

## **JPPSS Compass Observation Guidance 2015-2016**

***Note:** Evaluator adherence to policies and deadlines listed below will be taken into account for Leader ratings in his/her observation(s) for Component 3a: Observes teachers and provides feedback on instruction regularly.*

### **Observations: Formal and Informal**

Every Compass employee must have at least one (1) **formal** observation and one (1) **informal** observation documented in the Compass Information System (CIS), including employees who were hired late or on leave during a portion of the year.

- If an employee is hired after March 24, 2016, they are not required to have two observations in CIS.
- Once 14-15 TSGD Composite Scores are released this winter, teachers who have Highly Effective Composite Scores will be able to opt out of their Spring Informal Observation.

### **Formal Observations**

- A **Formal Observation** is a scheduled observation and consists of a pre-observation conference, an observation of a full lesson (opening through conclusion), and a post-observation conference.
- The pre-conference must take place no more than five (5) school days before the observation is conducted. The date of this conference must be noted in CIS.
- During the pre-conference, you should review the teacher's lesson plan for the date you will be observing him/her, and you should ask questions that will help you clarify what you should expect to see during the observation. You may ask the teacher to provide additional artifacts for review (unit plans, assessments, etc.) as well.
- The post-conference must take place no more than five (5) school days after the observation is conducted. The date of this conference must be noted in CIS.
- Observation notes must be entered and submitted in CIS no more than ten (10) school days after the observation is conducted. You may also print the observation report from CIS and have the teacher sign it as additional documentation that feedback was provided.
- The feedback delivered, both orally and in writing, must reflect rationale for the employee's score in each of the observation components, as well as overall strengths and areas for improvement. All employees must also receive next steps to further advance their practice.
- Evaluators should provide evidence and a rating for all five components.

### **Informal Observations**

- An **Informal Observation** is an unscheduled observation of a full lesson (opening through conclusion). Given this, a pre-observation conference is not required.
- Evaluators may elect to give teachers a window of time that they can expect their informal observation to take place. (Example: Evaluators may choose to share that all K and 1st grade teachers will be observed in January).
- After conducting the informal observation, evaluators may choose to gather additional artifacts from the teacher (lesson plans, etc.) to ensure observation ratings include the full scope of a teacher's instruction.
- Evaluators may choose to have a post-observation conference after the informal observation, but it is not required.
- Observation notes must be entered and submitted in CIS no more than ten (10) school days after the observation is conducted. You should also print the observation report from CIS and have the teacher sign it as additional documentation that feedback was provided.
- Evaluators should provide evidence and a rating for all five components.

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## Observation Windows and Deadlines

*These observation windows apply to all Compass employees, including Leaders.*

- Formal observations can begin on **9/1/15** and must be completed by **12/11/15**.
- All formal observation data must be entered into CIS by **1/8/16**.
- Informal observations can begin on **1/8/16** and must be completed by **5/6/16**.
- All informal observation data must be entered into CIS by **5/20/16**.

## Observation Rubrics

*Use the rubrics below for each employee type. All rubrics can be found on the [Instructional Performance Resource](#) page under Observation Rubrics and Resources.*

- **Teachers: Compass Teacher Rubric**
  - Teachers must be observed and rated on all components for both the formal and informal evaluations.
- **Counselors: Compass Counselor Rubric**
  - Counselors must be observed and rated on all components for both the formal and informal evaluations.
- **Librarians: LASL Librarian Rubric**
  - To utilize this rubric, librarians must be marked as “Other” in CIS. Because of this, you will not be able to record individual observation scores in CIS and will need to keep hard copy records of both librarian observations. An optional template for you to use for this is also provided on the website. You must submit copies of your librarian observations to your Compass contact by the end of each observation window.
  - Should a librarian prefer to be rated on the Compass Teacher rubric, their evaluator must send written consent from the librarian to the Compass contact. These librarians will be marked as “Teachers” in CIS.
- **Leaders: Compass Leader Rubric**
  - Leaders must be observed and rated on all components for both the formal and informal evaluations.
  - If you have a leader at your school whose responsibilities do not fully align to all of the Domains of the Leader rubric, reach out to your Compass contact for approval to rate them on only two of the Domains.
  - If approved, you will be able to rate this Leader on Domain I and *either* Domain II: School Culture (all components) *or* Domain III: Instruction (all components).

## Observation Notes in CIS

Follow the steps below to enter observations into CIS. You should have the appropriate rubric handy while entering your observation notes to ensure you are assigning ratings accurately.

