VPK PROGRAM ASSESSMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

VPK PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

General

1. **What is Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)?** CLASS is an observational tool that focuses on the effectiveness of classroom interactions among teachers and children. CLASS categorizes the interactions in three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization and Instructional Organization.
2. **Is program assessment required for VPK Providers?** In accordance with s. 1002.68(2), F.S., each VPK classroom is required to participate in a program assessment. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is the identified tool for VPK program assessment.

Scheduling

3. **How soon in the program year can the observation take place?** Observations can begin no earlier than fifteen (15) instructional days after the start date for school year programs and no earlier than five (5) instructional days for summer programs.
4. **When will providers learn of their observation date?** The Early Learning Coalition or its designee must provide notification via email to private and public school providers of upcoming program assessments at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled observations.
5. **What if we have teacher absences on the scheduled CLASS observation day?** If a teacher has an extenuating circumstance which causes her absence from a classroom on the day it is scheduled to be observed, the observer must reschedule the program assessment within two (2) weeks of the original program assessment date. A provider should notify the observer as soon as the provider is aware of any circumstance which would cause a VPK instructor to be absent.
6. **Who needs to be present at the time of observation?** The Early Learning Coalition approved lead instructor must be present at the time of the observation. At least one VPK enrolled student must be present.

Rescheduling Observations

7. **What if the program experiences a temporary closure on the scheduled observation date?** If the provider experiences a closure as defined in Rule 6M-8.204, F.A.C., on the day it is scheduled to be observed, the provider must request to reschedule the program assessment within two (2) weeks of the original program assessment.
8. **What if the lead teacher is absent on the scheduled observation date?** The lead teacher on record must be present at the observation. Providers should contact their coalition to reschedule when a lead teacher is absent. This communication is especially important when a provider knows a substitute will instruct a VPK classroom for a lengthy period.

Observation

9. **What qualifications do the CLASS observers possess?** All observers must be certified by completing all required training. Only coalition staff, FDOE vendors, or coalition designees may conduct observations.
10. **Are there other observer considerations?** Observers must have the ability to speak, understand, and write in the language of the classrooms they are observing. Certified observers may not observe in the school or center in which they work.

    Observers must not conduct an observation of a classroom in which the observer:
    - Is an immediate family member of the teacher being observed.
    - Is an immediate family member of an individual who supervises or provides training or technical assistance to the teacher being observed.
    - Has direct financial interest in the site where the classroom observation is taking place.
    - Has children currently enrolled in other classrooms at the site.
11. **How is a CLASS observation conducted?** Observers complete four, 20-minute observation cycles with up to a 10-minute scoring and coding break in between. The total time it takes to complete an observation is about 2 hours.
12. **What interactions are the observers looking for during an observation?** Observers will look at interactions between the adults and students in the classroom.
13. **What are the criteria for the assessment/components?** Classrooms will be observed on the following 10 dimensions:
    - Positive Climate – reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions.
    - Negative Climate – reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom; the frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and peer negativity are key to this scale.
    - Teacher Sensitivity – Encompasses the teacher's awareness of and responsivity to students' academic and emotional needs; high levels of sensitivity facilitate students' ability to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement.
    - Student Perspective – captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with student and classroom activities place an emphasis on student's interest, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy.
    - Behavior Management -encompasses the teacher's ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior.
    - Productivity – considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities.
    - Instructional Learning Formats – focuses on the ways in which the teacher maximizes students interested, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities.

- Concept Development – measures the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote student' higher-order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher's focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction.
- Quality of Feedback – assesses the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation.
- Language Modeling – captures the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques.

