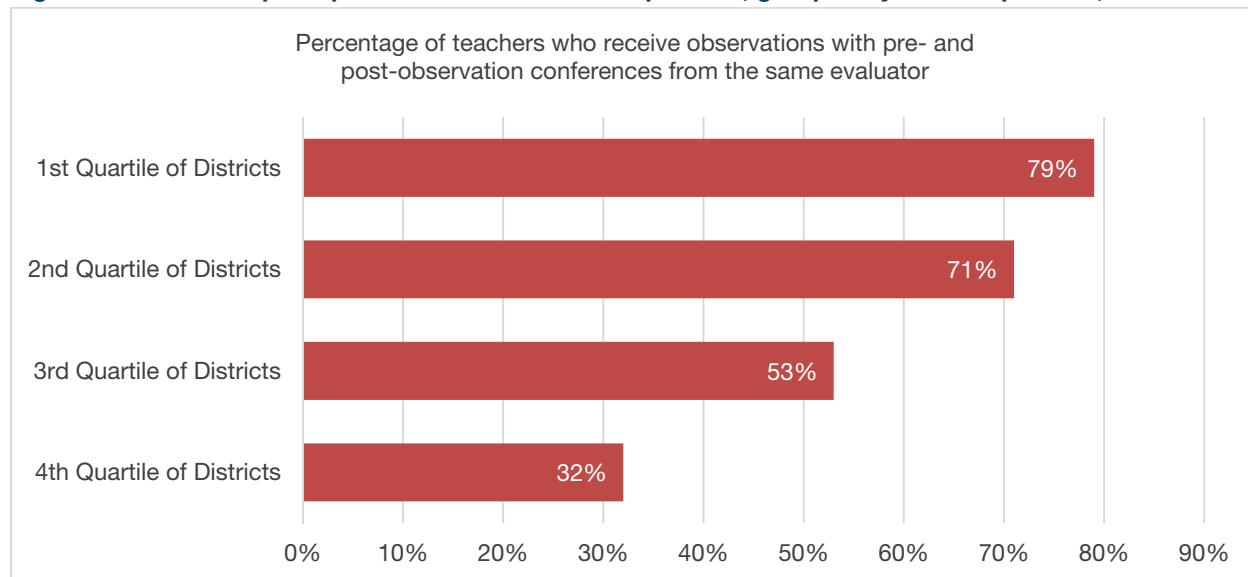
In the 2015 TPE report,¹¹ Maryland’s educators indicated that actual observation practice often differed from best practice. They cited the many demands on the time of principals in all districts. They also noted the significant inattention to best practices in some districts. This year’s survey included items intended to increase the understanding of how observations are being implemented in districts.

Survey responses show that 98% of principals and 81% of teachers agree that observations are conducted by observers/evaluators qualified to do the evaluation. But teachers are also more likely to agree that some steps in the observation process are skipped—and in interviews they cite the absence of the pre-observation conference or the post-observation conference.

Survey responses show differences in how districts are approaching the observations. In the survey, teachers indicate if they agree that their classroom observations include a pre-observation conference, the observation, and a post-observation conference, and have the same observer/evaluator conducting the conferences and the observations. Results are aggregated to the district to show how many teachers in each district have both opportunities. Districts are then rank ordered, and aggregated by quartile.

Figure IV-3 shows the results for each of the four quartiles of districts on the percentage of teachers whose classroom observations are accompanied by pre- and post-observation conferences from the same evaluator. In the top quartile of districts with stronger classroom observation implementation, 79% of teachers agree that they have all of these levels of support. At the other extreme, in districts with weaker classroom observation implementation, only 32% of teachers have such support. This disparity in responses of 47 percentage points means that **the quality of the observation process in some districts is significantly stronger than in others**. In some districts, the observations are approached seriously. In others, the observations are essentially a compliance activity.

Figure IV-3. Teacher perceptions on the observation process, grouped by district quartiles, 2016



Note: The above graph shows districts grouped in quartiles by their level of agreement on select survey item(s) related to observations. Districts grouped in quartiles in this graph may not be the same as districts grouped in quartiles in the other graphs in this report.

Perceptions of the observation process

In the districts where the observations are highly valued, leaders emphasize the importance of ensuring quality in the process. These districts also provide ongoing professional development to teachers and principals.

“I think the principals are making very good strides on achieving a high level of observation quality...The superintendent plans to keep making that stride...Most of our principals are well educated on that and moving along in a good way.”

-Union Leader

“We are constantly building the capacity of all administrators in the central office and the schools to ensure we have everything consistently applied across the board. If not, we have to go in and provide personalized professional development. I asked schools to work rigorously on teacher observations and the evaluation process.”

-Superintendent

“Having consistent messages is really important. We have to continue to push that conversation on observations.”

-Superintendent

"We are becoming better. The teachers are supposed to reference the rubric. For each subcategory, you have to rate it. Our principal is very focused on what the Danielson framework says. We self-rate, and I would say our teachers and principals tend to rate things the same."

-Teacher

Educators also highlight the importance of being purposeful in emphasizing instructional improvement throughout the observation process.

"You do observations to see where the teacher can grow. Are we focusing on the areas where a teacher is not strong? How does that help me to help that teacher?"

-Principal

"I was fortunate to be in a building where my administrator will say, 'I see your weaknesses, very specific items, hey, I will come back again, and I want to see XYZ.' That's exactly what should be occurring, but it is not occurring in all buildings."

-Union Leader

"I think the instructional conversation really happens in the post-observation conference. If a teacher walks out of the conference and if there is not a constructive instructional discussion, something goes very wrong."

-Principal

Summary

Quality matters when implementing SLOs and teacher observations. The quality of the capacity building, the quality of dialogue related to meeting student academic needs, and the quality of the planning and delivery of instruction all matter. What matters for quality is the type and strength of district support for an instructionally focused TPE system. Districts with strong SLO implementation develop their SLO process with the input of teachers. They support implementation by providing ongoing professional development that helps teachers use SLOs to improve their classroom practice. In districts with a strong, quality observation process, teachers understand what is expected and engage in dialogue with their evaluator about instructional practice. Lack of meaningful district support for either the SLOs or the observations diminishes their power in shaping the dialogue and thought process necessary for continuous improvement of instruction.

Chapter Five: Consistency

Consistency is a cornerstone of effective TPE implementation. Achieving consistency of implementation at a high level of quality is an ongoing challenge within and across districts and schools. It is a key issue that affects the reach and credibility of the evaluation system.

Four years of experience in Maryland show that **the districts making real progress in the consistency of quality implementation are doing so through concerted efforts to build principal and teacher capacity.** They are intentionally working to bring more consistency to the TPE process through a number of inter-related efforts. They are focusing on instructional improvement, while working to improve the district and school support to school-based educators. These districts have also been active participants in the training sessions sponsored by MSDE and MSEA.

In districts where TPE is being implemented with less consistency, teachers are quick to point out how things are being done differently from building to building, and within buildings. These districts are often perceived by the teachers as having leaders who give inadequate attention to what happens with TPE implementation at the schools, place less priority on sharing and taking action related to better practices identified by the state, and tend to participate less in the sponsored training sessions.

Leadership commitment to consistency

With all the competing demands on districts, **superintendents underscore the importance of being focused—and staying focused—on the consistent implementation of TPE.** The district leadership role is paramount to successful TPE implementation.

“I am working hard to make sure we don’t lose consistency. I want to make sure we have that continuity.”

–Superintendent

“For principals, we have a meeting once a month. The whole meeting focuses on an instructional practice that is important to them. In the beginning of the year, we focus on the strategies and the process to ensure we have continuity with the learning strategies from the training.”

–Superintendent

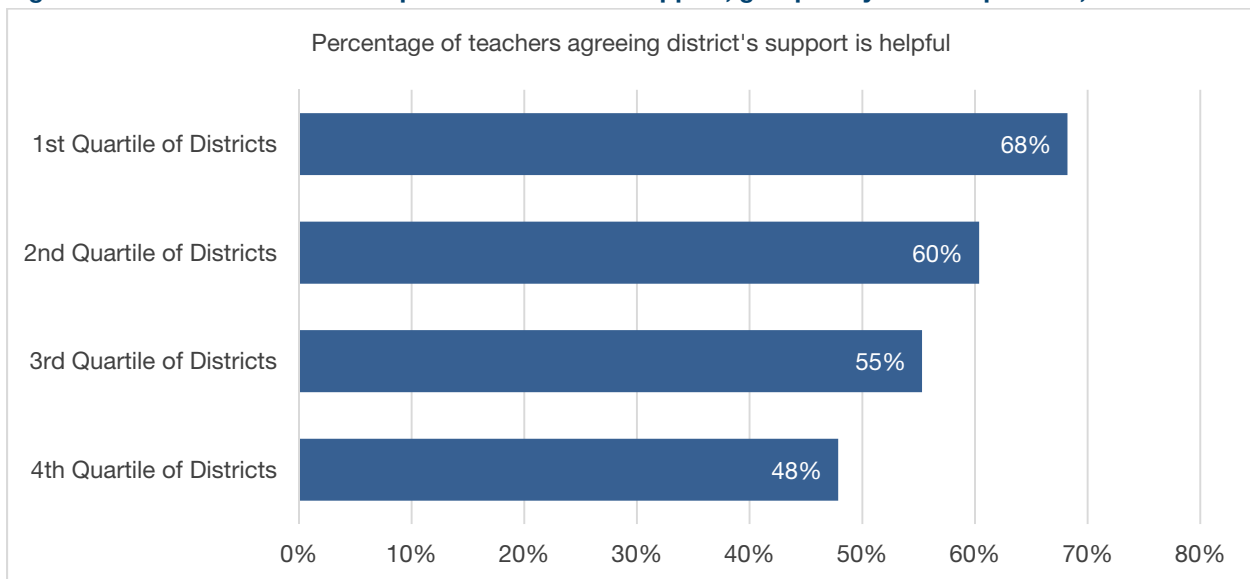
“We spent time monthly going through all the training together, rating different classrooms. Then we looked at that monthly to make sure we were doing things the same way. Maybe because of the other priorities, lately we have not been doing that as much. But our consistency comes from the supervisors who are working across buildings.”

