

St. Example School

Student-Led Conference Faculty Handbook

Description of Student-Led Conferences

Objectives of SLCs

SLC Learning Targets

Role of Student

Role of Subject Teacher

Role of Teacher

Role of the Parent

Role of School

Supporting Documents

Student Self-Evaluation Template

Student-Led Conference Scheduling Template for Teachers

Student-Led Conference Scheduling Template to Post

Student-Led Conference Assessment Template

Conference Concerns/Comments For Subject Teachers

Concerns For Students Earning Less Than a 75

Student Preparation Checklist for Student-Led Conferences

Sample Student Agenda

Sample Student-Led Conferences Student Script

Achievement Support Plan

Description of Student-Led Conferences (SLCs)

St. Example School considers the relationship between students' families and the school to be of paramount importance. The school invites students and their families to attend formal conferences three times during the school year. At St. Example, Student-Led Conferences replace the traditional parent/teacher conference. SLCs are attended by the student, parent/guardian, and other adults the student would like to be present. The teacher facilitates the meeting, but the student is in charge.

During the conference, students explain their progress toward and mastery of academic (content/skill) and character (habits of work and learning) learning targets. Students justify their progress by leading their families through a portfolio of assignments culled from academic classes.

Students justify progress in each class by referencing specific assignments and mastery of learning targets. Students also complete self-evaluations of their performance in each class and share them with their families.

Adapted from: Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School Minds in Motion

Students are held accountable for their progress when they explain areas of strength and areas needing improvement. The conference's tone is positive, focusing on what can be done to ensure success as opposed to what has been done poorly.

Objectives of Student-Led Conferences:

To increase student accountability and autonomy concerning academics and their habits of work and learning.
To hone student verbal communication and critical thinking skills. To emphasize St. Example School's student-centered philosophy.
To build open relationships with families concerning student progress at St. Example School.
To help students meet speaking standards.
To teach students how to persuade by substantiating claims with evidence.

Student-Led Conference Learning Targets
Habits of Work and Learning
SLEs
Content/Skills

Role of the Student

The student is the main player in the student-led conference. Teachers and crew advisors guide the students through the conference process and help the students prepare, but the responsibility of conveying information to parents and families rests on the students.

Students continually self-assess their progress based on learning targets.
Each student keeps graded assignments in the appropriate binder or the student work folder. Students do not throw away work.

Two weeks before conferences, students cull two to three pieces of work from each of their academic working folders demonstrating their ability to meet learning targets. Students put work in a single folder that they take from class to class.

Students complete self-evaluation checklists for each academic class. They reflect on their progress and the areas they need to improve. Students are prepared to share goals and strategies to obtain these goals with the important adults in their lives.

They practice substantiating their grades with evidence from various assignments and their mastery of learning targets by participating in mock conferences during crew and subject classes.

Students write formal invitations to their parents to invite them to SLCs.

Students make sure their parents fill out surveys and bring them to their crew advisors. Students write formal thank-you notes to their parents post-SLCs.

Role of the Subject Teacher

The subject teacher is responsible for keeping the student informed about his or her progress according to learning targets. The teacher is also responsible for helping students select appropriate work to bring to the conference and for providing class time for this purpose.

Each subject teacher creates a file system of student work. All assignments are placed in these folders. Students are taught to keep assignments available, either in their binders or in their working folders.

Each subject teacher creates a list of learning intentions for each unit covered during the marking period. As a general practice, the teacher explains the connection between assignments and learning targets. Teacher assessment is aligned with student mastery of learning intentions. The teacher helps students learn to explain academic progress in learning intentions mastery. Grading is transparent, and students know how they are doing in a specific class at all times, so the final grade is never a surprise.

Two weeks before conferences, teachers provide students with opportunities to cull work demonstrating mastery of learning intentions. Teachers help students select two to three assignments that show the learning process, preferably a multi-step project instead of a quick quiz. Improvement in skill mastery, like a gradual improvement in multiplication facts, geography recollection, or specific grammar exercises, can be shown in graph form to emphasize trends in progress, as opposed to performance on an assignment in isolation.

Teachers create a self-evaluation form for students to complete according to their success in the class. This form includes the major learning targets and an area for goal setting. Students plan ways to meet goals in the upcoming quarters.

Teachers model verbal exposition of the connection between assignments and learning target mastery.

