Below are two examples of written responses to Textbox 5.1 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 (3-4), and the other response was scored at the Did Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level (1-2). This information is being provided for illustrative purposes only. These excerpts are not templates for candidates to use to guarantee a successful score. Rather, they are examples that candidates can use for comparison purposes to see the kinds of evidence that they may need to add to their own work.

**Guiding Prompts for Task 5, Textbox 5.1**

a. How did you facilitate the development and completion of a family and community needs assessment with your colleagues? (The needs assessment for this task may be based on something your district already uses, but the majority of the form should be original, reflecting the input of your colleagues.)

b. What were the results of the needs assessment? What is the target area of need identified for this collaboration? What relevant aspect of the educational system will be improved, and how will student learning opportunities be affected?

c. How did the collaborative development of the needs assessment help you in identifying opportunities to improve colleagues’ collaboration, communication, and understanding of family and community culture and diversity in order to improve student learning?

**Example 1: Good/Excellent**

a. To develop and complete a family and community needs assessment I decided I should speak to my principal and ask him if there was an issue that he would like me to address. Mr. Harrison informed me that our school had went through the SACs process last year and they had found the need for our school to get parents of students more involved with our school and their children’s education (T. Harrison, personal communication, August 26, 2014). After I meet with Mr. Harrison, I sent my two colleagues an email explaining what Mr. Harrison had suggested to me during our meeting (C. Devine, personal communication, August 27, 2014). Both of my team members agreed that a lack of communication between teachers and guardians was an issue that needed to be addressed (S. Segal & M. Yang, personal communication, August 27, 2014). After we were in agreement I created a needs assessment survey with the help of my two team members. After the needs assessment was finalized I asked my two team members and the additional two analytical geometry teachers at our high school to complete the survey.
b. The results of the needs assessment indicated that there was a strong need for increased communication between parents and analytical geometry teachers. For example, on the needs assessment survey, 2 out of the 4 teachers answered that parents only sometimes come to scheduled parent conferences. All four of the analytical geometry teachers responded on the survey that their students rarely or never return their homework with parent signatures and/or parent comments. One last example of the need for increased communication between parents and teachers was that three out of the four teachers on the needs assessment survey indicated that parents rarely contact them with concerns about their children. After analyzing the needs assessment survey my team and I decided that the math department needed to create a reason that would motivate parents to come to the school. The target group was tenth grade students who are part of Analytical Geometry Support classes and the area of need identified is the need for a measurable increase in parental involvement.

c. Our team believed that if we created a project that got the students excited and afforded the parents an opportunity to see what their children were excited about at school then our students would be more motivated throughout the semester. Our thoughts were that the increased motivation would lead to higher End of Course Test scores and higher pass rates for our students in Analytical Geometry Support classes. Our challenge was that our math teachers who teach the same course have no common planning time, but I am fortunate to work with colleagues that communicate and collaborate very well with each other.

By developing this needs assessment all areas of the school were represented in some facet. By having a member of administration, special education teachers, and a general education teacher, it allowed us to collaborate effectively because we were all able to provide different points of view. We as a group then have to collaborate as a unit in order to effectively produce a needs assessment that would prove beneficial in answering the questions to the problems that we were facing as identified within the school improvement plan. As a special education teacher, it was interesting seeing the different views, but also having to be the one to facilitate the creation of this needs assessment from three different views of education. By producing this needs assessment, our group gained more knowledge about how to approach concerns that families within the community may have had about our program. I also became aware about how to help my colleagues improve their communication skills with the students’ parents.

Refer to the Task 5 Rubric and ask yourself:

In the candidate’s analysis of the family and community needs assessment, where is there evidence of the following?

