



Evidence-based tools and guidance  
for delivering effective programs

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**GUIDANCE FOR SAMPLE:**

## DALLAS ACADEMIC LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

This document provides guidance on how to use the [Dallas Academic Lesson Observation Form](#) sample available in the Summer Learning Toolkit. You can also access the sample in the [Planning and Management](#) section of the Toolkit.

### What is the DALLAS ACADEMIC LESSON OBSERVATION FORM sample and how can you use it?

Developed by Dallas Independent School District for the academic school year, the Dallas Academic Lesson Observation Form is also used during the summer to provide feedback to teachers. Observations are conducted twice over the course of the summer by site leaders and instructional coaches to collect data on classroom environment, student time on-task, teacher engagement, transitions, use of technology, use of assessments to check for learning, and languages used by teachers and students. Assessors use the form to record data upon entering the classroom, at 10-minute intervals throughout the class, and prior to leaving the class. Completed forms are provided to teachers after the observation is complete.

### Why is formal observation important?

**RAND** recommends that summer programs engage in a continuous improvement process that includes evaluation of a site's culture and climate as well as the use of time and academic quality in

classrooms. RAND also recommends that site leaders periodically observe instruction to understand which teachers may need additional support. Classroom observation can be a useful way to collect site and classroom information to support of continuous improvement.

### **Who can benefit from this resource?**

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- District central office managers
- School-based program leaders
- Nonprofit program leaders

### **Tips for effective classroom observation**

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It is important to use an observation tool that is valid (assesses what it says it does) and reliable (produces similar results across observers and instances of use). For those reasons, you may want to consider using an established observation tool that has been tested for validity and reliability. If you choose to develop your own observation tool, develop and deliver training for observers on how to use the tool prior to implementation. Additional tips include:

- Ensure teachers know when they will be observed, what observers will be looking for, and that they have the chance to ask questions in advance. Provide teachers with a blank copy of the observation tool during professional development.
- After observations are complete, discuss data with teachers in a timely manner through in-person coaching sessions.
- Use the observation data to help teachers set goals for professional development.
- Equip coaches or site leaders to use data to provide ongoing support to teachers. Identify common areas of need to inform in-service professional development and pre-program training for the following summer.