Teachers provide class time for students to practice substantiating their grades with evidence from their assignments. Teachers run mock conferences specific to their subject area.

After the conferences, teachers make sure to contact any parent concerned about his/her child's progress in a timely manner.

Teachers should be prepared to speak to the parents of any child who has failed the class or dropped significantly in either conduct or academic performance.

Role of the Parent/Guardian

The parent/guardian is the second most essential attendee to the Student-Led Conference and should be briefed about the format and objectives of the SLC so that the conference runs smoothly.

The parent must be willing to let the student speak, saving questions until the end. The parent/guardian arrives on time.

The parent/guardian shares any lingering concerns with the crew advisors, who will inform the subject teacher.

The parent/guardian helps the student meet academic and behavioral goals by supporting their progress at home.

Role of the School

The school prearranges Student-Led conference days, notifying teachers, students, and parents in a timely manner.

The school shares the student-led conference format with the parents and is clear about the objectives of these meetings.

The school encourages parent questions about our conference format.

The school sends multiple reminders home to families in English and other appropriate languages.

The school responds to parental concerns promptly.

Student Self-Evaluation Template

Teachers: Fill in the major assignments the children have completed this quarter/trimester. Write in the major Learning Intentions assessed by these projects. Help the students self-evaluate by modeling the evaluation of an important project. Students may find self-evaluation easier if they have the assignments in front of them. You may want to allow students to select their assignments to self-evaluate.

Name: Class: Date:

Class: Teacher:

Directions: Rate your mastery of each learning target. Consider your performance on projects that assess each learning target.

Learning Intentions

4

3

2

1

Assignment:

Assignment:

Assignment:

Assignment:

What were some of your strengths this quarter/trimester?

1.

2.

3.

What are your goals for next quarter/trimester?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What changes can you make in your study habits to help you achieve these goals?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Preparation Checklist

Pre-Conference/Scheduling Logistics

- I have scheduled a conference for each student in my class, paying specific attention to families with multiple children attending St. Example School.
- Each family knows when to arrive and where the conference will be held.
- I know the first and last names of any adults that will be attending the conference.
- I have created other arrangements for parents who cannot attend the regular conference times.

Pre-Conference/Student Logistics

- I have helped students organize assignments and prepare for conferences by reviewing student self-evaluation forms, helping students set new goals, and guiding students in creating action plans to meet those goals.
- I have helped students develop agendas for the conference time and have helped them learn to manage time wisely when speaking.
- I have helped students learn appropriate speaking skills.
- I have set aside time for students to practice student-led conferences with peers.
- I have reviewed the Student-Led conference assessment rubric with students. They know what they need to do!
- I know my students! I know what classes they are excelling in and in which they struggle. I know if they are having trouble with behavior in a specific class or homework in another. I definitely know if a student is failing a class and I've spoken with the subject teacher to find out why. I know if the child's family is going through a difficult time. I know with whom each student lives and if there has been a change in the home environment. I know the names of my students' parents and I think I may recall the names of a sibling or two. I know if a student is habitually tardy or late. Nothing is a surprise to me.

Materials for Conferences

- I have a copy of the conference schedule posted outside my classroom.
- I have set up chairs in the hallway for families that arrive early.

Adapted from: Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School Minds in Motion

- I have a container next to me filled with portfolio materials arranged in the order of the conference schedule. I do not waste time by looking for work.
- The students' report cards, evaluations, and other important documents are already in the folders.
- I have a group of desks arranged to promote small group discussion. Multiple chairs are available. There is a place for smaller children to sit and play quietly. My crew may have provided refreshments, which I have set up in an area away from the conferences and portfolios. I am prepared for spills.
- I have a copy of the conference schedule in front of me.
- I have a timer or watch and multiple pens.
- I know which papers need to be signed and I have a folder in which to keep signed documents.
- I have a sheet on which to record parental concerns that cannot be addressed during the conference.

During the Conference...

- I stick to the schedule. I make sure that each conference ends before the next begins.
- If a parent wants to meet with a teacher I record that information and tell the subject teacher the next day.
- I let the student talk. I may ask probing questions or direct the student to the agenda, but I do not dominate the conversation. I help the student if the parent is talking too much, and I try to redirect the conversation if the parent begins to get upset.
- I make sure all of the paper distribution and signing happens without taking away from the student's presentation.
- I am prepared to answer questions about why the parents are meeting with me and not the subject teachers and SLCs in general.
- I welcome each family, preferably using names, and thank them for coming. I remind families that the student will do most of the talking and that it is best to save questions for the end.
- I thank each family for coming and reaffirm my availability for current or future concerns and give them a survey to fill out at home.

