


Process Three (of 6)

A step-by-step guide for

CHECKING THE COURSE AT CONFERENCES

NOTE: Steps marked with a 

are accompanied by one or more inserts,

included in this packet.

Parent Teacher Conferences are one part of an overall approach to organizing family involvement.

- 1 Use Professional Development time** to orient teachers to the goals and procedures for conferences.
Role play exercises to help teachers, especially new teachers, to anticipate and deal positively with typical parent questions.
- 2 Arrange generous time for conferences.** Provide substitutes if added time is needed.
Many parents cannot easily get off work to attend conferences. Attempt to coordinate conferences for parents with more than one child. Prepare a separate letter explaining how to do that for families with siblings in your school.
- 3 Provide child care, refreshments, translation services and transportation, if necessary.**
Work with the Family Group or your local high school to arrange these support services. Let parents know they're available.
- 4 Notify parents well in advance** of the conference dates and times. Repeat the notices in newsletters often.
Send home information that tells parents about the conference process, give them some questions to consider and discuss how to bring up and address concerns.
- 5 Consider involving students** in Parent-Teacher Conferences. There are many benefits to doing so, including increased parent attendance. Perhaps 2-3 teachers would pilot the idea and report their experience to the rest of the staff.
We've included one article (INSERT A for Conferences Step 5) exploring the reasons for inviting students into the conferences. Others are available at www.asia.indstate.edu/guidingallkids/studentledconferencing.htm and www.education-world.com/a_admin112.shtml
www.rialto.k12.ca.us/frisbie/coyote/interdeisciplinary6.html
- 6 Collect samples of each child's work** to share at the conference.
- 7 Plan carefully what you hope to accomplish.** Teachers must decide what information to share, what problems need solving, and what information they need from the parent. **DO NOT OVERWHELM THE PARENT.** Settle on no more than two or three concerns to be discussed.
Include a copy of "Students' self-rating." See INSERT A for CONFERENCE Step 7. Use the checklist included as INSERT B for CONFERENCE Step 7 to be sure you're ready. If students are leading the conference, develop an agenda to guide all participants, as illustrated by the sample agenda in INSERT C for Step 7.
- 8 Remind parents** of the time, location and length of conference.
Include any expectations you have for the conference.
- 9 Ask parents for feedback** about how the conference worked.
INSERT for CONFERENCE Step 9 suggests one form for soliciting feedback.

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