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Let me tell you how to make Purrfect PAX Games . . .

Purrfect PAX is a rubric. Teachers use rubrics every day. The Purrfect PAX Rubric has three parts:

- Four PAX cues
- Five PAX kernels
- A recipe for using the cues and kernels together

Part of your PAX training and coaching support is about learning and using the Purrfect PAX Rubric.

Purrfect PAX is not rigid, since the classroom, subject matter, and the people involved are different every day.

Purrfect PAX is not dry, either. It brings fun and joy back to teaching and learning. A score of 4 in any topic area of the Rubric is “Purrfect.” If one part is missing, it’s a 3. If a couple of items are missing, it’s a 2. If most are missing, it’s a score of 1. If no parts are demonstrated, that means that the topic was not there to observe.

What does it mean for PAX to be *purring* in a classroom?

All of us have stepped into classrooms that seem delightful, where the students are working together, focused, and where fear or threat are absent. We call that “Purrfect PAX.” Purrfect PAX is less about classroom “management” and more about cultivating self---regulation and a sense of purpose in students.

In a Purrfect PAX Classroom, a teacher can step out of the room or even have a substitute (guest) teacher, and the class will operate smoothly in time. How? Well, PAX is teaching students to self-regulate, reduce impulsive or emotional reactions, delay gratification, and work together for a higher purpose. This is not achieved by lessons on the brain or behavior or some formal curriculum on social-emotional learning. Rather, this is achieved in the context of ordinary life at school that mimics conditions of human evolution that prompted our children to pay attention, cooperate with peers, and do things that have long-term benefit for both individual and community survival and success.

Students don’t just show up to school knowing how to do such Purrfect PAX, they have to learn how to do it, and modern society makes that difficult in so many ways. While it would be wonderful to wave a magic wand for society to change so that every child arrived at school with a full self-regulation toolbox, it’s not likely to happen by wishful thinking. The truth is that we as teachers can and do foster self-regulation, which is wholly different than classroom “management” based on rules and consequences.

This rubric summarizes how teachers, school staff, and PAX Partners (mentors,

administrators and others) have been proven to enhance the lifetime skills of self-regulation and peer cooperation, which in turn increase academic success, high-school graduation, and university entry and allow for fewer special education needs while contributing to less lifetime addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs, delayed sexual activity, fewer mental health problems, and reduced violence to self and others.*

The rubric works by having overlapping, fluid strategies that do four major things to create a nurturing environment for human development in a classroom (See Biglan et al., 2012):

1. Decrease accidental reinforcement for negative behavior by peers and adults, and increase the density of positive reinforcement from peers for prosocial actions;
2. Increase psychological flexibility so that students can predict and handle new situations or challenges successfully;
3. Reduce exposure to problematic behavior from peers and others that trigger mental, emotional, behavioral, and related physical disorders; and
4. Reduce exposure to, or impact from, toxic influences in communities, neighborhoods, schools, and families.

These strategies are meant to flow in the context of daily activities in classrooms and schools—simply to be part of the way of life. When that happens, teachers everywhere report that classrooms are filled with learning, fun, wellbeing, and opportunities to expand one's future and horizons. It purrs. The Rubric can help this happen.

Example References on the Effectiveness Pass Strategies

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The PAX Partner and Purrfect PAX Mentoring an Rubric Model

PAX Partners are people who have advanced training and accreditation in PAX GBG. PAX Partners function as an extra pair of eyes, ears, hands, and feet as well as a mind with a voice to notice, strengthen, model, reinforce and nurture observable PAX among students and within the larger school community. PAX Partners come from all walks of life professionally. Some may be teachers, some may be allied professionals, some maybe skilled community leaders, etc. They have to demonstrate some key skills: 1) Learning to reliably code and observe student behavior (PAX & Spleems), since this is critical to knowing how well things are going; 2) learning to reliably observe and code the Purrfect PAX rubric so that suggestions are useful; and 3) to BE, DO, MODEL, and recognize PAX for and among students, staff, and community. Our colleagues at Johns Hopkins and other academic/research institutions have developed, studied, and written both scientific and practical articles about the impact of the PAX Partner (coaching, mentoring, and rubric) model.