–Superintendent

Consistency across districts

There are meaningful differences in the consistency of TPE implementation across Maryland’s districts. Survey responses highlight these differences, as exemplified by teacher responses to the item, “My district’s support of the implementation of the TPE system is helpful.” In Figure V-1, a grouping of Maryland’s 24 school districts by quartile shows a difference of 20 percentage points in responses between the top quartile (where 68% of teachers agree that district support is helpful) and the lowest quartile of districts (where only 48% of teachers agree). What this means is that **educators in some districts feel they are being provided with helpful support, while their peers in other districts indicate they are not getting the help they need.**

Figure V-1. Teacher views on helpfulness of district support, grouped by district quartiles, 2016

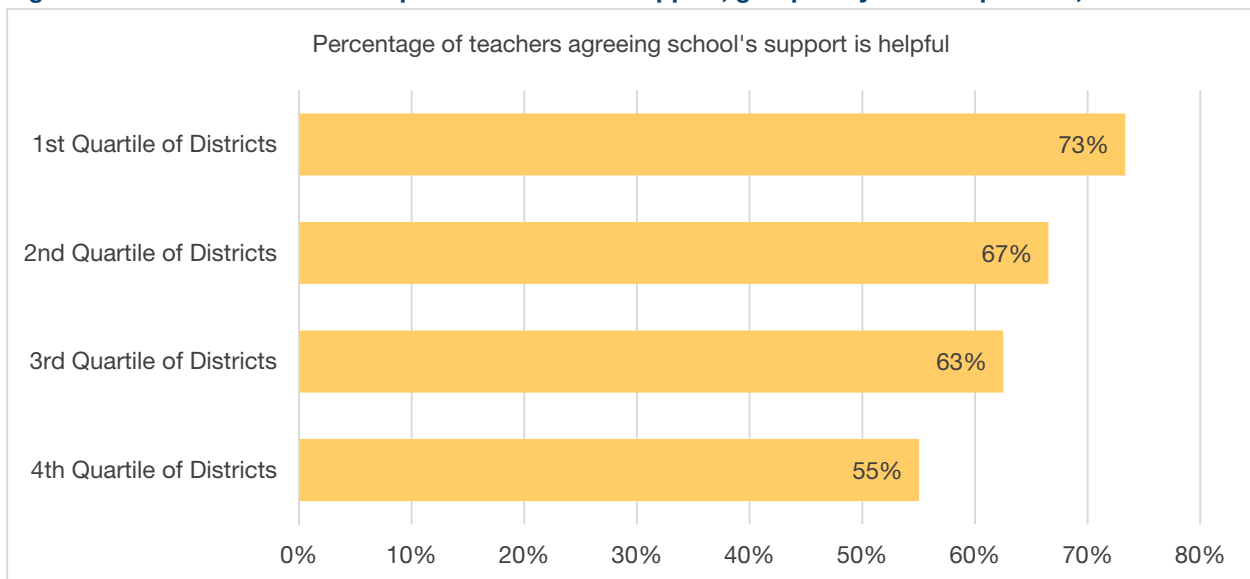


Note: The above graph shows districts grouped in quartiles by their level of agreement on select survey item(s) related to district support. Districts grouped in quartiles in this graph may not be the same as districts grouped in quartiles in the other graphs in this report.

Differences within and between districts

The helpfulness of school level support varies considerably by district. Teacher responses to the item, "My school's support of the implementation of the TPE system is helpful," show an 18 percentage point difference in response rates between the top quartile of districts (where 73% of teachers agree that school support is helpful) and the lowest quartile of districts (where only 55% of teachers agree). These variations have meaning because **the more teachers are effectively supported, the greater their chances for success.**

Figure V-2. Teacher views on helpfulness of school support, grouped by district quartiles, 2016



Note: The above graph shows districts grouped in quartiles by their level of agreement on select survey item(s) related to school support. Districts grouped in quartiles in this graph may not be the same as districts grouped in quartiles in the other graphs in this report.

Differences within and between schools

A major concern for teachers is when they perceive differences in how the evaluation system is being implemented from teacher to teacher within a school.

“My conversations with the principal are not the same as other teachers...I was brought into the system and I was not trained like everyone else. I had to do a lot of learning on the fly. That inconsistency is a problem.”

-Teacher

“Inconsistency within disciplines...That is a real issue and concern.”

-Teacher

In different schools, teachers cite inconsistencies in how various components of TPE are being implemented. Some teachers discuss how the observation process is being conducted, while others note variation in how SLOs are rated.

“The observation process is highly subjective and expectations are applied inconsistently. Conflicting observations between a supervisor and principal are not resolved equitably. I’m speaking as someone who was part of the evaluation construction process in my county.”

-Teacher

“The SLO portion of the evaluation system is too inconsistent in both process and significance. Importance placed upon SLOs varies from administrator to administrator and school to school. This inconsistency sends the message that SLOs are not a viable tool for evaluation.”

-Teacher

“I have found that administrators in my school implement the standards inconsistently, some not understanding the nuance of the framework and the classroom experience.”

-Teacher

“The pressure is on the administrators. They cannot transcribe everything that is going on in the classroom. Principals have to give a lot of evidence to give a 4. There is constantly a lot of confusion. There is a huge difference across schools as to what is a 4, and even within schools there is big variation in what is a 4.”

-Teacher

District leaders also share concerns about the inconsistency between schools within their districts.

“There are different levels of quality with different administrators. When we look at the ratings from last year – ‘Highly Effective, Effective, and Ineffective’ – my weakest schools had the most ‘Highly Effective’ teachers.”

-Superintendent

“I think you will see consistency of the quality of SLOs within clusters but not across the district.”

-Central Administrator

A key marker that affects consistency is whether the central administration and the school-based practitioners view implementation in similar terms. In some districts, the educators are very much on the same page regardless of their position. In other districts, there are markedly different opinions about TPE implementation between the central administration and the schools.

For example, in one district where TPE is highly integrated into the instructional framework of the district, there are similarities of perceptions across different levels of the system.

“They talk about data and instructional programs...So it forces that conversation. Teachers will tell you the same thing, that they have good conversations.”

-Superintendent

“How are SLOs affecting teacher/principal dialogue? From my previous experience as a principal, it was transformational. We can talk about data and get the bigger picture.”

-Central Administrator

“It’s a different dialogue than I had a few years ago. Before we had the SLO we would’ve talked about what the data looked like but no link to where the target is...The SLO has really shaped and forced those primary teachers to look at their data differently.”

-Principal

The more teachers are effectively supported, the greater their chances for success.

“There are more conversations with your colleagues. The principals spend more time having those meaningful dialogues on what you are doing in the classroom.”

-Teacher

In contrast, comments from another district reveal opposing views on how TPE is being implemented. This district is experiencing greater inconsistency in the quality of implementation.

“This evaluation system has helped us to build the capacity of people. It cannot be an event...You need to talk with the principals about consistency. There is a lot of professional development for principals and teachers.”

-Superintendent

“I would say there is more consistency than not, if a teacher moves from place to place they should have the same expectations – that is what we look for. When we see principals having a conference, are they using the rubric? If not, we push them to do so.”

-Central Administrator

“There is no consistency for our expectations for SLOs. I am not sure if there will be...I don’t believe there is any consistency across our county. We have very different views. We have principals who clearly state to teachers that ‘Highly Effective is only a place to visit and they don’t live there.’ I respectfully disagree with that. There is not a consistent message across the board.”

-Principal

“The district did not provide a lot of training – most was given at the schools. It was all school-based from the administrators at the building. That was mostly about 2-3 years ago.”

-Teacher

Inter-rater reliability

Many districts are increasingly using a quality rating rubric to provide a standard of quality for SLOs. They are using similar protocols to strengthen the observations of teacher practice. They are also engaging in formal training and team sessions to develop consistent approaches for rating SLOs and classroom observations. By working intentionally to improve the quality of inter-rater reliability, central and site level leaders find that their efforts are helping the districts to develop a common vocabulary about instruction.

“How we deal with inter-rater reliability? We spent a great deal of time talking about that in our monthly principals’ meetings, at the director level meetings or at the larger curriculum meetings. We have crafted behavior stems to make sure people are on the same page. We have also worked to have a common lexicon of instruction, so teachers in one school hear the same thing as teachers in another school. We believe that if you don’t have a common language, you will likely be beat up by someone who likes wiggle room with vocabulary.”

-Superintendent

“We have invested heavily and given our principals a lot of professional development to show them the look-fors, to get inter-rater reliability as groups. We looked at video tapes of lessons, what did you see here, how can you match what you saw with the rubric, how to get greater consistency and better agreement on what is happening. That has all been very positive. One limitation is that you have such a wide variance in who is actually doing the classroom observation and what they were seeing. So that process has been helpful to us.”

-Superintendent

“We meet with instructional directors and pull a sample of SLOs and go through the rating process: why this one is okay, why this is stronger with this calibration, why this SLO is at a very low level.”

-Central Administrator

Yet there are also some districts that place less priority on developing consistency.

“We did training at the beginning of the year on inter-rater reliability but not since.”

-Superintendent

“We often have two different sets of eyes seeing dramatically different things in the same teacher and student group. It goes back to that they are not well trained. I think the focus is just not there. The district is making no effort to bring inter-rater reliability.”

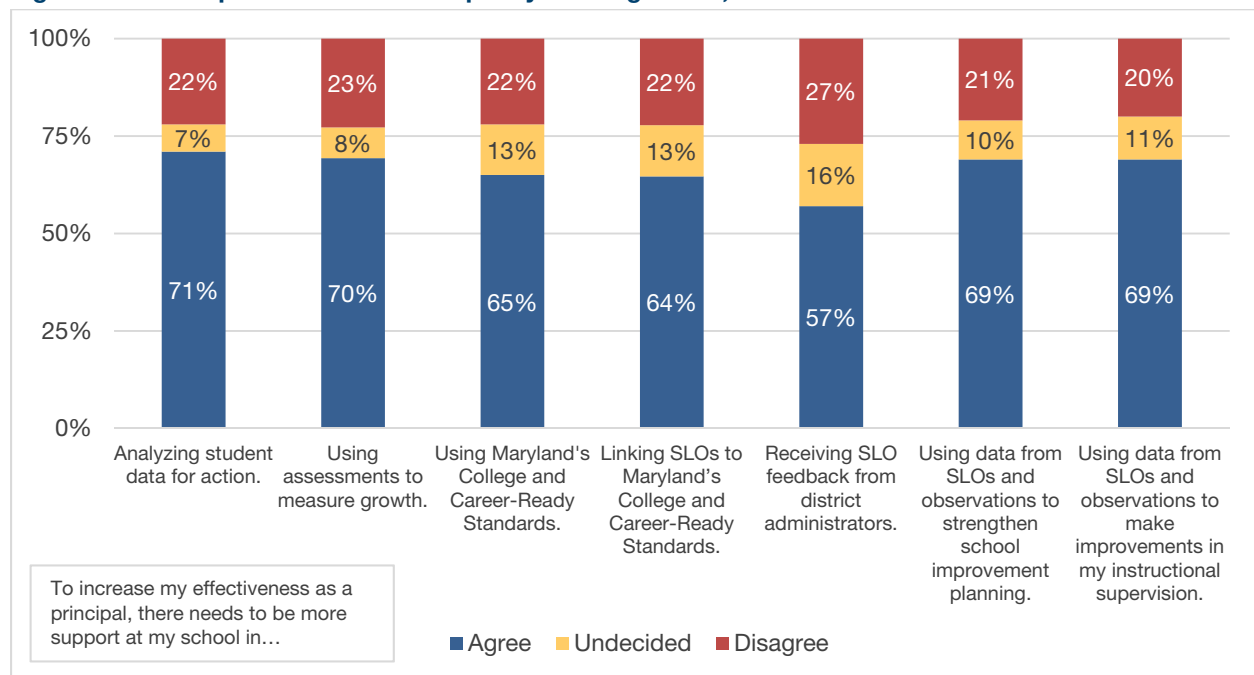
-Union Leader

Consistent training to address school needs

For many districts in Maryland, **the key to developing consistent processes and inter-rater reliability within and across schools begins with understanding and then addressing the capacity needs of principals and teachers.**

As noted in Chapter 3, principals are learning more about the challenges of supporting TPE implementation. They are identifying the support they need from their respective districts to be more effective. Figure V-3 highlights the focus and level of need from the perspective of Maryland’s principals.

