Background

Research shows the years before third grade are vital for later school success, and the key skills students develop one year must be built upon and reinforced the next. Louisiana believes that all young children should be ready to master skills and content knowledge aligned to Louisiana's standards in order to be academically successful in third grade and beyond. Given the importance of the early elementary years, the Department will pilot a set of tools that support best practices in those critical years.

Pilot Objectives

Based on feedback from a working group of K-2 teachers, school leaders, and system administrators, the Department **will pilot four K-2 tools** beginning in the 2018-2019 school year in order to implement statewide no earlier than 2019-2020.

The goals of the pilots are:

- Define a cohesive set of expectations for teachers and school systems
- Utilize a limited, coherent, and efficient set of tools to monitor progress across districts and schools
- Provide maximum consistency across grade levels to support ease of use by educators
- Reflect the academic goals of K-2 in the way that schools are measured and held accountable
- Collect data and feedback that informs K-2 policy to be in effect statewide no earlier than 2019-2020

Driving Excellence in K-2 Classrooms

The Department worked with K-2 educators in Louisiana and national experts to define excellence in K-2 classrooms. The experiences necessary to ensure students are ready to master the skills and content knowledge aligned to grade-level expectations fell into two categories: classroom experience and mastery of fundamental skills.

The **four K-2 tools** that will be piloted in 2018-2019 build on Louisiana's experience with CLASS^{TM} and reinforce the priorities outlined in the state's ESSA plan for school redesign.

Category	Tool	What it Measures
Classroom Experience	CLASS^{TM}	Teacher-student interactions that promote positive social and academic development
	Curriculum implementation observation (third party review)	Teachers' use of materials that impact student learning experiences

Mastery of Fundamental Skills	Student writing sample evaluation (third party review)	Students' written expression and knowledge of language and conventions
	Grade 2 ELA & math skills checkup	Students' mastery of ELA and math skills that meet the standards

Schools already implementing CLASS^{TM} in kindergarten or above are encouraged to select at least one additional tool to pilot in 2018-2019.

School and School System Commitment

Louisiana is seeking school systems with one or more schools serving any combination of grades K-2 to participate in the pilot. Selected schools will implement at least one and up to all four tools. Schools that pilot the curriculum implementation metric must use a state-identified Tier 1 curriculum.

School and school system leaders must commit to participating in all required training sessions for the respective tool (listed below) and submitting all requested data to the Department in a timely manner. Participants will gain free use the tool(s) and the opportunity to provide feedback to the Department.

School systems interested in participating in the K-2 pilot should read the complete the Kindergarten-Grade 2 application at the link in the Application Guidance. The Guidance provides estimated funding amounts for participation in the pilot. Applications are due July 23.

Timeline

Tool	Training Dates (Training is free)	Trainees	Implementation Dates
CLASS^{TM} for Kindergarten	September (2 days, in-person)	School principals and teacher evaluators	Fall and Spring observations
Student writing sample evaluation for Grade 1	Fall (Webinar)	Local instructional leaders and teachers	Spring collection
ELA and math curriculum implementation observation for Grades 1-2	N/A	N/A	Between November and February
ELA & math check-up for Grade 2	Winter (Webinar)	Assessment administrators, principals, and teachers	April

Please direct questions to Jill.Slack@la.gov.