

Parent Survival Guide to Student Led Conferences

Frequently Asked Questions

Why Student Led Conferences?

Responsibility is one of our core ethical values at Truman Middle School, and what better way for our students to demonstrate **personal responsibility and accountability** for their academic performance than by leading their own conference? Student-led conferences are emerging as a positive alternative to traditional parent-teacher conferences. Parent attendance is higher, parents and students engage in open and honest dialogue about learning, and students develop important organizational and oral communication skills as they present their portfolio of work.

What can I expect at the Conference?

At the conference, your child will do most of the talking as he or she shares work samples and discusses progress and goals in each class. Then, you will have the opportunity to ask questions. You may want to ask your child why they received a certain grade, if they interact well with his/her teacher, or how much time they devoted to a certain project (**see our list of suggested questions**). Sixth grade parents may want to ask how their child is adapting to middle school, while eighth grade parents may want to begin to talk about the transition to high school.

How are the teachers involved in Student Led Conferences?

In student led conferences, the spotlight is on the most important person in the process: **the student**. While the core team teachers (math, science, social studies, and English) will be in the room, **they will not be directly involved in your discussions with your child**. They are available to support the students if needed, to clarify points, or answer questions. Since many conferences are going on at once, they have a very limited time to speak with parents. All elective, PE, Reading and Math Strategies teachers will be available in the cafeteria. Make sure you and your child stop by to review the work in their portfolio from these specialty classes. As with core teachers, the teachers in the cafeteria are available for quick questions or clarifications.

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Suggested Questions and Conversation Starters

In an effort to make student-led conferences as beneficial as possible, below is a list of questions to ask your child as you sit down and review his/her portfolio of work together.

- Why do you think you received this grade for this work?
- Was this grade a fair assessment of the work you did?
- How much time did you devote to this project/paper?
- What would you say is your best/worst subject?
- What do you enjoy the most/least about this subject?
- Do you participate in class discussions and activities?
- Do you interact with your teacher well?
- Is there something you wish your teacher knew about you?
- Do you work well with a partner?
- Are there times when you prefer to work alone?
- What strengths or weaknesses do you bring to group projects?
- Who do you sit with at lunch?
- Is there someone in your class that you wish you knew better?

Conversation after the conference...

- I am pleased to see your effort in...
- I am proud of your improvement in...
- I know you sometimes have difficulty with..., however...
- I would like you to focus on...
- I can help you by...