Figure V-3. Principal views on their capacity building needs, 2016



Where TPE implementation is going well in schools, educators highlight a key contributing factor: the principals’ ability to synthesize the TPE process and clearly communicate expectations and practices to teachers. This means that principals need support to fully understand all aspects of the SLO and observation processes and how those two components can be leveraged to improve instruction in their schools. For many districts, building the capacity of principals is pivotal to developing consistent TPE processes and ratings within and across schools. Many but not all districts are focusing on building such leadership capacity in the schools.

“In my mind, we should begin with our principals – that has to be the focus of staff development, making sure our principals have the time and skills to be true instructional leaders. I want all my principals to be instructional leaders. I want the central office to support the principals to get the job done and develop as instructional leaders.”

–Superintendent

Where TPE implementation is going well in schools, educators highlight a key contributing factor: the principals’ ability to synthesize the TPE process and clearly communicate expectations and practices to teachers.

“Principals across schools are becoming more consistent. They are doing a better job across the board regardless of which school the teachers are in because there is a concerted effort to do that. I don’t want them to say, ‘we’ve done that, and now we are done.’ Everyone needs reminders and review and I hope they keep that up. I see a big push from the superintendent. I think he will continue in that direction.”

-Union Leader

When districts neglect the importance of building the capacity of principals, the result is weakened and inconsistent implementation.

“The support for principals does not exist here...Why are we setting principals up to be the bad guys? Why are we setting schools up to fail? The district’s messaging is not clear.”

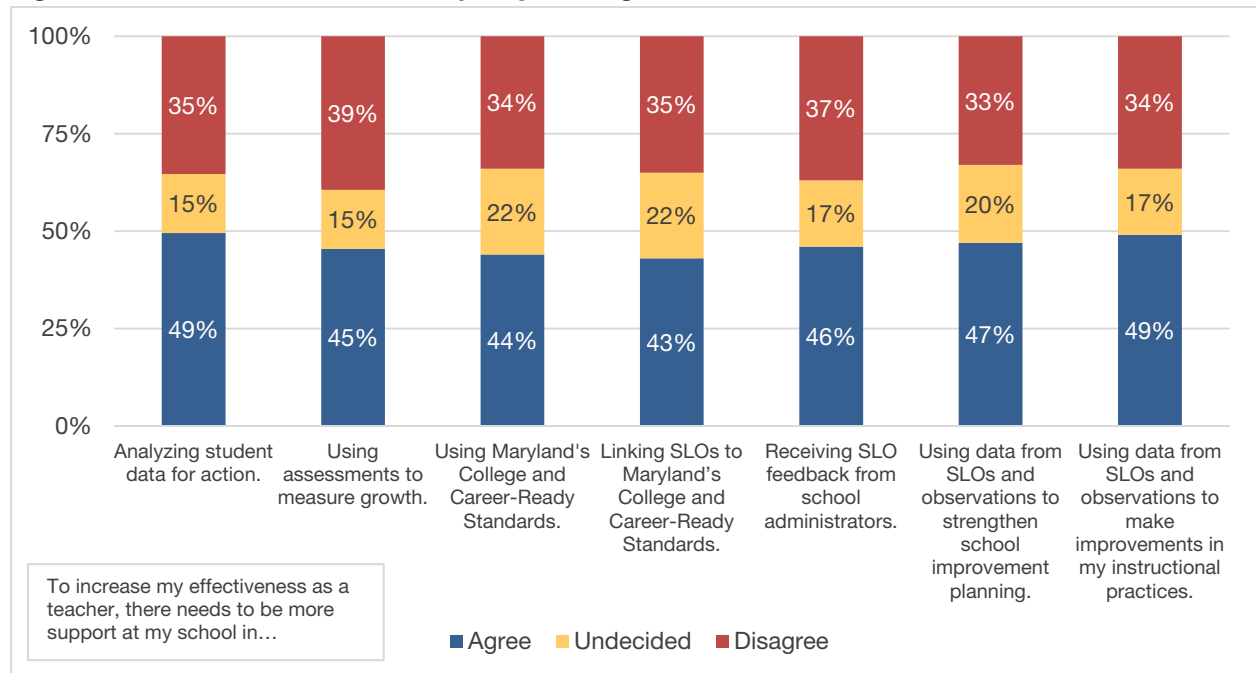
-Principal

“The pressure is on teachers and principals. Where is the pressure on the central office to support me and my colleagues?”

-Principal

In many districts, teachers have the same capacity building needs as principals. They are also identifying the support they need, as Figure V-4 illustrates.

Figure V-4. Teacher views on their capacity building needs, 2016



An inconsistency of implementation is that **while many districts are leveraging the resources and methodologies provided by the state to increase teacher capacity, others are not.** As a result, the training sponsored at the state level is reaching some districts and schools more than others. Whether this happens depends on the priorities of district leadership.

"We looked at results around the state and how we fit in. We reviewed the highs and lows in each year. We met with our administrators and did some graphing of the way the SLOs were implemented and ranked according to our building. We were also supported to further those conversations in the building to make sure needs were being met in areas of assistance, inconsistencies, etc."

-Teacher

"Teachers and principals should be trained together because there is always a gap – something is in or out, or part of it or not. If you put them together, for the majority, they should learn together. It will take away so many debates as the process is implemented through the year. There is no misunderstanding."

-Union Leader

"I know what the district should have brought back to us, but the problem is the district didn't bring back what they got from the training from MSDE."

-Teacher

"No one helps you unless you reach out for help. You have to be self-dependent. There is a feeling of hopelessness in the first years and that is indescribable."

-Teacher

Summary

Achieving consistency of implementation at a high level of quality is an ongoing challenge within and across districts and schools. Districts that are building a consistent, quality implementation across schools are doing so through strategic efforts. For example, their leaders make a concerted effort to build both principal and teacher capacity. They build a consistency of understanding among educators at central and school site levels so that the district has a shared view of TPE implementation. They use rubrics to support the quality of SLOs, and the quality of observations. Simply put, they emphasize the importance of ensuring buy-in, developing consistency, and improving the quality of implementation.

Chapter Six: Manageability

District leaders need to make decisions in a number of critical areas to effectively manage the TPE process. How districts balance the tradeoffs between a manageable system and a rigorous process requires careful consideration of what students and teachers need to fulfill district instructional goals. Districts have to decide how much flexibility to allow for school-to-school and classroom-to-classroom differences in student needs, while maintaining comparability and trust in the TPE system. **The leaders who are effective at implementing TPE make it a district-wide priority to thoughtfully support and manage the evaluation system.**

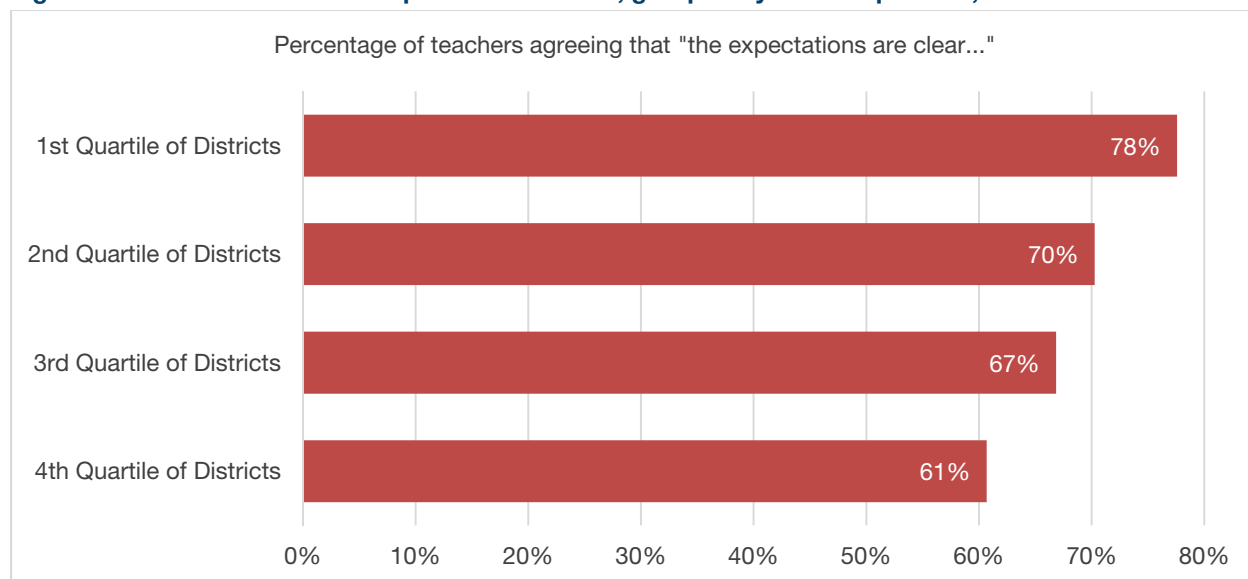
Even in the growing number of districts with more advanced TPE practices, the leaders acknowledge there are still areas where they need to get better. By contrast, the districts with weaker implementation are giving these areas less meaningful attention. The areas are described below.

Setting clear expectations for TPE to improve instruction

Many districts have found that the best route to effective implementation is to make instructional improvement the primary focus of the TPE system. In these districts, management provides clear expectations for principals and teachers and uses TPE to improve instruction.

Figure VI-1 shows marked differences between districts in terms of how teachers perceive the clarity of expectations for TPE. It presents the results for each of four quartiles of districts on the percentage of teachers who agree that the expectations are clear. The difference of 17 percentage points between the top quartile (where 78% of teachers agree that the expectations are clear) and the lowest quartile of districts (where 61% of teachers agree) is substantial.