- Select the employee name. Then, click on the “Observation” tab in the top row of tabs.
- In the second row of tabs, click “Conduct.” Then, click the “Add” button to begin.
- So that you can save your observation periodically, complete all boxes with a red star (\*) first, including the “Scoring” box at the bottom of the page, where you must click “Average Components Ratings.”
- All components must be rated and have comments in the “Feedback” section. Evaluators must also complete the “Areas of Strength,” “Areas for Improvement,” and “Next Steps” sections.
- If you choose, you may upload your scripting notes or other documents/evidence by attaching them at the bottom of the page.
- Once you have completed the observation, click “Submit,” which makes the observation viewable to the employee. This step must be taken within ten (10) days of completing the observation.
- Special Cases:
  - **Leaders** who are approved to be rated on only two Domains must have “No Rating” marked for all components of the Domain that is not being scored.
  - For **Librarians** who are rated on the LASL rubric, observation notes must be attached in CIS. In the “Scoring” box, the evaluator will click “Assign Overall Observation Rating” and must enter the average of all component scores in the accompanying box.

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### Observation Scheduling Best Practices

Factors to consider	Details & Recommendations
<b>Calendaring &amp; Benchmarking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add all observations to your calendar at the start of the cycle.</li> <li>• Establish interim dates by which you have a certain number of observations completed throughout the observation cycle. (i.e. Complete 1/3 of observations in January)</li> </ul>
<b>Observable Days</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The formal observation cycle is 3 ½ months and schools are in session for 68 days.</li> <li>• The informal observation cycle is 3 ½ months and schools are in session for 74 days.</li> <li>• Keep in mind when holidays and standardized tests are administered as you will be unable to observe on those days.</li> </ul>
<b>Observation Timing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the time of day and the lesson you choose to observe, as this will impact both the teacher and you.</li> <li>• Consider observing different subjects or student groups in each observation cycle.</li> </ul>
<b>Building in Flex Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish flex time throughout the cycle, but especially add a buffer toward the end of the window. Unexpected things will happen (i.e. absences) and anticipating delays will ensure that you are still able to complete all observations by the deadline.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations are a tool to improve teacher performance at your school, and the <i>order</i> in which you conduct observations makes a difference.</li> <li>• Be strategic about who you observe (i.e. new teachers first) and when you observe them. Seeing new employees first allows your feedback to impact their instruction immediately.</li> <li>• Alternatively, you may choose to observe teachers who are successfully implementing instruction first so that you can share some best practices from their classrooms as you observe others.</li> </ul>
<b>Entering Evidence &amp; Ratings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting aside time to compile, evaluate and enter your notes for each observation is critical. This process can be much more time-consuming than the actual observation, and it often becomes more time-consuming the longer you wait after the observation.</li> <li>• Consider closing your door for short periods of uninterrupted work time immediately after you conduct an observation. Even if you can't complete your notes entirely, it may help to have 15-30 minutes of time to consolidate and draft your thinking while it is still fresh before moving on to other responsibilities.</li> <li>• If you find that you can't complete your notes during the school day, hold yourself accountable to a deadline to do so. While you have up to ten school days, you may want to hold yourself accountable to a 48-hour turnaround, or to a rule that you don't observe the next teacher before wrapping up the notes for the previous one.</li> </ul>

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## Evidence and Feedback Best Practices

Factor to consider	Details & Recommendations
<b>Collect the “Right” Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring a copy of the Compass rubric and/or a note-taking template that works best for you during your observation.</li> <li>• Remember that scripting may prevent you from actually observing everything that’s happening. Before writing details down, ask yourself if they are relevant to the components of the Compass rubric.</li> <li>• Consider what you are <i>not</i> seeing as you observe (i.e. differentiation, student-led discussion, etc.). Make a written note to yourself about these missed opportunities so that you don’t wonder later if you just forgot to write them down.</li> <li>• Focus on what the students are doing/saying as much as what the teacher is doing/saying (you may even have a “teacher action” column and “student action” column to write down concrete evidence/ examples).</li> <li>• Walk around the classroom and/or ask students questions to gauge their understanding.</li> <li>• Have a process in place to gather any additional documents from the teacher that you need (lesson plans, assessments, etc.) to ensure you have all of the information you need to accurately rate his/her performance.</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting your Ratings and Feedback with Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rating that you assign for each component should be based off of the preponderance of evidence.</li> <li>• The feedback you share should include concrete details you observed that support how you rated each component.</li> <li>• It may also be important for you to annotate the concrete evidence you observed with commentary about why this is/is not successful.</li> <li>• See sample (<i><b>not exemplar!</b></i>) evidence below.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivering Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While not required for informal observations, post-conferences remain the best method of ensuring that the feedback you provide is understood and will be used to drive instruction moving forward.</li> <li>• For informal observations, you may opt to have conferences with some teachers, but not all, though all teachers have the right to discuss their ratings with you if they so choose. If you forgo conferences altogether, providing good feedback and evidence within your written notes in CIS becomes all the more important.</li> </ul>

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**Example of Observation Feedback from CIS**

**Observation Ratings**

**Domain:** 1 - Planning and Preparation  
**Component:** 1 - 1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes  
**Component Rating:** 2 - Effective: Emerging

**Observation Comments**

**Evidence:** Students are working on dividing shapes into parts and then determining how many parts of the total shapes are shaded. I do not see an objective posted in the room (for the day or for the week) for math, though objectives are posted for ELA.

