Attachment A, Memo No: 233-18

August 24, 2018

**Virginia Preschool Initiative**

**CLASS** TM **Observations and Professional Development**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **What is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System and why was it selected for this initiative?**

The CLASSTM is a nationally-regarded, standardized observation tool that focuses on interactions between teachers and children. Teacher-child interactions are a critical component of classroom quality. Studies using CLASSTM suggest that children in classrooms with higher CLASSTM scores show higher levels of learning and development.

The CLASSTM is used to measure and strengthen thousands of early childhood classrooms nationwide. In Virginia, the CLASSTM is already used by all Head Start and VPI+ classrooms. In addition, the CLASSTM is used in Virginia Quality for higher quality child care, Head Start and preK programs. In fact, Virginia is focused on strengthening classroom interactions and instruction across early childhood settings as part of broader effort to unify its early childhood system.

At the classroom level, the CLASSTM, offers in-depth, age-appropriate and individualized feedback to pre-K teachers and leaders on the indicators that matter most, including classroom climate, organization and instruction. Leaders can then use this individualized information and aligned resources to support teachers to strengthen their practice.

1. **What is the timeline? When will our classrooms be observed? What will happen before we are observed?**

All VPI classrooms will be observed before the summer of 2020. Observations will begin in spring 2019 and continue through June 2020. Forward-thinking divisions are encouraged to apply to partner with the VDOE to begin implementation this year. Participating divisions will not only have their classrooms observed and will receive feedback and supports earlier but they will also help inform policy and practice going forward.

The remaining VPI classrooms will be observed in fall 2019 through spring 2020. Before any classroom is observed, there will be information provided to all teachers and programs about the CLASS TM tool and observation protocol so they know what to expect.

1. **Who will observe us? How will the data be stored/shared?**

CLASS TM observations involve a trained, reliable coder observing for approximately two hours. However, the specifics of the observation protocols are still being developed. This plan is due November 1, 2018. We welcome school divisions’ applications to partner with us to give input on these elements.

1. **How will the observation data be used?**

The intended purpose of the data in the first two years is to provide feedback and guide professional development. Data will be viewed as baseline data in this initiative. There will not be any consequences to programs or teachers.

1. **Where can I learn more about the CLASS**TM **tool?**

There are many free resources available online. Some links are provided below:

| **Linked website/document** | **What the resource tells you about** CLASS TM **and how to use it** |
| --- | --- |
| Document: [Summary of the CLASS Pre-K tool](http://www.vpiplus.org/media/docs/pd/CLASS_1-pager.pdf) | This one-page document from the 2016 VPI+ CASTL Annual Report, provides a one sentence description of each CLASS TM -PreK dimension that falls within the three CLASS TM domains |
| Webpage: [CLASS Brief: Understanding and Using CLASS for Program improvement](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/class-brief-understanding-using-classr-program-improvement) | This document from the Head Start website explains what CLASS TM results mean, what are the ways CLASS TM results can be used, and how CLASS TM should be reported and shared. |
| Webpage: [Crosswalk of the 15-Minute In-Service Suites with the CLASS](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/crosswalk-15-minute-service-suites-classr) | This webpage from the Head Start website has links to the free in-service suites (PPTs, videos, materials) crosswalked to each CLASS TM PreK dimension. These Professional Development resources can be used for those who want to learn more about/ improve teaching practices associated with CLASS TM. |