- Becker, K. D., Darney, D., Domitrovich, C., Keperling, J. P., & Ialongo, N. S. (2013). Supporting universal prevention programs: A two---phased coaching model. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 16(2), 213---228.
- Becker, K. D., Bradshaw, C. P., Domitrovich, C., & Ialongo, N. S. (2013). Coaching teachers to improve implementation of the good behavior game. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, No Pagination Specified. doi: 10.1007/s10488-013-0482-8

Rubric 1: Evidence of Game Being Played Regularly

- A self-contained classroom ought to be playing announced Games three (3) times per day; or a full-time teacher with multiple sections or classes ought to have evidence of using the game in at least three (3) sections per day where appropriate.
- A self-contained classroom ought to have evidence of playing a “secret game” several times a week; or a teacher with multiple sections has evidence of playing secret games most days.

Rubric 2: **REVISED**, Preparing Students for the Playing the Game (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Teacher does all of the following:

- Gets (or already has) the children’s attention before starting the game (e.g. uses PAX Quiet)
- Gives clear directions for the activity the children will be completing during the game.
- **REVISED**: Asks students to predict what PAX that needs to be seen, heard, done and felt during this activity and game; teacher draws out ideas if incomplete.
- **REVISED**: Asks students to identify the types of Spleems that might be new or contextual during *this* game; coaches students up with examples as necessary; prompts or asks about Spleems they are still working hard to reduce.

- Sets timer in full view of the children, who hear they will be playing the game for _____ minutes.
- Announces that “the game starts NOW.”

Rubric 3: Choosing Activity for Playing the Game (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Teacher has chosen an appropriate activity for the students to complete while playing the game if all of the following are true:

- Teacher is able to observe the students effectively (or has someone else as a skilled observer).
- The activity is at an appropriate skill level for the students; not too easy nor too difficult.
- The activity has an educational purpose tied to curriculum (not just busywork) and/or effective transitions. (Note: it is OK to use seatwork, especially during the early phases of students learning the game. As the students get skilled with PAX, activities to play the Game can expand greatly—transitions, across different subjects, on field trips, in the hallways, etc.)

Rubric 4: Timing of the Game (Purrfect PAX points)

Teacher does all of the following:

- Timer is used to time the game.
- Timer is placed in a visible/auditory location where it visible/audible to all.
- Time is referred to during the game (e.g., “3 minutes left” or praising for playing the game well).

Rubric 5: Teams for the Game (Purrfect PAX points)

Class has all of the following:

- Students are all on a team (1-2 students may be temporarily on own team)
- Teams appear balanced with an equal number of shy and aggressive children (similar number of Spleems observed on each team)
- Appropriate number of teams for the class size
- Teams are identified (i.e. team name) and/or students know their team.

* *It is appropriate if a Pre K/ K class only has one large team or two large teams.*

* *It is only appropriate for an older class to be on one large team if they are competing against another class.*

* *Teams may have names that are NOT Spleems, and may have teams symbols, wristbands, etc.*

Rubric 6: Scoring the Game (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Class has all of the following:

- Tangible system in place for marking Spleems as they are seen during the game (e.g. PAX WINS scoreboard).
- Evidence that the game is being played consistently (any evidence of previous games)
- Students are aware of where the game scores are kept and know they won the previous game.

* *Tangible means the tracking system can be turned in as data (e.g. scoreboard.)*

* *Classrooms may use scorekeepers from teams to help with the recording or posting.*

Rubric 7: **REVISED**, Response to Spleems and PAX (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Teacher does all of the following:

- **REVISED**: Consistently notices PAX during the activity/game descriptively.
- Observes & accurately tracks majority of Spleems or praise is given for no Spleems;
- Responds to a majority of Spleems with low negative emotion (i.e. non-punitive)
- **REVISED**: Makes students aware that Spleems are being counted (e.g. verbally announces a Spleem, eye contact, or states that zero Spleems have been observed) **without any non-verbal cues of threats**
- Addresses Spleems without reference to individuals. (e.g. “Blue Team, that was a Spleem”)
- **REVISED**: *Teacher verbally or non-verbally notices PAX in the room or activity in a timely, warm way.*
- * *Teacher does not have to use the word Spleem.*
- * *Using student name is acceptable in K but teacher must reference the student’s specific behavior.*
- * *Students may assist in marking Spleems if there is no implied humiliation for marking the Spleem.*