Figure VI-1. Teacher views on expectations of TPE, grouped by district quartiles, 2016



Note: The above graph shows districts grouped in quartiles by their level of agreement on select survey item(s) related to TPE expectations. Districts grouped in quartiles in this graph may not be the same as districts grouped in quartiles in the other graphs in this report.

When the instructional expectations for TPE are clear, it is readily apparent at district and school levels, and affects how implementation is managed.

The best route to effective implementation is to make instructional improvement the primary focus of the TPE system.

“Now all students count. The focus is on the progress the students made, what changes are needed, and how to make students succeed. It’s a huge change, happening in all content areas.”

-Superintendent

“Our principal is very organized and works diligently and conscientiously to provide clear expectations and support for quality instruction.”

-Teacher

“I think that’s the value of the evaluation system: TPE helps us to manage the pace of improvement.”

-Superintendent

When a district is not clear about the purpose of the TPE system, teachers do not see the link between TPE and instructional improvement.

“Teachers observe that that time hasn’t resulted in anything, not new knowledge, not agreement to practicing something different tomorrow...I am afraid that sometimes it might be more about compliance, and less about effectively changing the practice.”

-Superintendent

“I don’t see TPE helping us instructionally. Because it has not been well defined on what the expectations are and what to accomplish instructionally.”

-Union Leader

Absent the instructional link, TPE becomes a managerial burden. It is perceived as a compliance activity rather than one that changes practice. What then gets implemented is a system that is either misunderstood, or misused to support only the accountability goals of a district. Most importantly, the opportunity for instructional improvement is lessened significantly. As one principal notes, “We are missing the spirit of what this evaluation system is trying to accomplish...and missing the conversation.”

Making district support the priority

A critical responsibility of districts is to create systems that support consistent, high-quality evaluations. As shown in previous chapters, that includes training principals and teachers on the district vision for instruction, on the components of the evaluation system, and on how the evaluation system supports the instructional goals of the district. **When districts are able to manage TPE as an instructional reform, TPE provides the glue across instructional initiatives.** In districts that build capacity in the schools and trust with their associations, professional development is focused and often a shared activity.

"We start at ground zero. We have to build their capacity. They come in without knowing anything about the process. Training takes place at the school level. The instructional supervisors have provided the training at schools. It helps new teachers to become instructionally strong."

-Superintendent

"The conversation we are having with the principal today is: 'Who else is doing the work? How are you building their capacity?' We calibrate our feedback. We definitely agree that as a district we are taking a leadership approach to building capacity, not just the principals or the assistant principals."

-Central Administrator

"As a union, we do several trainings per year and every time we get up to 100 teachers to go through the training. We used the same training the board uses. We used the same people, but I think it's got to be targeted in the buildings. The district really supports professional development in terms of dedicating those days and time. I know everyone is fighting for time for more PD. From my perspective, the TPE professional development drives the ship."

-Union Leader

The substance of meaningful communication, not just its appearance, is also part of a well-managed TPE process and can open the door to other levels of support.

"Open communication, team-based planning, regular staff meetings, rotating stations of school-wide professional development, and observations have all been tremendously beneficial in our school's implementation of TPE."

-Teacher

In each of the annual studies of TPE implementation in Maryland,¹² educators indicate that they become more comfortable with TPE with practice, and time demands are eased as districts develop better managerial processes and support systems.

Yet in an effort to make TPE more manageable or to ease workloads, a few districts are eliminating key steps that are essential to effective implementation. As an example, some districts reduce the opportunity for teachers and principals to engage in meaningful dialogue about instruction and student needs.

"I never had conversations with my principal or my assistant principal about instruction, and never received a post-evaluation conversation. When I asked my principal when we can have a post-conference, he said that he only talks with people who 'need the conversation.'"

-Teacher

"We are never allowed to have authentic conversations."

-Teacher

"What I worry about is the cookie cutter process...My concern is that those conversations and dialogues with teachers should really be focusing on how we change this, and how we improve that. When we start the clicking, the process becomes an assembly line."

-Principal

When streamlining the implementation process, some districts are, in effect, undermining the potential impact of TPE on quality practice. This is a systemic problem which can also include eliminating steps that research has shown¹³ as integral to better instruction. For example, central administrators in a few districts determine what teacher SLOs will be, regardless of the needs of students in the respective classrooms. Some districts undercut other important steps in SLO implementation, such as eliminating the process of teachers identifying learning content and standards based on student need. These practices reduce teacher buy-in, lead teachers to conclude that SLOs are a waste of time, and make teachers feel that they are not being respected as professionals. The net effect is that the focus of SLOs becomes a compliance activity rather than one that drives instructional improvement.

“SLOs in my county are mandated through and by central office. The assessments used are mandated, the amount of growth is mandated, and the information returned is exclusively controlled by central office. It does not shape instruction.”

-Teacher

“Our system does not let us select appropriate learning content for our SLOs as they are already predetermined at the county level.”

-Teacher

“Our county has had no support with developing SLOs. When we submit an SLO, we are told it is incorrect and the administration writes one for us. They set the goals to attain at 100% no matter what the baseline data reflects.”

-Teacher

Paying attention to the principal evaluation

Principals have full plates in Maryland. **One mechanism that districts have for understanding and addressing the needs of principals is to approach the new principal evaluation system as a serious endeavor.** That’s what the stronger districts are doing, while others are focusing disproportionately on teacher evaluation and giving short shrift to the principal evaluation. In the districts more focused on the needs of principals, administrators are able to talk about the power of the principal evaluation.

“When done correctly, you get to know the person – the strengths and weaknesses, engage that person prior to the evaluation. Otherwise, it’s cold. To evaluate principals, you need to visit the schools. We have teams from the central office. We have a pre-conference, look at their data, talk with the kids. Sometimes half a day, and sometimes a whole day. Sometimes we do follow-up visits based on the needs or conditions.”

-Superintendent

“The supervisors are having really meaningful conversations with principals about the quality of the TPE process and giving principals feedback. Good principals give feedback and get feedback, and their feedback loops here. There is an instructional coaching process.”

-Central Administrator

As discussed in previous chapters, the quality and manageability of TPE implementation depends on the ability of principals to synthesize initiatives and lead the charge. With the new TPE system, the adoption of Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards, and the introduction of a new statewide assessment, the work and role of the principal are changing dramatically.

It is the principal who is largely responsible for creating a coherent process in the school that leads to improved instruction. As one principal noted, "Nothing is being taken off the plate, and the plate is getting bigger." When approached seriously, districts use the principal evaluation system as a way to better engage and support principals in their instructional leadership role. Conversely, without sufficient support, principals can feel ill-prepared to guide TPE implementation.

"Somebody has to be the driver. I am depending on the principals to keep this process in place."

-Superintendent

"We did have quite a bit of training at the beginning. What bothered me most is once I got the training, I became the expert in my building. I feel inadequate to be the expert. How to create SLOs of high quality or measurable, it's new to me. I appreciate the professional development opportunities and I had an understanding. But I certainly should not be the one delivering that to my staff."

-Principal

Understanding the value of technology and information management

Technology platforms affect the quality and manageability of TPE implementation. When the technology works well, it helps facilitate conversation about instruction and enables districts to identify recurring challenges across multiple classrooms or schools. When it works poorly, people dismiss TPE as "too time-consuming" or "tedious." Educators tend to blame reforms themselves for the faultiness of their implementation. Accordingly, if the technology is contributing to that faultiness, then it affects the perceptions as well as the manageability of TPE.

The value of the technology should be to help districts generate information from SLOs, observations, and teacher and principal effectiveness ratings to inform their decisions about professional and leadership development, human capital, curricula, and assessments. Such technological capability should make it possible for districts to use the information from TPE to manage implementation more strategically.

Some interviewees share examples of how TPE data systems are being used.

"We use [name of data system]. We are really brought in and it drives the timing of the process and the conversations. I think it formalizes a lot of that process so we don't get slippage."

-Superintendent

"For professional practice, you can pull that out, look at different domains and do trend analysis. For SLOs, it becomes really a repository. You can see what is done and not done."

-Superintendent

Many other interviewees, though, indicate that having a technology system does not mean that they can produce the type of information that would help inform decisions at the district or school level. Districts are still largely using the systems as repositories of information for the evaluation process, not as management tools.

"I am not all that knowledgeable about our system that we use today, but what I do know is that it is not a tool we use on a regular basis. It is more a depository, a place we keep forms and notes."

-Superintendent

"Do I have a way to capture data to plan my summer professional development? Good question. My initial response is I am not aware of it. I could be wrong. I just looked at the preliminary plan this morning. I am not aware that anyone has ever said to me that according to teacher evaluation our people need help with X. That will be an 'ah ha' moment for me. I don't think we have any way to do that."

-Superintendent

One of the biggest frustrations among educators is when the technology does not support an efficient TPE process, yet adds to the workload.

"The observation process is also getting so bogged down that people get frustrated to use it. They get kicked out of the system, or it does not print out what they need, or printed extra content. It hasn't been something they feel is a smooth process."

-Superintendent

Educators tend to blame reforms themselves for the faultiness of their implementation. Accordingly, if the technology is contributing to that faultiness, then it affects the perceptions as well as the manageability of TPE.

"There is a gap when teachers have no access to SLOs. We had to submit online, but then we could not access the online system for a while. We were then blind for our goals for a period of time. My principal just emailed me a PDF copy of my goals because I requested it. I couldn't access them online. So if you forgot any aspect of it, you could not look it up."

-Teacher

"It is like we are doing double work. We kept collecting data and we have to put it in the other system. We are doing the same thing over and over again. It creates more work."

-Teacher

Summary

To manage TPE well, districts need to do several things well: provide clear expectations that TPE is focused on improved instruction; train teachers and principals on high quality implementation strategies; create a meaningful principal evaluation system to better understand and address principal needs; and develop technology tools to simplify the process and generate information to inform decisions about student, teacher, and principal needs.

Chapter Seven: Transitions

Change is constant and far-reaching for Maryland's schools and districts. Recent initiatives include implementing TPE, introducing College and Career-Ready Standards, developing curricula based on these new standards, and launching the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) assessments. All of these initiatives involve changes of practice and, when well implemented, changes of culture.

Throughout the introduction and early implementation of these changes, **the state's core strategies emphasize improved instruction, capacity building, collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and better results. Many districts and schools have taken approaches which build on these same strategies.** They have also worked with school level educators to get past fears and initial perceptions regarding, in particular, the intent and use of the new evaluation system and new assessments.

The level of change continues, affected by federal and state factors. For example, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act prohibits the U.S. Secretary of Education from mandating the elements of educator evaluation systems, while allowing the use of Title I-Part A funds for the development, refinement, and implementation of the evaluation systems.¹⁴ The next steps for TPE implementation under ESSA are now in the hands of the state and districts.