Scoring

14. **What is a passing CLASS composite score?** In accordance with Rule 6M-8.621, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), the Contract Minimum Threshold is 4.00.
15. **What does the CLASS Program Assessment Composite Score mean for my program?** The Program Assessment Composite Score is the average score of all VPK classrooms. Beginning in 2023-2024, the Program Assessment Composite Score must be 4.00 or above to participate in the VPK Program the following program year. Eligibility for school year and summer VPK programs are considered separately. Private and public school VPK providers' programs that score below the Contract Minimum Threshold of 4.00 may not participate in the VPK Education Program beginning in the consecutive program year and thereafter until the private or public school provider meets the Contract Minimum Threshold.
16. **How and when will the CLASS composite score be communicated?** FDOE shall notify providers via the Provider Portal of their score for each VPK classroom within 14 calendar days after observations are entered into the Web-based Early Learning System (WELS).
17. **How will multi-class groups be scored?** VPK classrooms organized as a multi-class group shall have one classroom observation completed with the resulting classroom observation score duplicated for each classroom in the Composite Program Assessment Score calculation.
18. **When will the dimension scores be entered into the vendor system?** Observers shall enter and save all dimension scores and notes into WELS within three (3) business days of conducting the classroom observations.
19. **How are classroom scores calculated?** CLASS assessment observations result in a set of scores for each classroom representing the quality of interactions observed on each dimension during each observation cycle. These scores can be averaged across cycles and consolidated to create domain scores.
20. **How is the composite score calculated?** All active VPK classrooms registered in the Provider Portal for each private and public school provider must be observed to calculate the Composite Program Assessment Score. The Composite Program Assessment Score must be calculated using the combined average of the dimension scores, excluding negative climate scores, from each VPK classroom's observation and will be rounded to two (2) decimal places as established in Rule 6M-8.621.

21. **What is the difference between the classroom score and the composite score?** The classroom score is based on the classroom observation. The program score is a combined average of the classroom dimension scores, excluding negative climate score, from each classroom in the program.
22. **If my program has more than one program assessment composite score, which will be used for contracting purposes?** Should a program have more than one program assessment composite score for the same program year and type, the most recent score will be used for contracting purposes.

Second Observation

23. **My composite score is not what I was hoping. Can I request a second observation?** Providers must coordinate second assessment requests through their affiliated coalition and provide payment prior to the assessment being conducted. It is the provider's responsibility to pay for a second assessment. A second program assessment must be requested from the coalition within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Composite Program Assessment Score. The second assessment must be completed in the same program year and type.
24. **What is the cost associated with the second assessment?** Contact your Early Learning Coalition to request information regarding the cost of second assessments.
25. **Who will be observed in the second observation?** If the VPK instructor previously assessed is still actively teaching in the classroom being observed, a single classroom will be observed and its classroom score will replace the previous classroom score to calculate a new CLASS Composite Program Assessment Score. If the previously observed instructor is not active in the classroom and the newly assigned instructor is hired after the previous program assessment was completed, the single classroom will be observed, and its classroom score will replace the previous classroom score to calculate a new CLASS Composite Program Assessment Score.

Failure to Meet Contract Minimum Threshold

26. **What happens if my program does not meet the contract minimum threshold?** Beginning in 2023-2024, programs not meeting the contract minimum threshold may not participate in the VPK Education Program beginning in the consecutive program year and thereafter until the private or public-school provider meets the contract minimum threshold. Providers will be able to complete the current VPK program year.

Programs with VPK and School Readiness

27. **What are the criteria for observing mixed SR and VPK classrooms?** Observations conducted in VPK classrooms during participation in School Readiness Program Assessment in accordance with Rule 6M-4.740, F.A.C., that meet requirements as defined in s. 1002.68, F.S., may be used in calculating the composite score, provided the program assessment meets all criteria specified in Rule 6M-8.621.

Change in Ownership

28. **How does change of ownership affect the program score?** In the event of a change of ownership, sale, sale of assets, conveyance of ownership or other transfer of ownership interest that requires a private or public provider to execute a new VPK Provider Contract per Rule 6M-8.301(9), F.A.C., the provider may request to retain the existing Composite Program Assessment Score if at least 50% of VPK classrooms and their assigned instructors who were previously assessed remain the same. If the provider elects not to retain the existing score, the provider is required to obtain a program assessment. If 30% or fewer of the VPK program hours remain at the time of ownership change, a program assessment is not required until the consecutive program year, as stated in Rule 6M-8.621.

Learn More about CLASS

29. **Where can I go to learn more about CLASS?** You can learn more about the CLASS observational tool by visiting www.teachstone.com. Providers can contact their ELCs for FREE access to courses.

Questions? Email vpkclass@del.fldoe.org or call 1-866-447-1159.