**Feedback:** The objectives the students are working toward encompasses some of the important learning from Common Core Standard 1.G.3 ( Partition circles and rectangles into two and four equal shares, describe the shares using the words halves, fourths, an quarters, and use the phrases half of, fourth of, and quarter of. Describe the whole as two of, or four of the shares. Understand for these examples that decomposing into more equal shares creates smaller shares). Students are able to partition shapes into equal shares (and for the most part, are able to divide them fairly equally), and there is an implication that they understand that more shares = smaller shares, though I could not say for sure if the students understand this or not 0 there is an opportunity to build in outcomes specifically related to the understanding of the concept. In addition, I do not see or hear the vocabulary of halves, fourths, or quarters, and there seems to be a missed opportunity to make that connection.

**Observation Ratings**

**Domain:** 2 - The Classroom Environment  
**Component:** 1 - 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures  
**Component Rating:** 4 - Highly Effective

**Observation Comments**

**Evidence:** It's clear that the students are well-trained in a wide set of classroom procedures and that they understand their role in maintaining a smoothly running classroom. For example, at one point, a student quietly makes a hand signal - Ms. McCandies acknowledges him with a nod that signals to him that he can get the bathroom pass and go to the restroom. All of this was done in complete silence and with no disturbance to the rest of the class and with no loss of instructional time. In addition to this example, I also observe procedures that allow students to get quiet quickly (counting back from 10), to review content with one another (partner talking procedures clearly established), getting their attention back (back and tracking), and more.

**Feedback:** You have clearly thought of and trained your students for procedures for almost anything they would need to do - even affirming one another when you do something silly (can we say "It's cool"? ) - this is important and allows your classroom to function smoothly. You also hold high expectations continuously for ensuring procedures are followed correctly (that was sloppy, let's do it again), which ensures the bar doesn't slip throughout the class period (or the year) and cancel out all the hard work you have done to put those procedures into place.

**Observation Ratings**

**Domain:** 3 - Instruction  
**Component:** 1 - 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques  
**Component Rating:** 3 - Effective: Proficient

**Observation Comments**

**Evidence:** Teacher asks students to "step up" by not only dividing the shapes into equal parts by converting them into fractions, which reveals that the intent is to push them out of their comfort zone in terms of what they are comfortable completing. However, all of the questions I observed during the class so have a single correct answer. (how many parts are shaded? out of how many equal parts?), so students are not invited to generate multiple correct answers. The teacher does use wait time effectively and also allows students to speak to one another (during the "teach" parts of the lesson) without her mediation. All students participate in this portion of the lesson.

**Feedback:** Consider building in ways to add higher-order thinking and/or open-ended questions into your lesson - building in connections to real world examples/word problems might make this a more seamless connection. In addition, consider increasing the opportunities for students to discuss/ask questions of one another.



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### Areas of Strength

Your classroom culture is strong - students feel ownership in making the classroom a smoothly functioning environment, evidenced by their clear understanding of and participation in procedures. They hold high expectations for themselves in this area, not seeming to mind when they need to repeat a procedure for not doing it perfectly. All of this is supported by a classroom that is clearly very friendly, loving, kind, and supportive.

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### Areas of Improvement

Channel the ownership you have built in for students into other parts of the lesson - how can they not only take ownership of the functioning of the classroom, but also of the learning?

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### Observation Ratings

**Domain:** 3 - Instruction  
**Component:** 2 - 3c: Engaging Students in Learning  
**Component Rating:** 3 - Effective: Proficient

### Observation Comments

Evidence: Throughout the lesson, nearly all students are engaged in the content. I see some students flexing a degree of student choice when they divide/shade the shapes slightly differently than the teacher (diagonally vs. horizontally, etc.), and teacher reinforces this behavior by saying, "Ooh, that's a creative way to do it." Students also have choices in other ways not related to the content of this lesson (go back to your desk in the way your favorite ocean animal walks). The worksheets students are working on supports the learning goals, and the pacing is appropriate. Students come to the carpet to work in whole group, they talk in pairs, and they also go back to their desks to work independently.

Feedback: Students feel primed to take on more autonomy in the lesson - consider increasing the amount of choices they have related to the lesson content so that they are driving their own learning, and ultimately, feeling more invested in meeting the lesson's goals through whatever means are most useful to them.

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### Observation Ratings

**Domain:** 3 - Instruction  
**Component:** 3 - 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction  
**Component Rating:** 3 - Effective: Proficient

### Observation Comments

Evidence: Teacher elicits understanding from students in several ways throughout the class: by calling on individual students, by having students talk to one another and listening in, by getting a thumbs up symbol from the whole class, by circulating while students are working independently. Teacher provides specific, timely feedback to students when working through the problems.

Feedback: Add in opportunities for students to give one another feedback and/or assess each others' knowledge.