



DC Pre-K Quality Evaluation 2016-2017

Data Collection and Quality Assurance Protocols

The District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) has contracted with School Readiness Consulting (SRC) to conduct the DC Pre-k Quality Evaluation. In the 2016-2017 program year, SRC will observe every Pre-k classroom in each of the three sectors that comprise the District's mixed delivery system (District of Columbia Public Schools, Public Charter Schools, and Pre-k Enhancement classrooms), as well as subsidy-funded classrooms in Community Based Organizations, using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) Pre-k instrument. SRC uses comprehensive systems and procedures, described in detail below, to ensure the implementation of a high-quality evaluation. The data collection process involves training and reliability assessments of data collectors, a scheduling system, a detailed project-specific protocol for conducting classroom observations, procedures to ensure data confidentiality and integrity, and guidelines for mandated reporting. These procedures ensure that the evaluation is characterized by the highest level of data integrity, and transparency of the process for all involved.

The DC Pre-k Quality Evaluation 2016-2017 data collection and quality assurance protocols are described in more detail below:

Training and Reliability of Data Collectors:

- Teachstone, the publisher of the CLASS® instrument, certifies all data collectors that collect data for SRC for the OSSE evaluation. All data collectors must maintain active Teachstone certification throughout the data collection time period.
- In addition to certification, data collectors are trained in reporting child abuse and neglect, their role as mandated reporters, and maintaining confidentiality and professionalism when conducting classroom observations (see additional information about mandated reporting below).
- Before conducting observations, data collectors must clear federal background checks and produce proof of a negative TB screening.
- Data collectors participate in monthly calibration activities to ensure that they maintain reliability with the CLASS® measure. To complete calibration exercises, data collectors code a Teachstone calibration video and must meet the 80% threshold for ongoing reliability. This requires that data collectors score within one point of the master codes for the calibration video on at least eight of the ten dimensions in the instrument. Should a data collector not meet the 80% threshold, the data collector receives direction from SRC staff and participates in additional training and double codes with an anchor scorer until codes are consistent within the 80%, one-point limit for reliability.
- Each data collector is screened for fidelity to the CLASS® instrument and the data collection protocol during an actual observation visit. Data collectors must pass the fidelity check in order to continue collecting data for SRC. Those who do not pass their fidelity check participate in ongoing training and coaching from managers, and co-scoring activities before resuming data collection.
- In addition, a random sample of 15% of classrooms are double-coded throughout the program year to ensure ongoing inter-rater reliability with an SRC anchor scorer for the CLASS®





instrument. In double coded observations, an anchor scorer who is highly experienced with the CLASS® (performing reliability and calibration exercises at 90% or above) conducts an observation alongside another data collector. The scores of the anchor scorer are used for reporting purposes, and the scores of the paired data collector are reviewed for consistency with the anchor scorer. If scores are not consistent within one point of the anchor scorer in at least 80% of the dimensions, the data collector will receive additional training and double code another observation to reliability before collecting additional data.

- SRC data analysts also review each data collector's average scores throughout the data collection window. Data collectors with average scores far outside the evaluation average will participate in double coding with an anchor coder to ensure reliability and, if necessary, receive additional training.

Scheduling Observations:

- SRC receives a list of participating schools and programs from OSSE identifying an administrator who will serve as the primary contact person for the evaluation.
- SRC requests that the administrator provide the school calendar and 'do not visit dates', along with lists of all Pre-k teachers who will be observed as a part of the evaluation.
- All observations for each sector are conducted within a three-month window.
- Schools' observation dates are divided into two-week observation windows and are randomly selected using an automated randomization generator. Schools are notified by email of their observation window to share any additional scheduling conflicts.
- Schools receive an email with the exact date of the observation for each classroom at least one week before the scheduled day. School administrators should inform the teachers of the dates of the visit.
- Data collectors contact the teacher via phone the day before the visit to provide confirmation of the observation. If the teacher is unable to be reached, the data collectors leave a message confirming their visit for the next day.
- Observations are cancelled during weather-related delays and closures, and are rescheduled as close to the original date as possible.