Concurrent with the federal changes, there are also changes in state leadership at the policy level with many new appointments to the Maryland State Board of Education, and at the executive level with the appointment of a new State Superintendent of Schools.

These changes create uncertainties for educators in Maryland's schools and districts. In a changing environment, educators are concerned about the future of TPE and the direction and processes that will be pursued moving forward.

"The concern I have is that with the political climate changing and the changes in the state board, I sincerely hope this evaluation system doesn't get trashed and we are left floundering in a stormy sea."

-Superintendent

The state's core strategies emphasize improved instruction, capacity building, collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and better results.

"We are concerned that we are going down this path and then we'll be told the path will take a detour. We are now worried about everything changing. People don't know what the focus is going to be or where the support will be."

-Superintendent

"I am afraid to say to teachers that 'now there may be more changes.'"

-Union Leader

"Not having stability at the state level is concerning. Our message to our folks is that our focus is great teaching for every student every day. We provide support to that. With TPE, we focus on what we know is good instruction that leads to good learning."

-Superintendent

In interviews, district and school leaders are characteristically making the same statement—they want the evaluation system to continue to focus on instructional improvement. Many districts have been working to change their practices and cultures. There are a number of other districts that are now moving in these directions. On a recurrent basis, **many leaders and practitioners are underscoring two key points—stay the course in the focus and support of TPE, while allowing more flexibility in the weighting of the components.**

“I would like to see SLOs remain. That for me has the greatest chance of tying everything back to the whole focus, the whole idea of continuous improvement. Without that, it’s just focused on professional practice, not holding to the accountability piece.”

-Superintendent

“There is a lot of discussion about changing the system. But we just want to keep going so stay the course.”

-Central Administrator

“We will continue what we are doing because we see the value – not because it’s mandated. I would be really disappointed if SLOs are gone. I think if I told my teachers we don’t need to do SLOs, most of the teachers would still do them. They see the value of it.”

-Principal

“We will keep SLOs because that’s the one thing we’ve seen in teacher evaluation that offers opportunities for dialogue, reflection, and concrete suggestions for improvement, instead of a checklist of things.”

-Union Leader

The weighting of the components in TPE is a pivotal issue for Maryland districts. The majority of interviewees indicate that they would want to adjust the percentage of the evaluation that focused on student growth. In addition, others note the need for modifications in the evaluation cycle.

“I am not a fan of student growth at 50% of teacher evaluation. Data should definitely be a piece, but 50% has created some issues for us. If they keep it at 50%, my people will not be happy. We don’t know what the state is going to do. We don’t know if the state board will turn and go and take a different direction.”

-Superintendent

“We used the state model, 50%-50%. We have come up with a 70-30 split – we are looking at professional practice for 70%, and 30% for SLOs.”

-Union Leader

“The weighting of SLOs irritates the hell out of me. I agree there is a place for SLOs, but the weight is not right.”

-Principal

“I tend to think the SLO is weighted too heavily but I would not change the structure. It has enhanced our practice. The goal setting is more intentionally focused.”

-Central Administrator

The process for how districts might approach making mid-course modifications is also the basis for comment.

“What will I change if I can do anything with TPE? I will go back to my task force. We will re-look at the observation process, and we will look at how we use SLOs in concert with the professional practice piece and see if any adjustment is needed.”

-Superintendent

Many leaders and practitioners are underscoring two key points – stay the course in the focus and support of TPE, while allowing more flexibility in the weighting of the components.

“The way forward is to make minor changes to allow the local systems to do what is best for their students. My feet are just getting wet on this. I think TPE is valuable.”

-Union Leader

“I hope we are pushing this forward based on what we have in the evaluation system that is leading to better conversations between educators and administrators.”

-Union Leader

“I think we will keep the evaluation process exactly as it is.”

-Superintendent

Some interviews show an undercurrent of opposition to the use of student academic growth in TPE. While these positions can sometimes be confrontational, they can also provide the basis for discussion and negotiation related to student growth and the importance of having multiple measures to gauge student progress.

“Without a doubt, we should decouple student performance from teacher evaluation.”

-Union Leader

“On TPE, there is already pushback from the teachers’ association about not using student outcomes as part of teacher evaluation. Well, on the one hand, I understand their position, but I do believe teachers have the ability to make an impact on how students do on tests. I think people I have worked with have shown that intentional work on student outcomes can improve those student outcomes.”

-Superintendent

“We should be able to use multiple sources of achievement data to demonstrate our students’ growth.”

-Teacher

“Are we wedded to 50% on outcome? Do we want to give up something we believe that might enhance our outcomes? I think there are places we can do better, but I am not too interested in negotiating this with the association. I would rather have a conversation with the union to see if we can come to a reasonable place where student growth is still part of it.”

-Superintendent

Summary

The state’s core strategies to support TPE implementation—emphasizing improved instruction, capacity building, collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and better results—are being replicated by many districts and schools. Recent changes in federal policy and state level leadership are creating uncertainties for educators in Maryland. In a changing environment, educators are concerned about the future of TPE and the direction and processes that will be pursued moving forward. On a recurrent basis, many leaders and practitioners are underscoring two key points—stay the course in the focus and support of TPE, while allowing more flexibility in the weighting of the components.

Chapter Eight: Issues and Recommendations

Maryland has made significant progress in the early years of implementing the new teacher and principal evaluation systems. The key to continuing progress is for district leadership to focus on managing constructive change, by developing principal and teacher leadership and emphasizing instructional improvement.

The charge for leaders is to develop leadership in others and to put teachers in a position to be more effective with more students. Increasingly in Maryland, there are districts whose central and school site leaders are managing these kinds of changes and systems, and doing it well. These leaders are supporting and advancing instructionally-focused evaluation reform. There are a smaller number of districts whose leaders, whether through insufficient attention or ineffective implementation processes, are failing to place priority on thoughtfully strengthening practitioners and on effecting instructional linkages to evaluation. In essence, they are lessening the potential impact in their districts of the statewide efforts to improve educator performance and evaluation.

The charge for leaders is to develop leadership in others and to put teachers in a position to be more effective with more students.

The recommendations focus on strengthening leadership and further improving implementation at central and school site levels within Maryland's districts.

Issue One: Statewide implementation of change

Overview

There are major state level implications of the TPE-related work conducted to-date. The state should use learnings to inform next steps under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Further, the state should use TPE as a model for statewide implementation of other major reform initiatives.

Recommended action

Base the ESSA evaluation strategy on TPE's progress. With each succeeding year of implementation, Maryland's educators are more supportive of and confident in TPE. Many districts are growing in their ability to support implementation. The state's building block approach to developing capacity and increasing the constituencies in support of TPE is proving productive. ESSA provides the state with the opportunity to continue TPE's dual emphases on professional practice and student growth, while revisiting the weighting of the components.

Renew the eight organization alliance in support of evaluation and instructional improvement. By coalescing all of the major educational entities in the state, Maryland is showing the country a way to advance evaluation reform through focused collaboration. The key constituencies in the state have been working together on behalf of students, teachers, and principals. With the initial Memorandum of Understanding having concluded in June 2016, MSDE should again assume a leadership role in ensuring that this statewide collaboration continues.

Use the learnings from TPE implementation to inform new statewide initiatives. MSDE's strategy for implementing TPE is multi-faceted: engage key stakeholders as partners, provide professional development regionally and statewide, promote open and two-way communication, prepare future practitioners, and make mid-course improvements based on changing needs in the field. These practices are contributing significantly to progress in TPE implementation. These same practices can be pivotal to the success of future initiatives in the state.

Impact

Maryland is a leader in implementing new educator evaluation systems. Maryland's success to-date is based on substance and process. It should shape future TPE implementation under ESSA and inform other statewide reform initiatives.

Issue Two: District support capacity

Overview

Increasing the quality, consistency, and manageability of TPE requires thoughtful and aligned actions at central office and school site levels. Advancing higher levels of practice, by improving the quality and coherence of support to the schools and classrooms, does not happen accidentally. The Maryland districts with better systems of support are making concerted effort to improve and refine their implementation of the new evaluation systems.

The role of district leadership is paramount in the TPE process. Where progress is being made, it is a direct function of the organized capacity of the district to support the school sites, integrate instructional initiatives, and focus the central administration on better practices.

There is greater consistency and quality of TPE implementation when the district emphasis is on engagement and collaboration, professional development and leadership development, and instructional improvement. In the districts that lack such emphasis, there is less buy-in and fidelity of implementation.

Recommended action

Provide advanced training to school site and district level practitioners. Teachers, principals, and central administrators need increased opportunities to be the beneficiaries of field-proven tools and processes to support implementation. They are now identifying needs in areas such as the use of quality rating rubrics, ways to advance inter-rater reliability, methods for integrating SLOs, observations, and Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards, and management strategies for achieving greater quality and consistency within and across schools.

Districts should replicate the MSDE model of providing training to cross-level teams. This approach enables educators at different levels of the system to hear and learn from the same things in the same ways—thus contributing to a common language and shared understanding of best practices for strengthening the implementation of TPE.

Focus on instructional improvement to increase accountability. Emphasizing the direct link of TPE to instructional improvement is pivotal to success. It encourages the thinking process for teachers and principals on issues of substance: learning content, instructional strategies, and student growth. When this direct link is lacking, a district loses the power of the reform. The result is compliance-driven activity, with little in the way of true support or accountability.

Emphasize teacher voice and constituency building. The more effective Maryland districts understand that meaningful implementation of TPE requires building the capacity of key constituencies to understand and carry out the reform. This can only happen when district leaders take TPE seriously, articulate the connections between TPE and other major instructional initiatives, and listen to the voices of the schools. Implementation continues to flounder in districts whose leadership either takes a top-down or a benign neglect approach to the schools.

Even when the process can be difficult, district leaders need to keep talking with teachers. Doing so requires having vehicles for two-way communication and being anticipatory in understanding the importance of teacher trust when undertaking new initiatives. Four years of survey and interview data

show that the districts which have strong, two-way communication with teachers and teacher leaders, even if it does always take the form of formal collaboration, are achieving higher levels of teacher buy-in. Where it is lacking, the districts are struggling and, characteristically, have more the appearance than the substance of real communication.

Engage the local boards of education. Implementing new evaluation systems is a policy decision that triggers other policy decisions. It is not enough for local board members to know that a new evaluation system is being implemented. They need to know what findings and organizational learnings are emerging from the new evaluative data that have implications for district policy in such areas as professional development, assessments, and budgetary priorities.

Conduct a thoughtful reset in select districts. Based on learnings from MSDE- and MSEA-sponsored training sessions, and bolstered by customized on-site support, several districts that initially got off to a slow start have made major strides forward in implementing TPE. Survey and interview data underscore that there are some districts that need to follow a similar course of action and learn from the better practices being used in other Maryland districts and nationally.

