

Middle School Guidance



Parent/Teacher Conferences

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Question: How can I, as a parent, make the most of parent/student/teacher conferences?

Answer: When I began teaching, two decades ago, parent-teacher conferences, more often than not, began with a sincere question: "Is my child behaving?" Over the years, the most common question had shifted to, "Does my child have an 'A'?" I don't think it is a question of entitlement. I think our society, some 20 or more years ago, made a shift from being concerned about behavior to being concerned about success. I happen to think both are important. Conferencing is a place to start. Quite frankly, as parents and/or educators, conferences make many of us nervous. We recently spent some intense discussion focused on this question. Here are some of our thoughts. First of all, please go to conferences. If you want your child to be interested in school, please show interest in your child's school experience. Go to conferences every time, but especially attend the last conference at a school and the first conference at the new school. These are the transition conferences. It will help you understand the sometimes difficult shift your child may experience when changing schools and levels. Conferences have changed in how they look, also. It used to be the parent(s) with the teacher (notice, without the student) on a discovery

mission through the grade book to find out how the student was "doing" in class. Now, in many school districts, the parents have access to that information on-line. Come sit with your teacher and your child, please, and learn about how your child learns and what they are doing in the classroom environment. Listen to your child talk about the joys and challenges of learning that particular subject. Don't look at individual grades, but look at the trends in your child's learning. Hear what the teacher has planned as far as outcomes in the class, and how every student can contribute to the learning happening in the entire class. All of this will give you talking points for further conversations with your child. Continuing the conversation at home keeps a spotlight on the importance of learning. Conferences are not discovery of grade and assignment missions anymore, nor are they complaint/conflict sessions. If you feel the teacher isn't answering your questions or has a conflict with your child, and you have talked to the teacher with no results, then you could/should schedule a meeting with the teacher and an administrator to work on solutions to a defined problem. Don't expect the "moon," but a common goal is not unreasonable. I reiterate: Please go to conferences. Support

your child. Please, also, support your child's teacher and school. Everyone is pretty nervous in these days of cut and stretched dollars. Come with an open hand and open ears and you will find the same. A child's teacher will celebrate your child's success and behavior with you. Continue that celebration and conversation about education at home. Together, we are the change education needs. (The Journal News, 1999)

Quote of the month "Win or lose, pass or fail; in most cases, it's a matter of choice. We decide first in our minds and then implement it through our actions."



**Happy
Thanksgiving**

Points of Interest:

- ✓ - Absent from school? Check out the teacher lesson plans by logging into the Logic House Parent Portal.
- ✓ - Excuses are due the day students return to school. A grace period of three days is allowed before becoming illegal.
- ✓ - Bullying information can be found at: <http://www.bbsd.com/bullying>

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Important Upcoming Events

The following are a listing of important dates to remember:

November 2, 2010 - End of First Nine Week Grading Period.

November 15, 2010 - ACT 80 Day. Parent/Teacher Conferences.

November 24, 2010 - Early dismissal.

November 25, 2010 - Happy Thanksgiving.

November 26 through November 30, 2010 - Thanksgiving vacation.

November 29, 2010 - Buck/doe season begins.

December 9, 2010 - Second Nine Week Grading Mid-Term.

December 23, 2010 - Early dismissal.

December 24, 2010 - Christmas Eve.

December 25, 2010 - Merry Christmas.

December 26 through December 30, 2010 - Christmas vacation.

December 31, 2010 - New Year's Eve.

January 1, 2011 - Happy New Year.

January 3, 2011 - Student return from Christmas vacation.