Introduction

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) continues to focus on improving educational outcomes and developing an accountability system that reflects the quality of instruction for students in kindergarten through second grade.

In the current accountability proposal to BESE, either CLASS® or NIET would be used as a score in a Classroom Quality Indicator and would count for a portion of the K-2 School Performance Score. In 2022-2023, school systems servicing students in grades K-2 have the opportunity to join the optional K-2 Learning Year: Phase I. To participate, school systems should plan to implement the CLASS® or NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric to observe teachers. Participants are expected to use either tool to observe the participating teachers once in the fall and once in the spring. Observation data gathered from K-2 Learning Year: Phase I will provide valuable information to the Department as it continues to develop the K-2 accountability system proposal, and it will support evidence-based practices to improve instructional practices.

Questions can be emailed to compass@la.gov.

Implementing the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Observation Rubric

The NIET Teaching and Learning Standards observation rubric is designed to support improvements in classroom instruction. It serves as a method for delivering high-quality professional development on instructional indicators and also provides a measure for teacher evaluations in K-2 classrooms. This guide provides best practices supporting the implementation of NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric for teacher observations.

Section 1: Observational Protocol (Local and Third Party)

The LDOE recommends that school systems implementing the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards observation rubric in Kindergarten through Grade 2 develop an observation protocol using the guidance outlined below. The following table outlines recommended practices for local observations and what to expect from third party observers from the ULL Picard Center.

Protocol	Local Observations	Third Party Observations
Observer Requirements	Following training, all observers MUST be certified by NIET as a reliable observer (i.e., passed the reliability certification test).	Following training, observers MUST be certified by NIET as a reliable observer (and recertified annually). Observers participate in on-going calibration exercises (i.e. shadow scoring) at least once per observation period that result in 80-100% reliability.
Scheduling Observations	A timeline is developed to ensure observations are scheduled for all participating sites and classrooms for the fall and again for the spring. Visits should be scheduled during optimal learning times.	Each observation will take place at an assigned date and time. Observation results are entered in the K-2 portal within 2 days after the visit occurs.

	NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric scores should be entered into EE Pass within ten days of conducting the observation and then pulled into the K-2 portal by the end of each month.	
Site Notification	Notification for observations completed locally will follow local policy.	The Picard Center contacts each site by phone and then email prior to the month they will be observed to verify site information: ● Number of classes, ● Optimal learning time (schedule), ● Email address, and ● Mailing/physical address. Site leaders and system contacts are notified electronically of upcoming third-party visits of the month in which the observation(s) will occur. Site leaders submit any scheduling conflicts no later than one week before the scheduled timeframe of the observation. Observers will not directly contact sites/schools to schedule or reschedule an observation.
Visit Protocol	Observations should begin at the start of the lesson and continue until the lesson ends.	Observations should begin at the start of the lesson and continue until the lesson ends.
Observations	A classroom must have the regularly assigned lead teacher present during the observation. Lead substitute teachers may be eligible for a NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric observation if they have been in the classroom for at least 10 consecutive days.	A classroom must have the regularly assigned lead teacher present during the observation. Lead substitute teachers are eligible for a NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric observation if they have been in the classroom for at least 10 consecutive days.
Reporting Scores and Observation Feedback	Systems establish and implement the protocol for providing feedback to teachers after an observation. It is recommended that feedback be given within 48-72 hours. NIET scores should be entered into EE Pass within ten days of conducting the observation and then pulled into the K-2 portal by the end of each month.	Reinforcement and refinement areas for each observation will be entered into the K-2 Portal within two days of the completed observation. Summary statements will address the corresponding descriptors.

Shadow Scoring	Shadow scoring by local observers is a recommended practice to ensure fidelity and reliability to the tool. (See Important Note below regarding reopening phases and shadow scoring.)	ULL will shadow score each observer and at least 10% of observations monthly to ensure fidelity and reliability to the tool.
Timelines for Conducting Visits	Fall visits should be conducted from September 12 through December 15 of each fall semester. All observation results should be entered into EE Pass by December 15. Spring visits should be conducted from January through May 15. All results should be entered into EE Pass by May 15.	For the 2022-2023 school year, third-party observations will be conducted in the Fall and Spring. Fall visits will be conducted from September 12-December 15. All results will be entered in the K-2 portal by the end of December. Spring visits will be conducted from January through May 15. All results will be entered in the K-2 portal by the end of May.

Rescheduling Observations due to COVID-19 Related Issues: If an observation needs to be canceled due to unforeseen circumstances such as school closures or COVID-19 related incidences, site leaders should re-evaluate in two weeks to determine if the observation(s) can be safely conducted. This applies to both local and third-party observations.