Impact

Nurturing a new direction for instructional improvement and evaluation requires leaders who can change practices, mindsets, and the culture of central offices and schools. Maryland's progress to-date provides the foundation for the steps which need to be taken to deepen the impact and reach of TPE.

Issue Three: Principal leadership

Overview

Principal leadership is key to the success of any serious initiative at a school site. Implementing the new teacher evaluation system is placing great demands on the time and skills of principals. Principals need focused support to do this work well. In this same regard, they also need a principal evaluation system that can strengthen their performance and contribute to their growth as school leaders.

Recommended action

Increase the capacity of principals to guide and oversee implementation. Districts need to provide principals with more coaching and formalized support as they implement the new evaluation systems. Meeting principals' needs has to be approached more systematically than it is in many districts. Specifically, principals need more coaching in how to lead instructionally-focused conversations with teachers, how to organize schools for greater quality and consistency in TPE implementation, and how to support teachers in setting and learning from student growth targets.

Part of this capacity building is to recognize that many principals are feeling overwhelmed. If they are to give meaningful attention to their responsibilities in leading instructional and evaluation reform under TPE, their workloads need to be adjusted in other areas to reflect the demands of their new responsibilities.

Nurturing a new direction for instructional improvement and evaluation requires leaders who can change practices, mindsets, and the culture of central offices and schools.

Make principal evaluation a greater priority in districts. Districts need to give attention to the quality of and priority for their new evaluation systems for principals. While receiving ratings is part of evaluation, it is not the system itself. An effective evaluation system must contribute to the professional growth of stronger principals, while providing support to improve the performance of other principals. Districts need to devote time and concerted effort to building in more focus and support to their principal evaluation systems.

Impact

The credibility and usefulness of a new principal evaluation system lies in whether it recognizes and provides the vehicle for improving performance. Principals of all performance levels need an evaluation system that produces these outcomes. Moreover, teachers have to see that principals are getting better as school leaders.

Summary

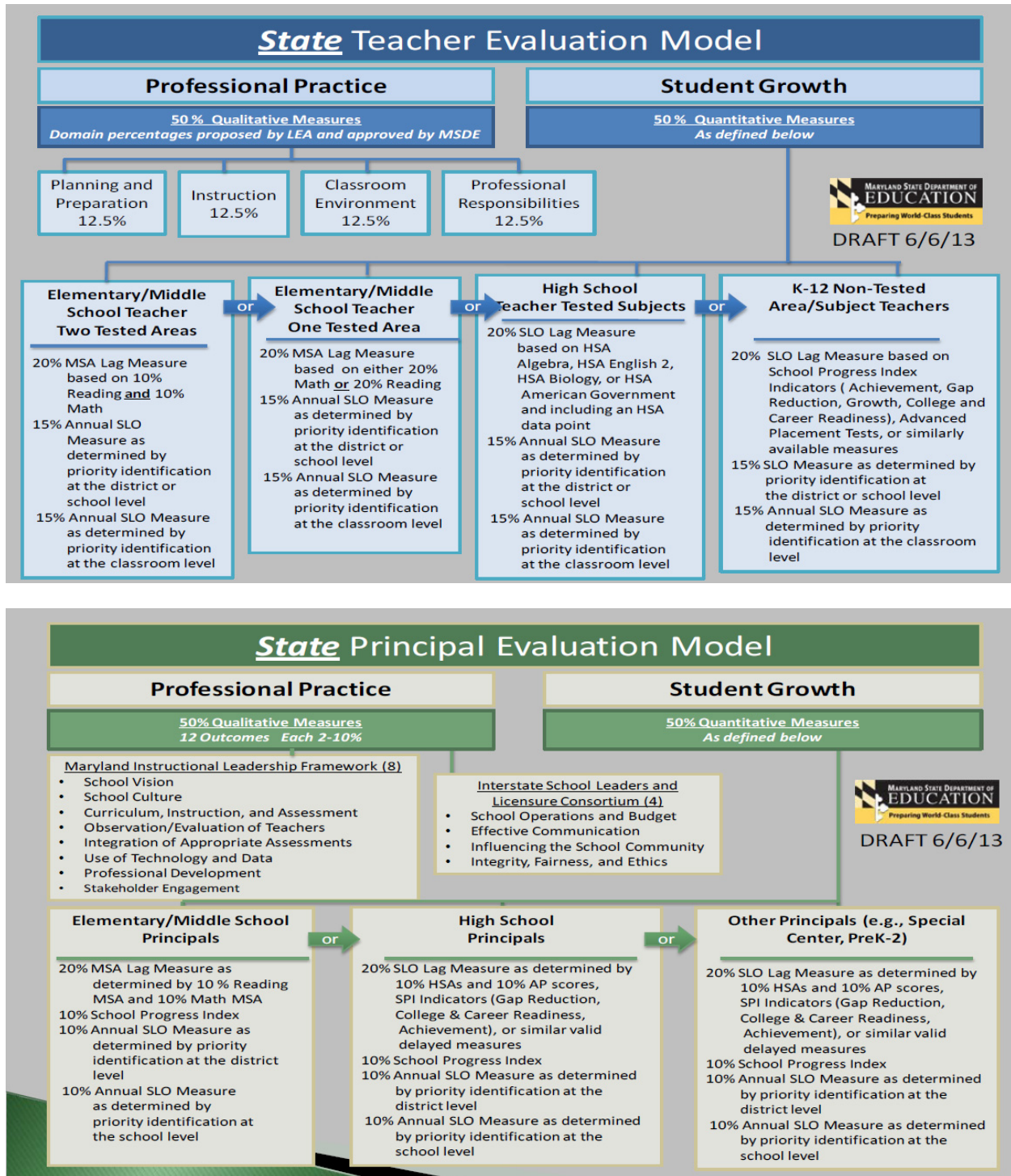
Maryland is making significant progress in implementing the new teacher and principal evaluation systems, as reflected in survey and interview data over a four-year period. **Moving forward, district- and school-based educators indicate that Maryland should stay the course in the focus and support of TPE, while allowing more flexibility in the weighting of the components.** This means continuing to link TPE to instructional improvement and continuing to strengthen the quality, consistency, and manageability of implementation.

Endnotes

1. This refers to the field test in 22 districts in school year 2012-2013, and the full implementation in all 24 districts since school year 2013-2014.
2. The MOU was signed on June 27, 2014 and included the Maryland State Board of Education, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland State Education Association, the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals, the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Baltimore Teachers Union. See http://archives.marylandpublicschools.org/press/2013Press/MOU_on_TPE_062714.pdf
3. Slotnik, W. J., Bugler, D., & Liang, G. (2013, September). *Spotlight on Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*. A report for the Maryland State Department of Education by the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd. Available at <https://www.wested.org/?p=72864> and <http://www.ctacusa.com/?p=297>; Slotnik, W. J., Bugler, D., & Liang, G. (2014, September). *Real Progress in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*. A report for the Maryland State Department of Education by the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd. Available at <https://www.wested.org/?p=59136> and <http://www.ctacusa.com/?p=702>; Slotnik, W. J., Bugler, D., & Liang, G. (2015, September). *Change in Practice in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*. A report for the Maryland State Department of Education by the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd. Available at <https://www.wested.org/?p=68513> and <http://www.ctacusa.com/?p=1343>
4. See the *Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook, Version 3* at http://archives.marylandpublicschools.org/tpe/TPE_Guidance_Version3_092013.pdf
5. See <https://danielsongroup.org/framework/>
6. MACC@WestEd. (2015). *Analysis of Maryland School Districts' Teacher Ratings*. Retrieved from http://archives.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/tpe/docs/Analysis-MD-LEA-TeacherRatings-MSBE-Presentation_2.24.15.pdf
7. Education Week, *The Every Student Succeeds Act: Explained* (January 4, 2016). Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/12/07/the-every-student-succeeds-act-explained.html>
8. Slotnik, Bugler, & Liang, *Change in Practice in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*.
9. Slotnik, W. J., Smith, M. D. *et al.* (2004). *Catalyst for Change: Pay for Performance in Denver*. Boston, MA: Community Training and Assistance Center. <http://www.ctacusa.com/?p=293>; Slotnik, W. J., Smith, M. D. *et al.* (2013). *It's More Than Money: Teacher Incentive Fund—Leadership for Educators' Advanced Performance, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*. Boston, MA: Community Training and Assistance Center. <http://www.ctacusa.com/?p=299>; Schmitt, L. N. T. (2014). *Summary of REACH Findings, 2007–2008 Through 2012–2013*. (DRE Publication No. 12.96). Austin, TX: Austin Independent School District.
10. Slotnik, Smith, *et al.*, *Catalyst for Change: Pay for Performance in Denver* and *It's More Than Money: Teacher Incentive Fund—Leadership for Educators' Advanced Performance, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*. Slotnik, Bugler, & Liang, *Spotlight on Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*; *Real Progress in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*; *Change in Practice in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*.
11. Slotnik, Bugler, & Liang, *Change in Practice in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*.
12. Slotnik, Bugler, & Liang, *Spotlight on Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*; *Real Progress in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*; *Change in Practice in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation*.
13. Slotnik, Smith, *et al.*, *Catalyst for Change: Pay for Performance in Denver* and *It's More Than Money: Teacher Incentive Fund—Leadership for Educators' Advanced Performance, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*.
14. Federal Register, *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, As Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act—Accountability and State Plans: A Proposed Rule by the Education Department on 05/31/2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/05/31/2016-12451/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-of-1965-as-amended-by-the-every-student-succeeds>