Student Name: Class: Date: Family Member:

CONFERENCE CONCERNS/COMMENTS FOR SUBJECT TEACHERS

Please record any additional conference concerns or comments for subject teachers.

Subject

Comments

Math

Please call: # Please call to schedule a meeting: #

Science

Please call: # Please call to schedule a meeting: #

Social Studies

Please call: # Please call to schedule a meeting: #

ELA

Please call: # Please call to schedule a meeting: #

Music

Please call: # Please call to schedule a meeting: #

Other

Please call: # Please call to schedule a meeting: #

Student Preparation Checklist for Student-Led Conferences

- I have work from each of my academic classes in my folder.
- I have completed evaluations for each academic class.
- I understand how my work and mastery of learning targets have resulted in my grade in each academic subject currently.
- I know my strengths and weaknesses as a student.
- I know how I can improve for next trimester: I have set goals and created an action plan for each class.
- I know how my behavior, attendance, and tardiness are affecting my academic progress.
- I have practiced speaking about my work in my home language.
- I feel comfortable talking about my progress.
- I understand how my performance during student-led conferences will be assessed.
- I am familiar with the conference agenda.
- I have given any information about conferences to my parents.
- I have sent home an invitation to the conferences.
- My parents know when we are supposed to arrive and where the conference will be held.
- My parents understand that if we are late they will not be able to have the full conference time.
- My parents know that I will be doing most of the talking during the conference.

Name: Class: Date:

Sample Student Agenda

1. Arrive on time.
2. Sit outside the classroom until I am invited in by the teacher.
3. Reintroduce my family members.
4. Thank my family for coming.
5. Briefly explain the format and objectives of the student-led conference, reminding my parents to save questions for the end.
6. Show my family my report card, pointing out academic and study habits/sles grades, as well as the teacher comments and attendance and tardiness.
7. Mention which subject seems to be the best and in which I am struggling the most.
8. Go through each subject, showing work samples, explaining learning target mastery, and sharing my goals and action plan for improvement.

9. Share with my parent how they can help me at home.
10. Ask my parents if they have any questions.
11. Give my parents and my crew advisor time to fill out paperwork.
12. Thank my family and my crew advisor.
13. Help my family to refreshments.
14. Make sure my family fills out the conference survey.
15. Bring the survey back!

Student

Crew

SAMPLE Student-Led Conferences Student Script

Introduce guest(s) to the crew leader.

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking time to come to my conference. This is an opportunity for me to share who I am as a learner.

Here is my progress report. (student reads through the progress report)

I know that a strength of mine is _____ and that I need help with _____ in most of my classes.

One study skills/SLE strength I have is _____, because I _____

One study skills/SLE need I have is _____, because I _____

My portfolio contains work from my classes, including my most rewarding and most challenging pieces that I wanted to share at my conference.

About my work...

I will start by telling you about my most rewarding piece of work is _____. It is most rewarding, because _____

A learning target we focused on was _____

This sample of work shows I met this learning target, because I am able to _____

My most challenging piece of work is _____. It is most challenging because _____. A learning target we focused on was _____

This sample of work shows I met this learning target, because I am able to _____

Goals

Academic:

What I will do to have more success in my most challenging class is

Character:

One thing I will do to improve my study skills/SLEs is

Ask: Do you have any questions?

Conclusion

After looking at the progress report and getting feedback from the listeners, conclude the presentation by saying:

Thank you for supporting me by coming to my Student-Led Conference.

ACHIEVEMENT SUPPORT PLAN

ACADEMIC

STRENGTHS:

NEEDS:

Suggestions for support:

HABITS OF WORK AND LEARNING

STRENGTHS:

NEEDS:

Suggestions for support:

ACHIEVEMENT PLAN:

THE STUDENT COMMITS TO:

o STUDY SEMINAR/HOMEWORK HELP/TUTORING DAYS: T W R THE FAMILY COMMITS TO:

THE SCHOOL COMMITS TO:

STUDENT TEACHER FAMILY MEMBER