COVID-19 Considerations: NIET recommends the continued use of the observation rubric, regardless of the current learning environment, to support educators in their professional development during the pandemic. Resources to support this process include NIET's Collecting Evidence in a VIrtual Environment and the NIET Virtual Learning Handbook.

Additional Considerations for Live Virtual Observations

School systems that choose this method should use the following guidelines:
- Review NIET's Collecting Evidence in a VIrtual Environment.
- Review the NIET Virtual Learning Handbook.
- Ensure that protocols align with Louisiana children's privacy laws and best practices (e.g., parental consent, opt-out policies).
- Identify technology needs and confirm that participants have the capacity required to complete virtual observations.
- Place the device in an area of the classroom where the interactions/actions of both the teacher(s) and students can be observed.
- Determine a way to signal that the observation cycle has started and when it has ended and if the device needs to be moved to capture the best video and audio.
- Observers should mute the microphone and remain visible in the camera for live video (e.g., Zoom, Google Meets) observations.
- Video security measures should be taken to ensure that only necessary individuals have access.

SECTION 2 – Shadow Scoring

The LDOE recommends that participants in the K-2 Learning Year: Phase I, conduct shadow scoring (paired observations) sessions to support rater reliability. Shadow scoring is when two certified, reliable observers conduct an observation at the same time in order to sharpen their observation and coding skills. It is a mechanism for maintaining inter-rater reliability and fidelity to the system. Inter-rater reliability occurs when two reliable observers produce consistent observation results for the same classroom at the same time. (This means that their results are at least **80%** reliable overall.)

NOTE: Shadow scoring should be used for the entire observation.

Shadow Scoring Procedure

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
One person is assigned as the observer, and one person is assigned as the shadow scorer.	Both observers arrive at the site at the same time. Each script the lesson to capture both student and teacher evidence and score the observation separately.	Both observers take time to **independently score and determine reinforcement and refinement areas without discussing.**	Once scoring is completed, review scores and discuss any indicator scores that are off by 2 points or more. Determine who has the supporting evidence most closely aligned with the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric and come to a consensus on the score for the indicator.	Count to determine the number of scores off by 2 points or more across all indicators. Subtract this number from the possible scores. Then divide the result by the number of total scores to determine the percentage of reliability overall. See example below.

Instruction	Designing and Planning	Learning Environment
12 indicators	**3 indicators**	**4 indicators**

Number of Indicator scores that were off by 2 or more = 3
Subtract from the total possible indicator scores (19): 19-3 = 16
Divide the result by the number of total scores to get an overall percentage: 16 divided by 19 = 84%
The overall inter-rater reliability for this observation is 84% which meets the 80% or higher threshold.

Section 3: Converting NIET SKR Scores to a Compass Rating

In accordance with Bulletin 130, personnel evaluation policy is composed of two parts: professional practice and growth in student learning. NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric scores are an approved qualitative assessment of teacher or administrator performance (professional practice).

NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric scores entered into the Department's K-2 portal flow to Compass for use in personnel evaluation. The highest observation of the semester is sent to Compass automatically. If a school system would like to use Compass in place of either the Fall or Spring NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric observation, they should enter the Compass score in the system and it will supersede the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric observation score. Since NIET Teaching and Learning Standards is an accepted alternative rubric for teacher evaluation, school systems should determine the way teachers are evaluated during the K-2 Learning Year: Phase I for each semester.

To align the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards rubric with the state's adopted Standards of Effectiveness, it was necessary to develop a conversion chart.

Rating	SKR Range	SKRs (NIET Rubric)
Highly Effective	SKR > 3.5	4.0, 4.5, 5
Effective Proficient	2.5 < SKR ≤ 3.5	3.0, 3.5
Effective Emerging	1.5 < SKR ≤ 2.5	2.0, 2.5
Ineffective	SKR ≤ 1.5	1.0, 1.5

To determine a Compass equivalent score, the following table was created based on possible SKR scores (Professional Practice Scores). This corresponding score is needed when calculating the teachers' overall evaluation composite score.

Professional Practice Score + Student Growth Score = Final Composite Score

Professional Practice Conversion Chart Prior to calculating the Final Composite Score, the NIET SKR score should be converted to its Compass equivalent		
SKR Score	**Compass Equivalent**	**Effectiveness Level**
5.0	4.0	Highly Effective $3.5 \leq x$
4.5	3.8	
4.0	3.6	
3.5	3.4	Effective: Proficient $2.5 \leq x < 3.5$
3.0	2.8	
2.5	2.4	Effective: Emerging $1.5 \leq x < 2.5$
2.0	1.8	
1.5	1.4	Ineffective $x < 1.5$
1.0	1.0	