

Notes about the conference

Follow-up plans

Teacher contact information

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www.pps.net/departments/school-family-partnerships

Portland Public Schools

501 N. Dixon St. • Portland, OR 97227 • www.pps.k12.or.us

“Tips for a Successful Parent-Teacher Conference” is based on information from the State of Washington Office of the Education Ombudsman.



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Tips for a successful parent-teacher conference



Parent-teacher conferences are a time for parents/guardians and teachers to share information, solve problems and form relationships that will help students succeed.

You know more about your student than anyone at school. Your student's teacher (or teachers) needs to hear from you. And you need to hear from the teacher(s). Talking with the teacher about your student will help pave the way for your student to do

well in class and will help you understand what is being taught in the classroom.

Classroom conferences are usually 15 to 30 minutes. Conferences for students taking multiple classes (at the high school level, where they may be in the gym or cafeteria) may be shorter. They often are the beginning of an ongoing conversation about your student. If you run out of time, you can always request and schedule a follow-up meeting.

Before the conference

- ▶ Talk with your student to understand his or her questions and concerns about school.
- ▶ Check progress reports, report cards and work your student has brought home.
- ▶ Think of questions you want to ask the teacher. (See the checklist for possible questions, and add your own.)
- ▶ Write down information about your student that the teacher should know, such as a family death, divorce, changed finances, illness or a new home. (You can use the checklist below.)
- ▶ All adults with a role in a student's education — mother, father, grandparent, guardian — are encouraged to attend the conference.
- ▶ If English is not your first language, have someone contact the school before the parent-teacher conference and request an interpreter to assist you during the meeting.
- ▶ If you can't make the scheduled appointment, arrange another time with your student's teacher.

At the conference

- ▶ Ask the teacher what your student should know by the end of the school year.
- ▶ Ask how you can support your student's learning at home.
- ▶ If you don't understand something, ask the teacher to explain.
- ▶ Find out the best way (notes, phone calls, e-mail) and the best time to communicate with the teacher. (Middle and high school families now can communicate through the EdBox Viewer — ask a teacher if you need information.) Exchange contact information with the teacher.
- ▶ Be aware that the teacher needs to talk to other families. Ask to schedule a follow-up meeting, if necessary.

After the conference

- ▶ Jot down a couple of notes about the conference. (The checklist includes space for notes.)
- ▶ Discuss with your student what the teacher told you, especially the positive comments. Talk about goals and make a plan to reach them together.
- ▶ If you are the parent of a young student, check your student's backpack daily for materials sent home from school. Read all of it. If English is not your first language, ask a relative or friend to read the school information to you in your language.
- ▶ Contact the teacher whenever you have questions. If your student is not doing well, set up a regular schedule with the teacher to monitor progress. If English is not your first language, get a friend to help you contact the teacher or to ask the school office for an interpreter.
- ▶ Send the teacher a thank-you note when something good happens in the classroom.
- ▶ Talk with your student every day about school. Attend school events and offer to help from home, volunteer in the classroom or join the parent organization.

Parent-Teacher Conference Checklist

You may want to take this form to the conference to help you make the most of your time with the teacher.

Questions for the teacher

Mark the questions that are most important to you, and add your own.

- How is my student doing? Is my student working up to his/her potential?
- Is this class appropriate for my student's ability level?
- Does my student pay attention in class?
- Does my student ask questions, volunteer answers, and participate in discussion?
- Is my student's homework completed thoroughly, accurately and on time?
- Can you show me some of my student's work?
- Is my student in class every day? Does he/she come to class on time?
- Is my student respectful and courteous?
- What are your expectations of my student?
- Do you have any advice or suggestions for me or for my student?
- Does my student finish assignments in class and turn in homework?
- Does my student join in class discussions?
- What does my student do well?
- Is my student having a difficult time in any areas?
- What resources are available at school to support my student's learning?
- What tests or big projects will happen this year?
- What is the best way to stay in touch about my student's progress through the year?
- What suggestions do you have for me to get involved with school, and to help my student succeed?
- What specific things can I do at home to help my student learn?
- How is my student's culture reflected in the classroom learning time?
- Other questions _____

Things to tell the teacher

- How my student learns best.
- Any big changes in the family — a new home, new people in the home, death or divorce.
- Medical conditions that affect my student.
- What has helped my student learn successfully in the past.
- What my student enjoys about school and the classroom.
- What is most challenging for my student in this class.
- Other _____