- The facilitation and collaboration in developing a family and community needs assessment with colleagues
- The connection between the results of the needs assessment and the targeted area of need
- How the targeted area of need will improve a relevant aspect of the educational system and affect student learning
- How the collaborative development of the needs assessment helped identify opportunities to improve colleagues’ collaboration with, communication with, and understanding of family and community culture and diversity in order to improve student learning

Why is the candidate’s response relevant and moderate?
Example 2: Good/Excellent

a. The school district in which I teach eighth grade English has preached "The Six Pillars of Character" to help our students become young people of good character; however, our school community focuses more on academics and less on building students’ character. To our principals credit, at the last "all staff" meeting before the winter break, he asked to start thinking of ways to address our commitment to character building. We were a bit surprised, because it is rarely mentioned, but after I thought about it, I decided it was best to focus on one of the pillars instead of all six, to create a meaningful experience. So I surveyed my eighth grade colleagues to get their impressions of our students and used that to guide which Pillar I would try to address. I designed the survey over the break and gave it to seven teachers when we returned.

b. The surveys were returned in about two weeks, and, after reading a few responses, a trend emerged: our teachers felt that our students lacked empathy, particularly when it came to those outside their own circles of friends and family. Then, when I read, Jillian’s and Ruth’s responses, both who were new to our school, I realized that our school community, not just the students, felt a bit unwelcoming to outsiders. They also felt that our students were a bit disconnected from the rest of the world, and that our community was difficult for someone new to feel included. As our classrooms were near each other, I was not surprised to read this, because they’d casually shared their feelings with me. Keeping Jillian’s and Ruth’s feelings in mind, I thought we might be able to design an activity or function that would allow them to get more involved with families and our broader community. Casually, I mentioned this idea after school one day, and both were very interested. We had an after school meeting and spoke about how privileged our students are and wondered if this contributed toward a lack of empathy and of a broader, or even global, perspective of other people. We decided to hold an event that would benefit others outside our community, and that our students and community should be involved in the event itself, as well as developing it. This approach covered Jillian’s and Ruth’s desire to become more familiar with the community, but also addressed an issue that affected many of our students. We thought that doing something to impact a community outside our own could help our students develop a better sense of empathy and realize that they could positively affect people they did not even know, and might likely never meet. Ultimately, we agreed that a fundraiser through which Jillian and Ruth could engage the community by approaching parents and local businesses for donations, would allow our students to work on empathy building by learning about a cause and doing their part to positively impact it. What we needed to determine, however, was a cause, an appropriate fundraiser, getting administrative permission and how to delegate responsibilities.
Example 2: Good/Excellent (cont’d.)

c. By taking our principal’s request to heart, analyzing all of the responses to my questionnaire and hearing Jillian’s and Ruth’s feedback, the three of us were able to identify and address a number of things. First we knew that our students’ character could improve if they were more empathic and socially aware. We also identified two objectives, helping our students grow and helping Jillian and Ruth, two brand new teachers, feel more included and a part our school’s community. The three of us agreed that holding an event that brings everyone together would give them both the chance to work with colleagues and students and to create connections with families and community members. However, we felt that we had to create something that would be meaningful to our entire school community, otherwise everyone might feel it is a waste of their time. I, personally, would never have chosen to focus on our developing our student’s character and capacity to empathize, if it had not been brought to my attention by Jillian’s and Ruth’s observations and what we learned from our questionnaires. As ‘outsiders,’ both tapped into an issue that a lot of family and community members noticed but did not know how to address. This proved to be true, because so many people during and after the fundraiser expressed that it was wonderful to see the students “doing something for others,” or “looking outside themselves.”

Refer to the Task 5 Rubric and ask yourself:

In the candidate’s analysis of the family and community needs assessment, where is there evidence of the following?

- The facilitation and collaboration in developing a family and community needs assessment with colleagues
- The connection between the results of the needs assessment and the targeted area of need
- How the targeted area of need will improve a relevant aspect of the educational system and affect student learning
- How the collaborative development of the needs assessment helped identify opportunities to improve colleagues’ collaboration with, communication with, and understanding of family and community culture and diversity in order to improve student learning

Why is the candidate’s response thorough or analytic?
Example 1: Weak/Fair

In 2012, our school system underwent an external review by educational accreditors. During this accreditation process, stakeholders (parents, teachers, and students) from my school analyzed all aspects of our school’s performance within five basic categories to determine both strengths and weaknesses. Once official results were released at the district level, we found our school data was comparative to the results of the external review team. Since then, both of my administrators have been working diligently to make amendments to the school improvement plan in an effort to enhance our school’s overall effectiveness.