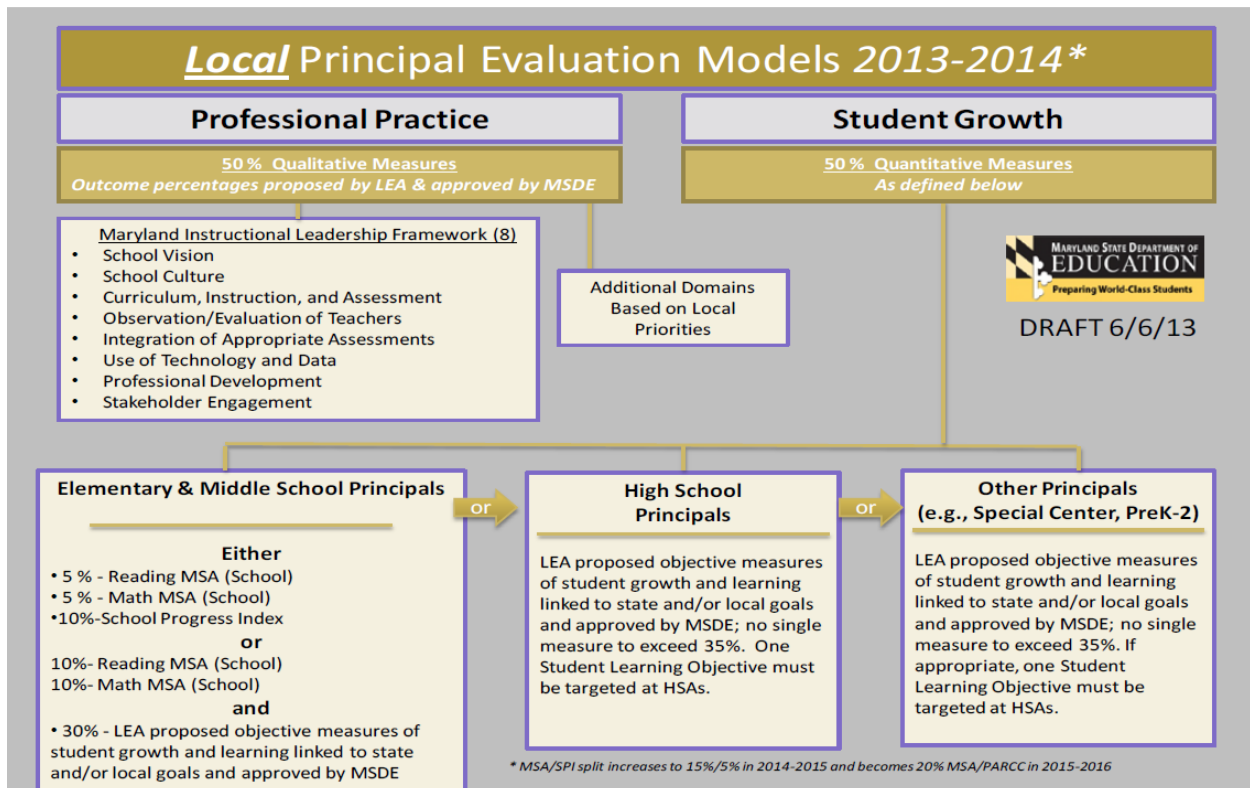
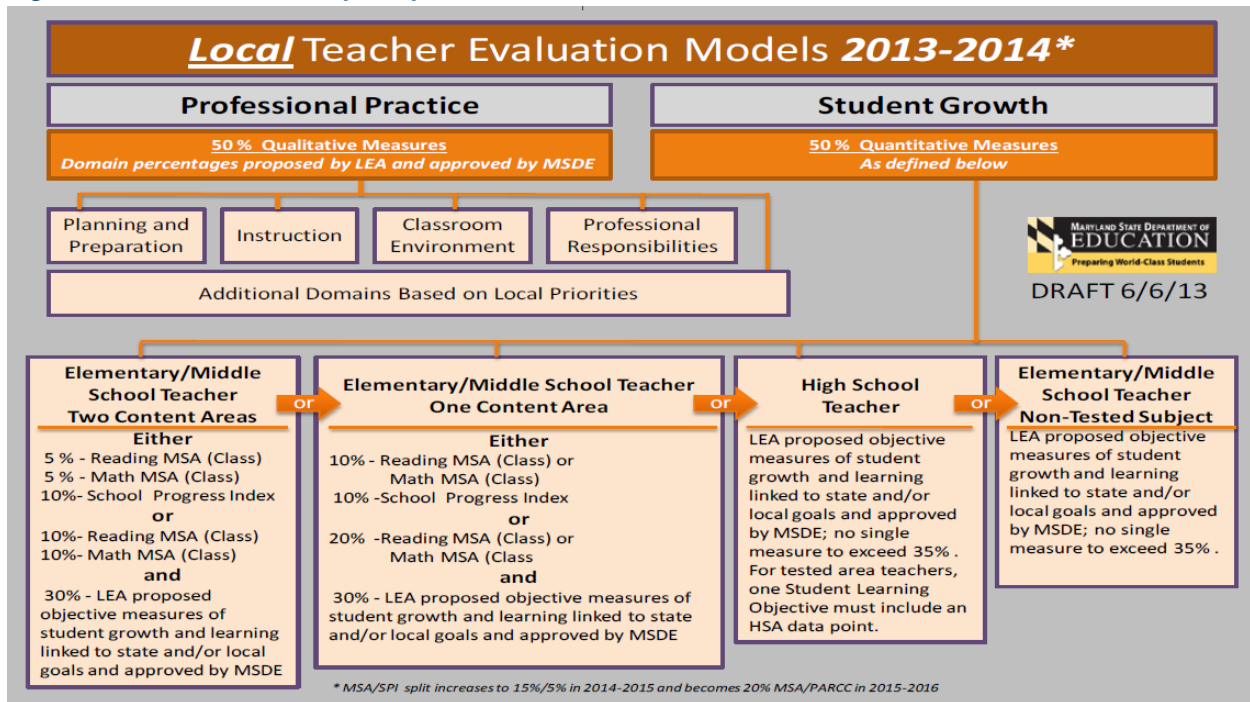
Appendix

Figure 1: State teacher and principal evaluation models



Source: *The Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook, Version 3*, http://archives.marylandpublicschools.org/tpe/TPE_Guidance_Version3_092013.pdf

Figure 2: Local teacher and principal evaluation models



Source: *The Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook, Version 3*, http://archives.marylandpublicschools.org/tpe/TPE_Guidance_Version3_092013.pdf

Table 1. Survey response rates by district, 2016

District	Response Rate
Allegany County	45.5%
Anne Arundel County	47.9%
Baltimore City	10.2%
Baltimore County	13.5%
Calvert County	32.7%
Caroline County	37.0%
Carroll County	14.1%
Cecil County	69.1%
Charles County	62.5%
Dorchester County	48.6%
Frederick County	23.8%
Garrett County	51.8%
Harford County	34.6%
Howard County	26.6%
Kent County	43.2%
Montgomery County	31.6%
Prince George's County	58.1%
Queen Anne's County	85.3%
Somerset County	63.4%
St. Mary's County	30.0%
Talbot County	38.9%
Washington County	36.5%
Wicomico County	33.5%
Worcester County	34.3%
State Total	34.6%

Note: Statewide, the number of survey respondents increased by 16.6% (or 2,708 educators) from 2014 (i.e., 16,314) to 2015 (i.e., 19,022), and by 15.2% (or 2,894 educators) from 2015 to 2016 (i.e., 21,916).

Table 2. Characteristics of the survey respondents, 2014-2016

	2014 (n=16,314)	2015 (n=19,022)	2016 (n=21,916)
I have*:			
Participated in classroom observation training(s)	44%	49%	50%
Participated in Student Learning Objectives (SLO) training	86%	85%	83%
Accessed other source(s) of information or experiences related to TPE	26%	26%	27%
Accessed other source(s) of information or experiences related to SLOs	49%	53%	54%
The school level I work in is:			
Elementary school	48%	48%	49%
Middle school	23%	21%	23%
High school	27%	27%	26%
Not Applicable / No Response	2%	3%	2%
My position is described by this educator category:			
Classroom teacher	68%	66%	68%
Non-classroom teaching staff	11%	13%	12%
Special educator	12%	13%	12%
Principal	4%	3%	3%
Assistant principal	2%	3%	2%
Other administrator	1%	1%	1%
Central office staff	1%	1%	1%
No Response	1%	1%	1%
In my position, the majority of my work is in the following subjects and/or area(s)*:			
Arts	8%	7%	7%
Career and Technical Education	6%	5%	4%
Elementary (multiple subject areas)	31%	28%	28%
English/Language Arts	21%	20%	20%
English as a Second Language	3%	3%	4%
Health and Physical Education	6%	5%	6%
Math	18%	17%	17%
Science	15%	12%	13%
Social Studies	14%	12%	12%
Special Education	13%	12%	12%
World Languages	4%	4%	4%
Other (e.g., music)	8%	9%	8%

	2014 (n=16,314)	2015 (n=19,022)	2016 (n=21,916)
Years of teaching experience (teachers only; n=14,905 for Y2, 17,344 for Y3, and 20,155 for Y4):			
0-3	11%	11%	12%
4-6	10%	10%	10%
7-9	15%	12%	11%
10+	63%	65%	67%
Not Applicable / No Response	1%	1%	1%
Years of experience as a principal (principals only; n=1,029 for Y2, 1,160 for Y3, and 1,235 for Y4):			
0-3	27%	29%	26%
4-6	17%	17%	19%
7-9	18%	15%	14%
10+	25%	26%	29%
Not Applicable / No Response	13%	12%	12%
The highest educational degree I have attained is:			
Bachelor's degree	21%	20%	20%
Master's degree	76%	76%	76%
Doctoral degree	2%	3%	3%
No Response	1%	1%	2%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. *Denotes multiple choice survey items; percentages do not add up to 100.

Table 3. Responses from principals and teachers, 2016

	Principals (n=1,235)			Teachers (n=20,155)		
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Systemic Context						
The expectations are clear for teachers and principals in the TPE system.*	88%	6%	6%	68%	16%	16%
My district's support of the implementation of the TPE system is helpful.*	88%	7%	5%	57%	25%	18%
My school's support of the implementation of the TPE system is helpful.*	91%	5%	4%	63%	22%	16%
Quality of TPE Frameworks and Processes						
Teacher evaluation frameworks and processes...						
Provide useful feedback to teachers.*	89%	7%	4%	62%	15%	24%
Encourage reflection on instructional practices.*	89%	7%	5%	72%	12%	17%
Lead to improved decisions related to instructional approaches.*	83%	10%	6%	58%	19%	23%
Classroom Observations						
Classroom observations...						
Are conducted by observers/evaluators qualified to do the evaluation.*	98%	1%	1%	81%	9%	11%
Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)						
Teachers receive...						
Information about developing high quality SLOs.*	85%	7%	7%	64%	13%	23%
Guidance in selecting learning content for SLOs.*	87%	7%	6%	63%	13%	25%
Guidance in selecting research-based instructional strategies for SLOs.*	76%	12%	12%	52%	17%	32%
Information on connecting Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards to SLOs.*	71%	15%	15%	51%	19%	30%
Recommendations for selecting pre/post assessments for SLOs.*	79%	8%	13%	57%	15%	28%
Valid and reliable approaches to setting growth targets for SLOs.*	77%	10%	13%	54%	17%	30%
Professional development that is informed by the SLO process.*	73%	12%	15%	53%	17%	30%
This Year's Experience						
This year, I believe...						
There were opportunities to confer with my principal about my SLOs.*	90%	5%	4%	68%	10%	22%
There were opportunities to review and refine my SLOs.*	91%	5%	4%	75%	9%	15%
Reflection on my instructional practices deepened.*	77%	15%	8%	54%	18%	28%
There was more instructionally focused dialogue with my colleagues.*	79%	12%	9%	54%	16%	31%
There was more instructionally focused dialogue with my supervisor.*	81%	11%	9%	48%	18%	34%
The results of my evaluation will be used to inform my professional development plan for next year.*	76%	16%	8%	51%	24%	25%

