



Possibilities in Action: Partnering to Ensure Student Success

SUGGESTED SELECTION GUIDELINES FOR THE NASP POSSIBILITIES IN ACTION PROGRAM

The Possibilities in Action program is part of NASP's ongoing effort to help school psychologists promote children's success in school and life, to improve collaboration within the school community, and to help highlight the education community's exceptional efforts to educate and support the development of all children. It is grounded in the belief that seeing and supporting the possibilities within each student, even in the face of adversity, is critical to helping them achieve their best in school, at home, and in life. A Possibilities in Action partner is someone who, either through their own efforts or by encouraging the efforts of others, makes an exceptional difference in the lives of students and families.

In general, a Possibilities in Action partner demonstrates one or more of the following attributes:

- Extraordinary personal or professional dedication to improving outcomes for students
- Outstanding professional functioning and effectiveness
- Effective advocacy for public policy that supports needed services for children and families
- Commitment to effective collaboration with school psychologists and other student services staff
- Long-term dedication to advocacy on behalf of individual students

Through their efforts, Possibilities in Action partners improve well-being and lower barriers to learning to help ensure that students are ready and able to learn. Possibilities in Action partners can be teachers, administrators, support personnel, classified staff, community providers, or parents. Partners can be recognized throughout the year, though NASP hopes school psychologists will make specific efforts to nominate colleagues as part of School Psychology Awareness Week in the fall of each school year.

KEY MESSAGES

Remember—Children achieve their best when they:

- Are physically and mentally healthy
- Feel connected, respected, and safe
- Receive social, emotional, and behavioral support
- Maintain positive relationships

- Are expected to succeed and challenged to do so
- Have problem-solving skills and believe they can overcome challenges
- Receive quality instruction that meets their learning needs
- Receive recognition for building on their strengths

SUGGESTION SELECTION QUALITIES

The individuals you select for Possibilities in Action recognition might be those who exemplify at an exceptional level at least one or more of the qualities listed below in their work and interactions with students. This listing of qualities is being provided as a way to organize your thoughts as you consider individuals for this unique recognition and is not intended as a checklist for selection. The activities listed below are not exhaustive, but rather are examples of how an individual may be making a difference in various settings. When choosing someone to receive this recognition, consider what area they may be partnering in to make the award more specific. Award recipients may be partners in mental health, learning, instruction, school safety, or any other area that best defines the area in which the person has made their mark.

If you are interested in recognizing a student in your school for an exceptional personal achievement, please consult the guidelines for the NASP Student POWER Award at www.nasponline.org/communications. Possibilities in Action certificates that you can personalize and download, sample letters of recognition, and further details are available at <http://www.nasponline.org/communications>.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBILITIES IN ACTION PARTNER QUALITIES

POSSIBLE FOCUS OF EFFORT	EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES	YOUR POSSIBILITIES IN ACTION PARTNER'S EFFORTS
Lowers barriers to learning	Accesses material resources for students in need; Volunteers to help students with homework after school; Adapts instructional assessment methods to match student learning style; Includes all students in activities; Develops a program for peers to put student requested books on tape	
Recognizes the individual needs of students	Sets individual goals for students; Modifies instructional materials to the student's ability level in order to present the concept; Celebrates small successes of all students; Develops a reward system that allows students to receive academic recognition for improvement, not just for excellence	
Connects personally with students and families	Engages in regular communication with parents; Touches base with parents at times convenient for them; Has lunch with students; Has materials translated into needed languages before being sent home; Makes home visits to learn about all factors that affect the student and his/her ability to learn	
Contributes significantly to positive school climate	Greets students and colleagues by name; Is available in the cafeteria to greet parents and students as they come to school and supports the morning cafeteria volunteers; Models engagement, caring, and respect; Serves as a mentor to new teachers; Models effective practices in all settings; Recognizes successes of colleagues; Helps to make school a positive place to work and to learn	

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Identifies and accesses the resources that students need	Seeks assistance from support personnel, resource staff, and other teachers in order to develop optimal programming; Knows about new resources; Finds books for students to take home to their families; Applies for grants to help provide families with material resources, such as money for eyeglasses or coats; Checks in on students to ensure that clothes are season-appropriate; Provides needed resources for the children of deployed military parents	
Engages other adults in collaborative efforts to help students	Teams with colleagues to problem-solve; Participates in collaborative planning; Passes on important transition information from one grade to the next; Works with the PTA and unaffiliated parents of students to bring information about school programs to all parents; Arranges for a “taxi” service so lower SES parents can come to evening school events	
Supports students’ physical, mental, and/or behavioral health	Incorporates health messages into lessons; Engages children in a healthy lunch challenge; Gets children up and out of their chairs to encourage movement; Shows caring and interest in activities outside the classroom that contribute to the whole child	
Is a trusted adult to whom students go for help	Serves as a mentor to students; Is a good listener; Keeps confidences; Shows students respect; Finds resources for significant needs, with student approval; Provides lunch-bunch time to open communication in addition to task-related conversations	
Facilitates effective teaching and individualized instruction	Opens workplace for colleagues and parents to observe; Utilizes creativity to heighten students’ interest; Shares innovative ideas with peers; Uses methodologies that are considered research based and assists others in the building to apply these methods	
Improves others’ understanding of what it takes to improve outcomes for children	Hosts professional development for colleagues; Shares interesting articles with staff; Highlights student success stories; Demonstrates new ideas in the real setting of the classroom; Attends and presents at parent–teacher meetings; Meets informally with administrators to share ideas for improving instruction, behavior, and school climate	
Acts as a role model for students and adults	Talks with students about personal academic interests; Highlights successes rather than shortcomings; Emphasizes student and teacher assets rather than deficits; Speaks positively; Treats all adults and students in a respectful, caring manner	
Emphasizes and facilitates prevention and early intervention	Engages students on topics of social concern; Recognizes needs of students and seeks resources; Encourages teachers to share information regarding children at risk; Works with administrators and special resource personal to develop early interventions for students at risk of failure or dropping out; Participates in school-wide prevention programs	
Supports and encourages school improvement efforts	Participates as member of school improvement team; Volunteers time to improve school building with planting or clean up; Tries new approaches to improve school success; Volunteers to model new ideas; Accepts constructive criticism	
Uses and promotes a problem-solving approach	Volunteers as a member of a problem-solving team; Meets regularly with one or more students for ongoing data collection; Researches problem areas; Works to narrow down concerns to the elements that can be improved	
Facilitates collaboration with community providers	Brings community members into the school to talk with students about careers, literacy, or other social problems; Gets community businesses to sponsor student events; Shares opinions with outside providers when asked; Is open to new ideas	

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Promotes resilience in students	Helps students to develop coping skills; Encourages students to meet challenges; Celebrates the good times for students; Creates an environment in which every student can succeed in something of importance to him/her	
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