Conducting Observations:

What is being observed-

- Observations focus primarily on the lead teacher identified by the school. However, CLASS® codes are determined based on the behavior of all of the adults in the room and should reflect the experiences of the typical or average children in the classroom during a given observation cycle.
- In all cases, attempts will be made to observe the lead teacher. If the lead teacher is on extended medical leave during the scheduled observation, and:
 - Has plans to return to the classroom by April 1: Observations will be rescheduled and the lead teacher will be observed. Attempts will be made to observe the lead teacher after he/she has settled back into the classroom for at least two weeks.
 - Will not return by April 1: Long-term substitutes who have been providing instruction in the classroom for at least two weeks will be observed. The school administrator should share the context for the observation during the long-term substitute's orientation to the classroom assignment so he/she is aware and is part of the process.
 - A long-term substitute has not been identified or has not been in the classroom for at least 2 weeks: Observations will not take place.





- Only classrooms in which a majority of the children are 3 or 4 years old are observed. If the data collector arrives in a classroom and it is confirmed that the majority of the children are not in this age range, the observation is cancelled.
- Nearly all of the activities that take place during a typical day are observed for coding. This includes specials such as music and art, meals and snacks, language arts and/or academics, free choice, centers and transition times. When necessary, data collectors may follow the students and teacher outside to code an activity (e.g., for a walk or science discovery lesson).
- Observations will not be conducted during traditional recess where the students are free to play and the teachers merely supervise. This includes indoor and outdoor recess. However, organized activities in which the teachers are engaging with the students should be observed. This includes activities such as nature walks and organized playground games.
- Data collectors will not observe during meals in a cafeteria when students are allowed to sit with peers from different classrooms and are not supervised by one of their lead teachers.
- Data collectors will not observe during foreign language instruction unless they have been deemed proficient in that language by SRC.
- Data collectors are directed to remain with their assigned classroom for the duration of the observation. They are advised, when possible, to step out of the classroom after each cycle to assign their codes.

Length of the observation process-

- A CLASS® observation is comprised of several coding cycles, in which data collectors observe the classroom for fifteen to twenty minutes and use the next five to ten minutes to complete a score sheet for that observation period. Teachstone guidelines for use of the CLASS® instrument require four to six cycles for a complete observation. SRC's protocol for data collection indicates that all classrooms in the Pre-k evaluation should be observed for six cycles if scheduling allows, and no fewer than four cycles. This process requires an average of three hours for a complete observation.
- Data collectors aim to arrive at the start of the school day, but begin the observation when a majority of the children arrive in the classroom. While data collectors will endeavor to begin at the start of the day when a majority of the children have arrived, delays due to any circumstances will not constitute a violation of data collector procedures. Regardless of start time, the CLASS® has been shown to be stable across times/dates if at least four cycles are observed during the observation.
- Observations are cancelled and rescheduled if an observation is discontinued due to unexpected circumstances that prevent the data collector from obtaining four cycles.

Data confidentiality and integrity:

- All scores are entered on hard-copy score sheets, then tabulated in a secure online spreadsheet. All data that is entered in the system can only be accessed by SRC management. The data system has constant backup protocols to ensure data is not lost or edited.
- SRC's data coordinator reviews and cleans the data weekly to ensure alignment between hard- and soft-copies of scores.
- All identifying information (such as teacher name) is removed from the study data files in order to maintain confidentiality. A document that contains teacher names and corresponding ID numbers is maintained in a separate, protected file.
- Each data collector signs a confidentiality agreement and a "conflict of interest" document listing any schools or community-based organizations where they have a previous relationship, to ensure that they will not be scheduled to observe at any of these locations.





Mandated Reporting:

- All data collectors receive training to identify incidents and signs of child abuse and neglect.
- If at any time a data collector witnesses or suspects mistreatment of a child, the data collector is required to end the observation cycle and call the SRC project manager.
- If the child is in imminent danger, the data collector will contact the school administrator immediately.
- If the incident meets DC's child abuse and neglect criteria, the data collector will contact the DC Child and Family Services Agency.
- If an incident is reported, SRC will notify the principal or program director within 24 hours of the incident being reported.

Please direct your questions to School Readiness Consulting's Evaluation Team at evaluation@schoolreadinessconsulting.com.

