

February 11, 2022

I would like to introduce myself and share why I am interested in the Family Literacy Fellow role. I am Andrea Estefania La Rotta, currently working at Madison PCS (Pseudonym) as a Multilingual Learner Apprentice Teacher while completing my master's degree in Transformational Education at Georgetown University.

I believe that I would be a good fit for this fellowship because I have had the opportunity to work in different grades in a short time working at Madison. That experience has provided me with insights into different needs across grades and how to support families to contribute to their student's growth. The connection between families and schools working to create a united community is significant support that our students can take advantage of in order to facilitate their progress in this challenging moment. My background and experiences will align with this project while allowing me to support families by understanding their difficulties and notions of how the school operates.

During this fellowship, I would like to better understand the contact points that the school has with the parents and families and transform those intersections into key spaces of learning. Also, I hope that this opportunity guides me better in understanding teachers' needs and what they consider will support their students' progress.

Multilingual students face several challenges in school. It is our responsibility to support them and provide better tools in the classroom. As a community with a growing number of bilinguals, we can develop a culture of multilingualism that embraces the backgrounds that our students bring to the school. One way we can accomplish this is by engaging with the families and letting them know that the school encourages our students to use their home language repertoire. It is also essential to guide parents in literacy skills in their home language to contribute to their student's success.

Some ideas that we can develop for the programming are projects that help bridge families' backgrounds and cultures into the school community. One example could be a self-identity project.

Thinking about virtual activities and the recent project to be more active on social media, we can invite families to introduce themselves through 4 simple sentences:

- I am, I like
- I remember I believe

They can write down and read this at home and do it with their families. Then families could record videos completing those sentences and share it with teachers in the classroom and with the school community. This activity guides students with their families' support to explore their identities and backgrounds using short sentences. The videos can be recorded in any language, and we are encouraging families by demonstrating the community we want to build with their help. We can send some examples or even share them online as a school. Also, as an

alternative, we can create a big collage if we don't want to use a video. We could send some materials home to build it and create a mural wall in the gym. *(This activity is inspired by the text Identity text and academic achievement: connecting dots in multilingual school context by Jim Cummins.)*

Another idea to support literacy in the family context during a week of literacy would be to send a story where parents can engage in reading at home with their students. We can ask for their support, explaining that it is a story that the teachers will discuss during CREW or a warm-up. This lecture can include questions to promote critical thinking that families can share with the students at home.

I would be a good addition to the fellowship because of my background and the way I connect with the students and families. Also, I sincerely care about this community, and the students, and I believe this project is a great opportunity to connect with the families and support our students.