Rubric 8: Using Prizes (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Teacher does all of the following:

- Prize is drawn randomly from prizes (Prize options can be voted on by the class before Game)
- Prize lasts for an appropriate length of time (not too long or not so short that children can’t adequately experience it).
- Prize is controlled (appropriate & safe for the classroom); Majority of students stop quickly when the prize when time is up.
- Prize is given to the students in an appropriate timeframe (e.g. immediately after the game, lesson, at the end of a hard task, banked for some larger activity, etc.)
- Teacher is enthusiastic about giving the prizes, builds suspense for prize, and/or participates in the prize.
- Students are familiar with prize (i.e. know how to do it) and/or are excited about the prize.
- * Teacher or team captain(s) can facilitate any of these, in older grades or later in the year.

Rubric 9: **REVISED**, Using PAX Language (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Teacher does all of the following:

- **REVISED**: Asks students to describe the PAX they did successfully after a Game or after a challenging situation (e.g., disturbance in hall or at recess or during difficult activity); and/or praises, notices, and describes PAX actions by students during non-game activities.
- **REVISED**: Invites students to predict what Spleems might be for new tasks or activities during non-game times; notices students for NOT doing Spleems.
- Teacher frequently makes PAX references & utilizes the language when appropriate situations arise in the classroom. (e.g. PAX leader, Spleem/PAX, etc.)
- Students respond in a way that indicates that PAX references & language are routine/familiar
- * *Students and teachers may invent new ways to use the language such as PAX Leader of the Day*

Rubric 11: Using PAX Cues (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Teacher does all of the following:

- PAX Cues are posted in a visible location in the room.
- Teacher frequently references the PAX cues.
- Teacher uses PAX Quiet during transitions and any other time to get children's attention.
- Students respond in a way that indicates PAX cues are regularly implemented.
- Teacher has extended the use of PAX cues (i.e. PAX feet, PAX line, PAX OK/Spleems Not Ok).

PAX Cues include:

- PAX Quiet -PAX Hands
- PAX Voices -PAX Feet/Lines
- Thumbs up/down OR Go PAX/Stop Spleems cards/posters

Rubric 12: REVISED, Using Tootle or PAX---It Notes (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Classroom shows all of the following:

- **REVISED:** Has daily or weekly routines in place for students to write, give, and post Tootles for each other or to adults at school, home, or in the community.
- **REVISED:** Has Tootle Board in classroom with current (within 2 weeks) peer-to-peer notes not just adult---to---student notes.
- **REVISED:** Students and teachers use the language of Tootles.
- Adult-to-student or Adult-to-Adult Tootle or PAX-it Notes are evident.

* *Children may design new Tootle or PAX-iT notes.*

* *Intermediate or middle school may put the boards in their hallways*

* *The 3-part NCR (no carbon-copy paper required) are from adults to students that are shared posted in the building AND sent home.*

Rubric 13: PAX generalization elements (Purrfect 4 PAX points)

Classroom shows any 4 of the following:

- PAX Mystery Player (aka PAX Surprise) used.
- PAX pinch slates used for responding.
- PAX Stix (for calling, tasks, etc.) used.
- Beat the Timer used throughout instructional day.
- PAX music used.
- Additional teacher created techniques, materials, or PAX lessons used (e.g., rewards for the team with the fastest PAX quiet response, creates charts, writes Tootles to families).
- Plays the Game during transitions, in the hallway, during bathroom breaks, playground or any other non---conventional time.
- Team members are given jobs/roles (e.g., Go---Getters, Game Reminder)

* *I noticed amazing things that you and your class did to "sweep away Spleems" during this visit. This note is to celebrate the success of you and your students.*

Write a note, sign and date and include this footer:

Your PAX Partner in bettering the world, and bettering lives

I noticed PAX purring when I visited. I want to share with you a Tootle about the great PAX I witnessed. It's important for others to notice the good you and your students are doing to better the world and better themselves.

Share a Tootle about the PAX I witness, sign and date and include this footer:

Your PAX Partner in bettering the world, and bettering lives

On Being a PAX Partner™...