As a member of the school leadership team which is comprised of 11 teachers, 1 Title I family liaison, and 2 administrators, I am involved in multiple areas of school improvement. Based on areas of need indicated by the educational accreditors’ visit, our annual Title I Parent Survey was amended for the 2013-2014 school year. We used a document that had been previously used and added questions about our Parent/Student/Teacher Compact, Grade-Level Assessments, and Parent Input in regards to the School Improvement Plan. Per parent surveys, 20% felt a need for greater involvement in reviewing and revising the school improvement plan. This was confirmed by all stakeholders scoring this indicator a Level 2 at our educational accreditors’ self-assessment review. Per our educational accreditors’ self-assessment review, the one of the self-assessment team identified the need to ensure school-level data is consistency reported across all grade levels and to all stakeholders with explanations of different types of assessments.

My colleagues along with the Title I family liaison, wanted to ensure that parents are not only aware of school-related events but also parent conferences, school improvement plan review meetings, and school-level assessment data. For the last several years, communication between both the school and parents is an area of need. Although grade-level newsletters and weekly school related flyers are sent home, there remains a need for face-to-face conversations, technology-driven notifications, and notice of meetings that involve all stakeholders concerning a review of school improvement plan provides opportunities to make parent conferences more meaningful, revise Title I Parent/Student/Teacher Compacts, and involve parent stakeholders in school improvement meetings.

Refer to the Task 5 Rubric and ask yourself:

In the candidate’s analysis of the family and community needs assessment, where is there evidence of the following?

- The facilitation and collaboration in developing a family and community needs assessment with colleagues
- The connection between the results of the needs assessment and the targeted area of need
- How the targeted area of need will improve a relevant aspect of the educational system and affect student learning
- How the collaborative development of the needs assessment helped identify opportunities to improve colleagues’ collaboration with, communication with, and understanding of family and community culture and diversity in order to improve student learning

Why is the candidate’s response **unclear** and **loosely connected**?
Example 2: Weak/Fair

a. The need for the Student Led Conferences was identified by an administrator at the local school. The teacher leader then sent a brief survey to see if my colleagues felt that parent and student involvement was a need that needed to be addressed. The family and community needs assessment was developed by identifying a need and finding several different options to meet this need.

b. The results of the needs assessment were that student and parental participation needed to improve. Another target area was to increase student ownership of their learning. The survey demonstrated a need to increase student and parental participation as well as allow for each individual student to take ownership of their learning. The needs assessment identified a need for students need to keep track of their own progress and monitor their learning by tracking mastery of learning targets.

c. This project will actively involve all stakeholders in the educational process. It will allow parents and students to see areas of strengths and weaknesses in learning. The needs assessment helped in identifying my colleague’s thoughts and ideas on students taking ownership of their learning. The project will create an opportunity for students to see their own strengths and weaknesses. Student led conferences provide students a voice in the educational process and reflect on their progress and learning. The development of the plan for the conferences provided an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues using different platforms. The development of the conferences allowed members of the team and the team leader identify a community and school need and implement a plan that will help improve student and parent involvement.

Refer to the Task 5 Rubric and ask yourself:

In the candidate’s analysis of the family and community needs assessment, where is there evidence of the following?

- The facilitation and collaboration in developing a family and community needs assessment with colleagues
- The connection between the results of the needs assessment and the targeted area of need
- How the targeted area of need will improve a relevant aspect of the educational system and affect student learning
- How the collaborative development of the needs assessment helped identify opportunities to improve colleagues’ collaboration with, communication with, and understanding of family and community culture and diversity in order to improve student learning

Why is the candidate’s response disconnected and confusing?

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 appropriate artifacts for this textbox.