Capacity Building To increase my effectiveness as a teacher or a principal, there needs to be more support at my school in...	Principals (n=1,235)			Teachers (n=20,155)		
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Analyzing student data for action.*	71%	7%	22%	49%	15%	35%
Using assessments to measure growth.*	70%	8%	23%	45%	15%	39%
Using Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards.*	65%	13%	22%	44%	22%	34%
Linking SLOs to Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards.*	64%	13%	22%	43%	22%	35%
Receiving SLO feedback from school administrators (for teachers only).	N/A	N/A	N/A	46%	17%	37%
Receiving SLO feedback from district administrators (for principals only).	57%	16%	27%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Using data from SLOs and observations to strengthen school improvement planning.*	69%	10%	21%	47%	20%	33%
Using data from SLOs and observations to make improvements in my instructional practices (for teachers only).	N/A	N/A	N/A	49%	17%	34%
Using data from SLOs and observations to make improvements in my instructional supervision (for principals only).	69%	11%	20%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: *Principals* refers to principals and assistant principals; *Teachers* refers to classroom teachers, non-classroom teaching staff, and special educators. *Agree* is a composite of strongly agree/agree and *Disagree* is a composite of strongly disagree/disagree. * indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

Table 4. Responses from principals and teachers to same questions, 2014-2016

	Year	Principals				Teachers			
		A	U	D	Diff	A	U	D	Diff
Systemic Context									
The expectations are clear for teachers and principals in the TPE system.	2014	70%	13%	17%	Y2 vs. Y3: *	50%	20%	30%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	82%	8%	9%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	63%	17%	20%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	88%	6%	6%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	68%	16%	16%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
My district's support of the implementation of the TPE system is helpful.	2014	77%	13%	10%	Y2 vs. Y3:	40%	31%	29%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	81%	13%	7%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	46%	31%	23%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	88%	7%	5%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	57%	25%	18%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
My school's support of the implementation of the TPE system is helpful.	2014	88%	9%	3%	Y2 vs. Y3:	55%	23%	21%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	88%	8%	4%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	57%	24%	19%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	91%	5%	4%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	63%	22%	16%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Quality of TPE Frameworks and Processes									
Teacher evaluation frameworks and processes...									
Provide useful feedback to teachers.	2014	84%	11%	5%	Y2 vs. Y3:	49%	24%	27%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	87%	9%	4%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	54%	20%	26%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	89%	7%	4%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	62%	15%	24%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Encourage reflection on instructional practices.	2014	89%	7%	4%	Y2 vs. Y3:	66%	17%	17%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	90%	6%	4%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	70%	14%	16%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	89%	7%	5%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	72%	12%	17%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Lead to improved decisions related to instructional approaches.	2014	79%	15%	6%	Y2 vs. Y3:	48%	26%	26%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	82%	13%	5%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	53%	23%	24%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	83%	10%	6%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	58%	19%	23%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Classroom Observations									
Classroom observations...									
Are conducted by observers/evaluators qualified to do the evaluation.	2014	90%	6%	4%	Y2 vs. Y3:	61%	19%	20%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	93%	5%	3%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	66%	16%	18%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	98%	1%	1%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	81%	9%	11%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)									
Teachers receive...									
Information about developing high quality SLOs.	2014	70%	13%	17%	Y2 vs. Y3: *	50%	16%	34%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	76%	9%	14%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	57%	14%	29%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	85%	7%	7%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	64%	13%	23%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Guidance in selecting learning content for SLOs.	2014	76%	10%	15%	Y2 vs. Y3: *	50%	16%	34%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	79%	9%	12%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	56%	15%	29%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	87%	7%	6%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	63%	13%	25%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Guidance in selecting research-based instructional strategies for SLOs.	2014	63%	16%	22%	Y2 vs. Y3: *	37%	20%	43%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	70%	13%	16%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	45%	18%	37%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	76%	12%	12%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	52%	17%	32%	Y3 vs. Y4: *

	Year	Principals				Teachers			
		A	U	D	Diff	A	U	D	Diff
Information on connecting Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards to SLOs.	2014	55%	19%	26%	Y2 vs. Y3: *	33%	23%	43%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	65%	17%	19%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	45%	20%	35%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	71%	15%	15%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	51%	19%	30%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Recommendations for selecting pre/post assessments for SLOs.	2014	71%	12%	18%	Y2 vs. Y3: *	48%	16%	36%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	75%	11%	15%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	53%	15%	31%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	79%	8%	13%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	57%	15%	28%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Valid and reliable approaches to setting growth targets for SLOs.	2014	60%	15%	25%	Y2 vs. Y3: *	40%	20%	41%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	65%	15%	20%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	47%	18%	35%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	77%	10%	13%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	54%	17%	30%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Professional development that is informed by the SLO process.	2014	66%	15%	20%	Y2 vs. Y3: *	43%	20%	37%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	71%	13%	16%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	49%	18%	33%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	73%	12%	15%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	53%	17%	30%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
This Year's Experience									
This year, I believe...									
There were opportunities to confer with my principal about my SLOs.	2014	90%	5%	5%	Y2 vs. Y3:	71%	9%	20%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	88%	7%	5%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	67%	10%	23%	Y2 vs. Y4:
	2016	90%	5%	4%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	68%	10%	22%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
There were opportunities to review and refine my SLOs.**	2014	82%	7%	11%	Y2 vs. Y3:	63%	11%	26%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	79%	9%	12%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	64%	12%	24%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	91%	5%	4%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	75%	9%	15%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
Reflection on my instructional practices deepened.	2014	72%	19%	9%	Y2 vs. Y3:	44%	21%	36%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	71%	18%	11%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	50%	19%	32%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	77%	15%	8%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	54%	18%	28%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
There was more instructionally focused dialogue with my colleagues.	2014	75%	16%	9%	Y2 vs. Y3:	42%	18%	40%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	75%	16%	9%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	48%	17%	35%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	79%	12%	9%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	54%	16%	31%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
There was more instructionally focused dialogue with my supervisor.	2014	78%	13%	9%	Y2 vs. Y3:	39%	19%	42%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	78%	13%	9%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	44%	18%	39%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	81%	11%	9%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	48%	18%	34%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
The results of my evaluation will be used to inform my professional development plan for next year.	2014	74%	20%	6%	Y2 vs. Y3:	45%	30%	25%	Y2 vs. Y3: *
	2015	75%	17%	8%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	49%	26%	26%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2016	76%	16%	8%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	51%	24%	25%	Y3 vs. Y4: *

Note: *Principals* refers to principals and assistant principals; *Teachers* refers to classroom teachers, non-classroom teaching staff, and special educators. *A* = Agree, a composite of strongly agree/agree. *U* = Undecided. *D* = Disagree, a composite of strongly disagree/disagree. *Y2* refers to 2014, *Y3* to 2015, and *Y4* to 2016. * indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level. N (principal, 2014 = 1,029; 2015 = 1,160; 2016 = 1,235); N (teacher, 2014 = 14,905; 2015 = 17,344; 2016 = 20,155). ** In 2014 and 2015, this survey item read: "There were opportunities to engage in a mid-interval review and refinement of my SLOs."

Table 5. Responses from principals and teachers to same questions, 2013-2016

	Year	Principals				Teachers			
		A	U	D	Diff	A	U	D	Diff
Systemic Context									
The expectations are clear for teachers and principals in the TPE system.	2013	55%	26%	20%	Y1 vs. Y4: *	41%	31%	28%	Y1 vs. Y4: *
	2014	70%	13%	17%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	50%	20%	30%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2015	82%	8%	9%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	63%	17%	20%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
	2016	88%	6%	6%		68%	16%	16%	
Quality of TPE Frameworks and Processes									
Teacher evaluation frameworks and processes...									
Lead to improved decisions related to instructional approaches.	2013	66%	24%	10%	Y1 vs. Y4: *	38%	38%	25%	Y1 vs. Y4: *
	2014	79%	15%	6%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	48%	26%	26%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2015	82%	13%	5%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	53%	23%	24%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
	2016	83%	10%	6%		58%	19%	23%	
Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)									
Teachers receive...									
Information about developing high quality SLOs.	2013	57%	20%	23%	Y1 vs. Y4: *	42%	26%	32%	Y1 vs. Y4: *
	2014	70%	13%	17%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	50%	16%	34%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2015	76%	9%	14%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	57%	14%	29%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
	2016	85%	7%	7%		64%	13%	23%	
Guidance in selecting learning content for SLOs.	2013	50%	26%	25%	Y1 vs. Y4: *	32%	32%	35%	Y1 vs. Y4: *
	2014	76%	10%	15%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	50%	16%	34%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2015	79%	9%	12%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	56%	15%	29%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
	2016	87%	7%	6%		63%	13%	25%	
Guidance in selecting research-based instructional strategies for SLOs.	2013	45%	28%	27%	Y1 vs. Y4: *	27%	35%	38%	Y1 vs. Y4: *
	2014	63%	16%	22%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	37%	20%	43%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2015	70%	13%	16%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	45%	18%	37%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
	2016	76%	12%	12%		52%	17%	32%	
Recommendations for selecting pre/post assessments for SLOs.	2013	44%	27%	29%	Y1 vs. Y4: *	29%	33%	37%	Y1 vs. Y4: *
	2014	71%	12%	18%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	48%	16%	36%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2015	75%	11%	15%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	53%	15%	31%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
	2016	79%	8%	13%		57%	15%	28%	
Valid and reliable approaches to setting growth targets for SLOs.	2013	42%	31%	27%	Y1 vs. Y4: *	28%	36%	37%	Y1 vs. Y4: *
	2014	60%	15%	25%	Y2 vs. Y4: *	40%	20%	41%	Y2 vs. Y4: *
	2015	65%	15%	20%	Y3 vs. Y4: *	47%	18%	35%	Y3 vs. Y4: *
	2016	77%	10%	13%		54%	17%	30%	

Note: *Principals* refers to principals and assistant principals; *Teachers* refers to classroom teachers, non-classroom teaching staff, and special educators. *A* = Agree, a composite of strongly agree/agree. *U* = Undecided. *D* = Disagree, a composite of strongly disagree/disagree. *Y1* refers to 2013, *Y2* to 2014, *Y3* to 2015, and *Y4* to 2016. * indicates statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level. N (principal, 2013 = 173; 2014 = 1,029; 2015 = 1,160; 2016 = 1,235); N (teacher, 2013 = 1,657; 2014 = 14,905; 2015 = 17,344; 2016 = 20,155).