The spirit of being a PAX Partner™ can be summarized by a very famous quote: *"Be the change you want to see in the world."* People often confuse the science of the PAX Good Behavior Game with the science of adoption, implementation, and maintenance of behavior change strategies. Both are necessary, but knowledge of the PAX Game is not sufficient for being a great coach. Let us review both necessary skills for being a great PAX Partner: Being PAX, and knowing how to play and using the PAX Good Behavior Game well.

Being PAX

The definition of PAX as a word is *"peace, productivity, health and happiness."* If you want to be a PAX Partner, ask yourself, *"How do I express these traits for adults and children to see, hear, feel and copy?"* No one is perfect in any of these—not even Mahatma Gandhi—and all of us must practice improving these traits, which is the essence of playing the Game and using PAX in a classroom.

As partners, we are extra eyes, ears, and reflections to help teachers and students improve their PAX, and this means we must do likewise to be credible and congruent. If you are not into being PAX, the teachers and children will sense that quickly. People might politely comply when you are present, but they will not strive to be PAX.

In the PAX Game language, we strive to sweep away Spleems—actions that get in the way of PAX. Everyone Spleems, to paraphrase Alexander Pope's quote that to "err is human." Can you imagine being easy at students calling you out for non---PAX actions? Can you imagine yourself agreeing to being called out for NOT doing PAX by students or adults without arguing or asserting your authority as an adult? If so, you are decidedly a candidate for being a PAX Partner. This does NOT mean you are a wimp.

If you feel that adults or children *should* respect you because of your title or education regardless of your actions, it will be hard to be an effective PAX Partner. That is not to say that you cannot endorse or promote PAX, it just means that being a PAX Partner will be outside your comfort zone.

There are four core principles for coaching PAX, which come from our 2012 lead paper on prevention in the *American Psychologist*:¹ a) increasing nurturing environments, b) reducing toxic influences, c) reducing exposure to problematic behaviors, and d) increasing psychological flexibility. The *American Psychologist* article is free to read at <http://bit.ly/NurturingEnviron>. What does this mean? We offer the principle in context, and examples of actions that support the principles:

PAX Partner Principle

As a partner, nurture adults and students by your actions and words—by helping to richly reinforce prosocial behaviors.

PAX Partner Example Actions

- A teacher has been struggling. Her class is better today since she started using PAX Quiet. You leave her a Tootle Note in her mailbox about how much more PAX her class is in making transitions quickly.
- The boy from a foster home plays his first PAX Game without any Spleems, and you let him draw a “bonus” Granny’s Wacky Prize for the whole class.
- You lead a difficult class in giving Tootles to their teacher, who must be at her wit’s end. And the kids actually tell the teacher many of the good things she does for them.
- A teacher has to take a leave of absence, and the long-term substitute seems overwhelmed with PAX. You coach the teacher in baby steps, and ask the students to help her learn all this PAX.
- A parent constantly sees her child in a harsh, negative light. You “cheat” and make her child the “PAX Leader of the day,” and the other students write him tootles for all the good things he’s done that week to take home. The parent cries, saying: “I never knew he could do those things.”
- It’s after testing, and everybody is brain dead. So, you dress up as “Wacky Granny” and deliver new ideas to spice up Granny’s Wacky Prizes so that the school year ends on a high note.

PAX Partner Principle

As a partner, help reduce toxic influences affecting both the adults and students you are helping.

PAX Partner Example Actions

- The hall monitors are undoing every thing, by yelling, scolding, and humiliating the students. You help them create PAX signs and bulletin boards for PAX Hands, PAX Feet, and PAX Quiet in the halls.
- The Office regularly calls or sends notes homes when children misbehave—causing much friction and crises. You create a soft- competition for all of the adults to write PAX-it Notes to send home for children’s improving their behavior or being steady in PAX.
- A child is constantly in trouble with a teacher who complains that the child is deliberately breaking the rules. You coach the teacher in how to use PAX Surprise so that the child gets massive attention from the class for doing PAX, instead of constant Spleeming.

PAX Partner Principle

As a partner, be observant and practically thoughtful about ways to reduce exposure to problematic behaviors from adults or other children.

