

## **PPAT<sup>®</sup> Assessment**

### Library of Examples – Special Education

#### Task 1, Step 2, 1.2.3: Communicating with Your Students' Families

Below are two examples of written responses to Textbox 1.2.3 as excerpted from the portfolios of two different candidates. The candidate responses were not corrected or changed from what was submitted. One response was scored at the Met/Exceeded Standards Level and the other response was scored at the Does Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level. This information is being provided for illustrative purposes only. These excerpts are not templates for you to use to guarantee a successful score. Rather, they are examples that you can use for comparison purposes to see the kinds of evidence that you may need to add to your own work.

**The work you submit as part of your response to each task must be yours and yours alone.** Your written commentaries, the student work and other artifacts you submit, and your video recordings must all feature teaching that you did and work that you supervised.

#### **Guiding Prompt for Task 1, Textbox 1.2.3**

- a. Explain how your method of communication conveys the importance of cultivating positive relationships with students and their families. Use examples from your communication to support your explanation.
- b. Explain how your method of communication fostered interaction among you, your students, and your students' families. Use examples to support your explanation.
- c. Describe the overall response you received from your communication. How will this response impact an instructional decision you will make in your classroom? Use examples from the responses you received to support your analysis.

#### **Example 1: Met/Exceeded Standards Level**

- a. I have a daily home note that I send home with the kids every single day. This note is a summary of their day, including the things they participated in and how it went. It is a preset note that we can circle what specialties they attended and how they did during them. At the bottom of the note I send home a message that is specific to their day and what went well. Then right next to the spot where I send my note home, I leave a spot of the same size for the parents or guardians to write something back with questions or concerns.

I find this type of communication is important for my students because it helps the parents better understand their student's days and gives them something to talk about.

Especially my non-verbal kiddos who can't go home and give their parent's an explanation, this way the parents can still talk to them and bring up the things that they did during school.

One example that I would like to share with you is about one of my first graders, who we will refer to as J. He can communicate when he needs to and wants to but doesn't necessarily communicate when we want him to. For the first few days of school, our friend wouldn't really touch his food. He would usually find one thing from the lunch food that he liked and ate all of it and then didn't want to touch the rest of his food. In fact, he even asked for that same one item from his friend's lunches. We tried to convince him that his other food was just as yummy, but he wasn't falling for it.

One day, when he didn't eat any of his lunch, I was a bit concerned and wrote a note home to mom. I said, "J had a great day. We were curious if he eats a lot at home or not. He's been good at eating most fruit, but he usually won't touch the main dish. Just curious. Thanks." The mom replied and said, "You are amazing! J is loving school. He is a pretty picky eater when he eats more than what he eats. He mostly grazes throughout the day at home. He rarely sits for meals. I'm hoping he will be exposed to more varied foods at school, but no worries if he doesn't eat much." This was great news for me to hear. This would be a good goal for us to work on with him at lunch time. The first part would be to help him try new foods, even if he doesn't like them. The second part would be for him to sit down the entire time we are eating lunch. Hopefully this would help the mom at home to have him eat with the family and then try new recipes as well. This three-sentence note home to mom, helped me better understand J and his routine at home. It has since helped me to work with him at lunch time and get him to do things that mom is working on at home too. When we are consistent between school and home, it's easier for J to get into a steady routine of eating. I also won't have to worry if he doesn't eat all of his food, because I know he is eating plenty when he gets home.

- b. Along with the daily home note, at the beginning of the year I sent out a get to know you survey that the parents could fill out. This was very different from the get to know your students survey for obvious reasons. The survey for my students was easy enough that they could understand what we were asking using pictures and colors. The parent survey was more detailed and gave me more information about their situation at home and observations from the parents. This helped me know more about my students from the parents point of view and what they see every day at home. The dynamics of the family is also important, so I know how best to attend to the student's needs.

This survey included information about the student's siblings, strengths, likes, dislikes, fears and anxieties, allergies, needs and anything else they thought I should know. It also had a place to tell me if they were left or right handed and where they were at in the toileting process.

It gave parents the opportunity to boast about their students and also state their concerns that they hope will be addressed over the school year. Having this communication between the parents, families and myself, allows for the greatest growth possible in their student. It allows us to see eye to eye and have the best understanding of each other possible.

