# Overview: Reflection on Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being by a Middle School Art Teacher Candidate



 **CONTRIBUTOR**

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 **WHAT is this resource?**

This resource is an example of a post-baccalaureate Teacher Candidate’s reflection after conducting informal interviews with parents of students in the Middle School art classes. The reflection focuses on the CAP Essential Element of Collaboration for Student Learning and Well-Being and is one of the Teacher Candidate’s artifacts for the CAP.

 

 **WHEN could this resource be used?**

This resource could be used during the practicum semester to show a Teacher Candidate an example of what a reflection after a Teacher Candidate engages with and elicits information from families. It could also be used during professional development sessions for Program Supervisors and Supervising Practitioners so that they can calibrate their consistency of expectations and support for the Collaboration for Student Learning and Well-Being Essential Element.

 

 **WHO could use this resource?**

The faculty member responsible for preparing Teacher Candidates for the practicum, as well as the **Program Supervisor, Supervising Practitioner** and **Teacher Candidate** could all use this resource.

** HOW could this resource best be used?**

This resource is helpful for Teacher Candidates to understand the possibilities and benefits of Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being, particularly after a survey with families about experiences and expectations in art classes. The resource can also be used in the training of Program Supervisors and Supervising Practitioners so that they all have the same understanding of what is expected when providing guidance and feedback to Teacher Candidates about Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being.

***Note:*** *This resource was submitted for inclusion in the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP) Resource Hub. It is intended to serve as a reference and source of guidance for others engaged in the CAP process. While it reflects one approach, users should adapt its content to fit the specific context and needs of their own evaluations.*

## Reflection on Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being by a Middle School Art Teacher Candidate

**Parent Collaboration in Middle School Art Education**

As a student teacher at W\_\_\_ Middle School, I had the opportunity to engage with families to better understand how art education connects with students’ lives outside of the classroom. In alignment with Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers, particularly the goal of collaborating with families, I conducted informal interviews with several parents of middle school students. The purpose was to explore how their children engage with art at home, what kinds of creative experiences they value, and how I, as an educator, can support and expand those interests within the classroom. This process not only highlighted the individual needs of students but reinforced the importance of communication and collaboration between teachers and families in supporting student growth through the arts.

A recurring theme in these conversations was that students’ interests in art are often deeply personal and reflective of their emotional and developmental needs. For example, one parent shared that their daughter uses drawing, particularly sketching cats, as a therapeutic outlet to manage anxiety. Art, in this case, is not just a school subject but a key tool for emotional well-being. Another parent noted their daughter's interest in architecture and her enjoyment of drawing house plans, which she already sees as a future career path.

While some students were not especially drawn to traditional art forms (for example, a mother talked about her son who expressed no interest or confidence in art-making), others found unique forms of expression, such as painting or working with clay, to be engaging. Parents widely recognized the benefits of art for their children’s development, even if the specific media or level of interest varied. Many emphasized that art provides a "low-pressure," “calming,” and “zen” experience that contrasts with the often rigid structure of academic classes. One parent observed how art allows children to “veer from the norm,” encouraging creativity, imagination, and personal exploration.

When asked what they hoped to see in their child’s art education, parents responded with a desire for more targeted opportunities based on individual interests. There was also a desire for art instruction that allows for more exploration and less rigidity. Parents want their children to experience freedom in the art room, with access to a wide variety of materials (including sensory items and recycled materials), and a structure that supports both guided and open-ended creativity.

These conversations highlighted the importance of hands-on, collaborative learning in art education. While some students may not initially gravitate toward traditional artistic activities, providing them with open-ended, sensory-rich materials and collaborative projects could foster greater engagement. The role of the teacher is to meet students where they are, whether that’s with structured steps for beginners or an exploratory space for more advanced learners. As a future art educator, I plan to integrate this feedback by offering choice-based art projects, maintaining open lines of communication with families, and tailoring instruction to student

interests. I also hope to create a classroom environment that values creativity over perfection and process over product, supporting both the artistic and emotional development of my students.

Along with incorporating student choice whenever possible, I will implement a fully student‑choice lesson that empowers each student to take full ownership of their artistic process. To begin, students will submit a concise project proposal outlining the medium and subject they want to explore. In their proposals, they will briefly state why they chose this particular project and how it connects to their personal interests or experiences. They will also list the specific materials they hope to use and explain why. Then, the students will spend the next few classes working on their projects. I will conduct regular check-ins as usual to provide guidance and make sure they have all the resources they need. This fully choice‑based approach is student-centered and integrates the family‑informed interests that emerged from our collaborative conversations.

Parent collaboration offers vital insight into how students experience art beyond the classroom walls. By listening to families at W\_\_\_\_ Middle School, I gained a deeper appreciation of how art intersects with students’ personal lives, emotional health, and future goals. These conversations will continue to shape how I design curriculum, build classroom culture, and communicate with families throughout my teaching career. In the end, art education thrives when it is personal, inclusive, and supported by strong home-school connections.