PAX Partner Example Actions

- You notice that an adult is having a hard time, personally, which is coming out at others, including children. You offer some kindness (secretly or not), like bringing some favorite treats, giving them a break, helping out, etc. This will often reduce the problematic behaviors impacting children and improve the adult's wellbeing.
- You notice that children are pushing and shoving at the water fountain, and people are scolding or threatening the children— causing worsening conditions for all. You make templates of PAX Feet, or PAX lines with gym tape, and other posters— installing them at the fountain. Then, you “puppy train” the students in PAX with a see, hear, feel, do chart for the water fountains, take some pictures, have the principal praise the class on the public address system.
- A shy, traumatized child is socially inept—which increases the child's exposure to the problem behavior of others. You fix it so that this child becomes a winning Mystery PAX Player, garnering a great prize for the whole class.

PAX Partner Principle

As a partner, model being psychologically flexible, leading by example.

PAX Partner Example Actions

- A teacher reports feeling very stressed and overwhelmed with the behavior of students. As a coach you might ask:
 - “How would you feel about exploring options and ways to make some of those behavior problems lessen?”
 - “I wonder if we could be everyday scientists together about these behavior problems and figure out when they happen more and when they happen less?”
- You avoid words like “resistant teachers” or “resistant principals.”
- If someone proposes an idea you are not sure about, instead of just dismissing it, you might model flexibility by saying: “Mmm... that's a possibility. I wonder how we might actually test it to see if that would increase PAX and decrease problems? What do you think?” This models a key principle of PAX: looking for functional benefits for all.

The Stance of Being PAX Partner

As PAX Partners, we are another pair of eyes, ears, hands, and feet working with the teacher to help evoke PAX in the students. As PAX Partners, we use our words to evoke PAX in both the children and adults working with them. We praise or Tootle the PAX we see, hear, or feel.

Basic Skills for Coaching PAX GBG

To learn to be a PAX Partner, you must be a dedicated learner. If you think you know everything about schools, prevention, psychology, etc., please don't apply to be a PAX Partner. You will be unhappy.

The surface of PAX GBG is simple. Underneath, it is not. At PAXIS Institute, we've been thinking about and studying all of this for decades. We are not finished, and neither is science. The Good Behavior Game was first invented and published in 1969. Much has been discovered since then, and more will be discovered in the next few years. For example, we added to PAX GBG all of our

work from the PeaceBuilders studies directed by Dr. Embry from the mid---1990s—which was the randomized control study of whole school behavioral supports. The PAX part of PAX GBG comes from the PeaceBuilders studies. Then, in the 2004, we started learning more about relational frame theory and evolutionary studies—which made PAX GBG even more powerful.

Being a good PAX Partner means learning to be a first-class everyday scientist. This is an ancient idea that was first articulated by Aristotle, a Greek philosopher. You must learn to see behaviors and events in real time, reliably, moment-by-moment. What does this mean?

- Can you *accurately* count children’s behaviors minute-by-minute in the classroom?
- Can you scan the classroom and see what is different from last week?
- Can you hear and see emotional differences in children and adults in the classroom in real time?
- Can you assess the presence or absence of actions by the teacher without seeing that adult as good or bad?
- Can you see small improvements?

Being Credible in Classroom a PA Partner

You land in a classroom. You don’t know the students. Can you command (not threaten) the situation and gain control? You might not know, and you might be scared of that—a natural feeling. You must be willing to learn this skill. If you cannot commit to that, you will have difficulty in establishing credibility with both adults and students in teaching PAX.

It’s always useful to find some situations in which you can practice your skills at PAX —every element of it—so that you are fluent and at ease. This might be a Sunday school classroom, a scout group, an afterschool program, your own family (yes, PAX works there), etc.

Being a Committed Learner as a PAX Partner

Learning to be an effective PAX Partner is not for folks adverse to or fearful of learning new things. We are always *students* of PAX.

The PAX Good Behavior Game is more than the science of the Good Behavior Game. It is much more than a Psych 1 summary of operant conditioning and behavior analysis. It is much more than a designated “best practice” on any list of approved “best practices.” PAX GBG is an ongoing learning community of continuous improvement, firmly rooted in the most rigorous scientific findings from many fields of the best science for improving the human condition. Science NEVER stands still.

As a PAX Partner, you are a trusted individual in the discovery and practice of using good science, humane interactions to better our future. Part of your accreditation process as a partner is building your creative and effective skills at promoting PAX.

References Utilized and Cited

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