*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Sponsoring Organizations with Educator Preparation Programs in Early Literacy |
| **From:** | Claire Abbott, Director, Educator Effectiveness |
| **Date:** | Posted January 2023 and updated May 2023 |
| **Subject:** | Early Literacy Observation Form Implementation Timeline |

### Purpose

The [Early Literacy Observation Form](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy-observation.html) supports educator preparation supervisors to observe and provide high-quality feedback to teacher candidates on their practice in evidence-based early literacy as outlined in the [Mass Literacy Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) and in alignment with the new [Early Literacy Program Criteria](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy.html). By providing specific “Look Fors” to guide observations and feedback, this form is a key component of Massachusetts’ mission to ensure that all teacher candidates in Elementary, Early Childhood, and Moderate Disabilities programs are well-prepared in early literacy instruction.

### Development

The form was developed in partnership with faculty in the 2020-21 Early Literacy in Educator Preparation Network. In this network, faculty generated ideas for and provided feedback on the Look Fors and implementation of the tool. In 2021-22, thirteen supervisors from six sponsoring organizations piloted the tool.

Based on feedback from this initial pilot, the Early Literacy Observation Form has been refined to:

* **Strengthen the Look Fors.** Updates were made to ensure that Look Fors are high-priority, evidence-based, culturally responsive and observable.
* **Streamline the observation and feedback process.** The tool has been restructured to improve ease of use and seamless integration into CAP. In the updated form, supervisors review the Look Fors *before* the observation as a guide for what they should expect to observe, and then return to them *after* the observation to provide focused feedback. The evidence and feedback form mirrors the CAP Observation Form, with added specificity around early literacy.
* **Support use throughout preparation.** Though the Early Literacy Observation Form will be a required in CAP, the form, and specifically the Look Fors, can be used in pre-practicum, coursework, and practicum to support learning, practice, and feedback opportunities for candidates throughout their preparation experience.

### Implementation Timeline

* **SY2022-2023 - Resource:** The Early Literacy Observation Form is available as a resource for Sponsoring Organizations to begin integrating into coursework and field-based experiences.
* **SY2023-2024 - Partial Implementation:** All Sponsoring Organizations with Early Childhood PK-2, Elementary 1-6, or Moderate Disabilities PK-8 programs will be required to use the form during CAP with a minimum of 10 teacher candidates in each relevant program (or all candidates, if fewer than 10 in the program).
* **SY2024-2025 – Full Implementation:** All Sponsoring Organizations are required to implement the form during CAP with all candidates in Early Childhood PK-2, Elementary 1-6, and Moderate Disabilities PK-8.

DESE will offer virtual training sessions in Fall 2023 to support supervisors’ use of the form. Supervisors are also encouraged to reference [Mass Literacy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) for more available resources.

At the conclusion of the 2023-2024 academic year, all participating supervisors and candidates will complete a survey to share feedback on their experience using the form. DESE will convene faculty and field-based experience coordinators in Summer 2024 to advise on future supports and guidance ahead of full implementation of the early literacy observation form in SY2024-2025.

### Implementation Requirements

The [Early Literacy Observation Form](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy-observation.html) is designed for candidates in **Early Childhood PK-2, Elementary 1-6,** and **Moderate Disabilities PK-8** programs, and should be used when observing candidates teaching a **full core literacy block**. This observation can occur in 1-2 parts but must encompass all three components of the core literacy block (teaching of foundational skills, engaging with complex text, and writing).

The early literacy focused observation should take place towards the end of a candidate’s practicum, during **CAP Announced Observation #2**. The supervisor will use the Early Literacy CAP Observation Form *in place of* the CAP Observation Form (see below for implications on the Online Platform).

As a CAP-specific observation, the Early Literacy CAP Observation Form is associated with the following **three essential elements: 1.A.1 Subject Matter Knowledge, 1.A.3 Well-Structured Units and Lessons, and 2.E.1 High Expectations**. As such, an alternative sequence of focus elements for CAP observations (see below) may be used for candidates using the form. Following this alternative sequence when implementing the Early Literacy CAP Observation Form will ensure that candidates are assessed on all essential elements over the course of the practicum.

### Alternative CAP Observation Sequence of Focus Elements

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|  | Observations | | | |
| Essential Element | #1 Announced | #1 Unannounced | #2 Announced | #2 Unannounced |
| 1.A.1: Subject Matter Knowledge |  |  | * \* |  |
| 1.A.3: Well-Structured Units and Lessons |  |  | * \* |  |
| 1.B.2: Adjustments to Practice |  |  |  |  |
| 2.A.3: Meeting Diverse Needs | * \* |  |  |  |
| 2.B.1: Safe Learning Environment |  |  |  |  |
| 2.E.1: High Expectations |  |  | * \* |  |

[Note: \* indicates that a focus element will be observed at a different time than in the traditional sequence of observations. Highlighted cell represents update to the chart made in May 2023.)

### IMPLICATIONS FOR CAP ONLINE PLATFORM USERS

Because the Early Literacy Observation Form mirrors the general CAP Observation form, supervisors can continue to use the CAP Online Platform, with a few adjustments:

* During Announced Observation #1, in addition to 1.A.1 Subject Matter Knowledge and 2.E.1 High Expectations (which are already required elements for this observation), supervisors will record evidence for 2.A.3 Meeting Diverse Needs. Because the evidence box for 1.A.3 Well-Structured Units and Lessons is also a required field on this form (meaning that there must be text entered in that box for the form to be complete), supervisors should write “See Announced Observation 2” in that box to indicate that that element is being observed at a different time.
* During Announced Observation #2 (the early literacy-specific observation), supervisors will record evidence for the three focus elements on the Early Literacy Observation Form (1.A.1 Subject Matter Knowledge, 1.A.3 Well-Structured Units and Lessons, and 2.E.1 High Expectations). Because they are required fields on this form, supervisors should indicate “See Announced Observation 1” for 2.A.3 Meeting Diverse Needs and “See Unannounced Observation 2” for 1.B.2 Adjustments to Practice.
* Unannounced Observation 1 and Unannounced Observation 2 are unchanged.

DESE will collect feedback on this process during the 2023-24 partial implementation year as we assess the need for any additional updates to the Online Platform.