One way that I have structured my teaching in the classroom has come from the communication from a parent. They let me know that Calendar time was a trigger for their son, and it would be hard for him to get over it once he was triggered. My teacher leader and I decided to make that student his own personal calendar that he could fill out daily and have it be his own. We have been doing this for the last couple weeks and it has been a game changer. Without the communication from the parent letting us know this was his trigger we would still be trying to figure out what was setting him off. Communication is key to knowing what the student's need and how they need it.

As the classroom teacher, I am in charge of amending each student's IEP because we are an hour shorter every day of school. I am taking these opportunities to meet with the parents during the Amendment meeting and just introduce myself better and then talk with them about their child and strengths and needs at this time. The paper survey helped me get an idea at the beginning of the year. Now that we are meeting in person it gives me more opportunity to talk face to face and get more information in detail about their student.

- c. I have received a positive response from a few of the parents. They will send the daily home note back with their questions and concerns of the daily notes I send home. I have heard from the few of them that they appreciate these notes because they know what their student is doing each day and it gives them something to talk about. Some of the parents have been concerned if their student doesn't get the highest ranking possible and what is holding them back from getting that. This daily home note is a way for me to communicate with parents daily and give them the update that they are waiting for.

Having this daily form of communication allows me as the teacher to make sure my students are receiving the best education experience possible. It keeps parents and I informed and working towards the same goal of the student's success. I've been very happy with the response I have received from parents both with the daily home note and the parent survey. I want to serve these student's the best I can and that can only happen when their parents and I are working together. What a great opportunity this is for growth.

**Refer to the [Task 1 Rubric](#) for Textbox 1.2.3 and ask yourself:**

In the candidate's response, where is there evidence of the following?

- Does the candidate explain a method of communication that conveys the importance of cultivating positive relationships with students and their families?
- Does the candidate use examples to support this explanation?
- Does the candidate explain how this method of communication fostered interactions among you, your students, and their families?
- Does the candidate use examples to support this explanation?
- Does the candidate describe the overall response received from the communication?
- Where does the candidate explain how the response impacts an instructional decision that is made in the classroom?
- Does the candidate use examples from the received responses to support this explanation?

## Example 2: Did Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level

- a. In my introduction letter I was very positive about working with these students. I put a simple picture of me to help parents see who I am and who their kids will be working with. I kept my letter simple and not too long so parents would want to read it and be able to do so quickly. I explained a few facts about myself, so the parents were able to feel comfortable with the person teaching their students.

As well as my introduction letter students have a blue folder that gets taken home each day. In this blue folder we put assignments that have been completed that day and also their behavior tracker that has notes from teachers written on it. This is good for the parents to see because students understand that their child might have had a bad day and they have proof of that that is signed by a teacher. This helps the parents because they don't have to call and ask why their child may be acting up when they can just see the things that happened that day.

- b. At the bottom of my introduction letter I put a box where parents were required to sign and able to write notes or questions. By having something interactive at the end of my letter I gave parents an opportunity to communicate and, in a way, forced communication with me.

In the student's blue folder there is a labeled pocket for things that parents want us to see when their students get to school. This pocket is labeled "take back to school." This is a visual reminder to parents that if they ever have anything that I need to see they can put it in the folder, and it will get to me the next day at school.

- c. I received a signed form back from the majority of my students. I had the opportunity to meet with a set of parents from one of my students. The parents were able to greet me by name and say thank you for helping their child. If I hadn't sent home that letter the parents would have no idea who I was. Because I have gotten signed papers back, I feel comfortable that my students' parents are supportive of me being in the classroom.

There has been positive feedback from parents that they like to see their student's behavior tracker each day. This is something I want to continue because parents are finding it useful.

### Refer to the [Task 1 Rubric](#) for Textbox 1.2.3 and ask yourself:

In the candidate's response, where is there evidence of the following?

- Does the candidate explain a method of communication that conveys the importance of cultivating positive relationships with students and their families?
- Does the candidate use examples to support this explanation?
- Does the candidate explain how this method of communication fostered interactions among you, your students, and their families?
- Does the candidate use examples to support this explanation?
- Does the candidate describe the overall response received from the communication?
- Where does the candidate explain how the response impacts an instructional decision that is made in the classroom?

- Does the candidate use examples from the received responses to support this explanation?

### **Suggestions for Using These Examples**

After writing your own rough draft response to the guiding prompts, ask the question, “Which parts of these examples are closest to what I have written?” Then read the 4 levels of the matching rubric (labeled with the textbox number) and decide which best matches your response. Use this information as you revise your own written commentary.

Lastly, using your work and/or these examples as reference, consider what you believe would be an appropriate artifact for this textbox.

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