A Parent’s Guide to Student–Led Conferences

What is a Student-Led Conference?

A student-led conference is a preplanned meeting in which students demonstrate responsibility for their academic performance by providing a review of their work for parents and teachers. The students lead the conference by presenting work samples and discussing their learning.

Student-led conferences differ from the traditional parent/teacher conferences.

★ Students participate in all stages of the conference. They prepare and organize work samples, use checklists to demonstrate new learning, and plan next steps.

★ Students lead the conversation to show what they have learned. They receive feedback from their parents and teachers about strengths and goals for improvement.

Student-led conferences benefit students, parents, and teachers.

★ Students take more ownership of their learning.

★ Parents and students have open communication about school, after-school activities, and other important decisions in life.

★ Teachers establish a stronger working relationship with parents and students.

What is the Role of the Student?

Students lead the conference.

★ Before the conference, students:

  • Collect work samples to share with their parents.
  • Review their work with the teacher and think about learning goals.
  • Explain the benefit of the conference as a learning process to their parents.

★ During the conference, students:
• Share and discuss learning with their parents.
• Identify strengths and learning goals with parents and teachers.
• Connect their learning to long-term career goals.
• Determine next steps to improve learning.
• Agree on the date of the next conference to address progress or concerns.

★ After the conference, students:
• Discuss the benefits of the conference.
• Work on the next steps to improve learning.

What is the Role of the Parent?

Parents participate as active listeners and as advocates for their child.

★ Before the conference, parents:
• Encourage their child’s involvement in the learning process.
• Familiarize themselves with the conference process.
• Support their child’s review of learning goals for the student-led conference.
• Prepare a list of questions for discussion.

★ During the conference, parents:
• Provide encouragement, praise, and reinforcement.
• Assist their child in identifying strengths and learning goals.
• Work with their child and teachers to determine the next steps for learning.
• Agree on the date of the next conference to address progress or concerns.

★ After the conference, parents:
• Participate in the conference evaluation.
• Discuss the long-term value of their child’s engagement in learning.

Continue to review new goals and the next steps for learning with their child.

What is the Role of the
Teacher?

Teachers help students prepare for the conference.

★ **Before the conference, teachers:**

- Guide students in the collection of work samples and review of learning goals.
- Review learning goals.
- Explain the conference as a learning process to parents.
- Organize the conference area for successful communication.
- Set up a conferencing schedule.

★ **During the conference, teachers:**

- Act as a guide and offer positive feedback.
- Identify new learning goals with students and parents.
- Inquire about students’ long-term career goals.
- Assist students and parents in determining the next steps for learning.
- Agree on the date of the next conference to address progress or concerns.

★ **After the conference, teachers:**

- Provide feedback to students and parents about the conference process.
- Review new goals and next steps for learning with students and parents.

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