

410. OBSERVATION PPSD POLICY

General Belief	The Providence School Board seeks to make it easier for parents/guardians to participate in the education of their children, and recognizes that some parents/guardians may wish to observe their children in a classroom or other school setting in order to evaluate the appropriateness of a program or placement. The School Board welcomes such observation to support students' academic success and social emotional development. The School Board recognizes that guidelines are necessary to ensure observations are conducted in a manner that protects students' rights to confidentiality and privacy, maintains the safety and security of students and staff, and minimizes disruption to the educational process.
Purpose and Scope	The purpose of the Observation Policy is to establish expectations and requirements for parents'/guardians' observations of their children or their children's program, conducted by themselves, their consultant, or their evaluator.
Definitions	The following definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy and the legal obligations of the District. Confidentiality Agreement/Disclaimer: A signed form which holds an observer accountable for the confidentiality and privacy rights of all students being observed in a classroom. District: Providence Public School District or PPSD. Educational Consultants or Evaluator: Individuals who are contracted by the parent to provide an educational service or evaluation. Observers: Parents/guardians of students in the District or educational consultants or evaluators hired by parents/guardians who may conduct an observation. Observation: An observation is defined as spending time in the classroom or other in-school setting for the purpose of observing and collecting data regarding a child in the educational setting. Parent/Guardian: Any individual who has legal custody over a minor student within the District.
Guidelines and Implementation Strategies	The Superintendent will develop administrative regulations to implement the Observation Policy and to ensure compliance with the expectations and requirements of this policy.

	<u>Request to Observe</u> Parents/guardians of a child in the District, including educational consultants hired by parents/guardians who may observe a student or students (hereinafter referred to as “observer”) in the classroom, must follow the expectations and requirements adopted by the District. Parents/guardians must submit a written request to the principal to observe a classroom and/or student. The written request shall include the child’s name, classroom or other setting, grade, teacher, and duration and purpose of the observation. Parents/guardians designating another individual to observe their children must complete an observation designee form. The principal is responsible for reviewing and responding to observation requests. Parents/guardians should expect that their observation requests will be accommodated. However, the principal may consider limits on the duration and frequency of an observation, and in extenuating circumstances, may deny an observation request. Should the principal determine that it is necessary to deny or limit the observation, the following steps must be followed: 1) The principal will consult with the office of specialized instruction and obtain approval from the office of specialized instruction regarding alternate options for, or denial of, the observation request. 2) The principal will provide a written explanation to the parent/guardian regarding the decision. 3) The principal will discuss alternative options with the parent/guardian, as applicable. 4) Parents/guardians who do not agree with the principal’s decision may appeal, as described in the “Denial of Access” section of this policy. <u>Scheduling an Observation</u> 1) Observers granted permission by the principal shall communicate with the principal within one week to mutually determine the date and time for the observation. 2) The acceptable length of time for an observation will vary based upon the activity, and must be approved by the Principal prior to the observation. Observations cannot exceed one hour in duration without a pre-identified, specific purpose that demonstrates the need for an extended observation. An estimated length of stay must be identified when the observation is scheduled with the principal; non-specified lengths of stay will not be approved. Observers will not be permitted to stay and/or observe beyond the time agreed upon. 3) Decisions related to the duration and/or frequency of an observation are at the discretion of the principal, who will consider the potential impact
--	--

	on student safety, as well as the impact on the educational setting. 4) Observers will, prior to each observation, be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The agreement details the requirements related to the confidentiality and privacy rights of all students, as well as the expected conduct of observers. <u>Expectations for Observers</u> 1) An administrator and/or designee will be present with the observer at all times during the observation of the child, and will escort the observer to and from the observation. 2) Observers shall refrain from the use of photography, and/or video or voice recording during an observation, in accordance with privacy laws and regulations that serve to protect students and their families. 3) While observing a student in the classroom, the observer is not permitted to enter into a discussion with the teacher(s), other professional staff, the child, or other students. The observer is not permitted to ask questions or make comments during the observation period except at the request of, or with approval of, the teacher. 4) Observers who want to conduct in-depth discussions with teachers, other professional staff, or administrators after the observation of a child must make an advance appointment for a mutually convenient time. Such appointments will be made through the principal's office. 5) If an observation is deemed disruptive for any reason, the observer(s) will be required to immediately leave the classroom and/or school building. 6) Any report generated as a result of the observation, to the extent it is to be utilized for educational purposes, shall be provided to the District. <u>Denial of access</u> Should an observer fail to adhere to the expectations detailed in the Observation Policy, or fails to adhere to the confidentiality agreement, building rules and/or any applicable District policies, PPSD reserves the right to limit or deny that observer's access. Parents/guardians who disagree with a principal's decision related to an observation, may appeal the decision to the Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.
Training, Oversight, and Communication	The Superintendent or his/her designee will oversee the implementation of the requirements set forth in this policy regarding parents'/guardians' request to observe their children in a classroom setting. The policy and accompanying administrative regulations will be communicated and distributed to all principals and assistant principals. The policy and clear, step-by-step procedures shall be provided by schools to

	parents/guardians who inquire about scheduling an observation, and made available on the District website. The Superintendent shall provide an annual report to the School Board providing data on the number of observation requests received, the number of requests denied, the number of school-level denials appealed to the Superintendent, and the disposition of the appeals to the Superintendent.
Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements	The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD personnel and all PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board policies. In the event any part of any policy is unlawful, the Superintendent will report such event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of this policy.
Policy Revision and Adoption	This policy shall supersede the Classroom Observation policy approved August 9, 2016, and all other previously adopted or amended policies, resolutions, or other documents addressing the same. All prior Board adopted or amended policies shall have no force or effect to the extent that they conflict with this newly adopted or amended policy.
Legal Reference	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 R.I. General Laws Title 16 Rhode Island Regulations Governing the Education of Students with Disabilities, 200-RICR-20-30-6
History	Approved by Board: August 9, 2016 Amended: January 22, 2020 Regulations Issued: