



Student Led Conferences

Purpose

To engage ALL students in their learning and share their progress with family. Student led conferences also allow for students to experience facilitating a “meeting” and apply the social graces needed in a group of people.

Format

The format is flexible, but typically follows something like this:

- Student welcome to everyone and introduces teacher to family, as well as agenda for conference
- Student conducts conference (using leadership notebook, grade report, or other artifacts)
- Student asks if there are any questions
- Teacher adds anything else (e.g., report card, work samples, clarifications to student comments)
- Student concludes conference and thanks everyone for coming

Leadership Notebook

The student’s leadership notebook serves as a great reference tool during the conference. At a minimum, the leadership notebook should include:

- Mission statement (individual, class, and school)
- Student goals (e.g., academic, behavior, personal)
- Scoreboards for tracking progress on goals
- Follow up actions on goals (identifies what the goal is, actions they will take, and how parents can help)
- Examples of student work that reflect success in those areas
- Examples of student work that reflect improvement is needed
- Daily/weekly reflections (for students, parents, and teachers)
- Celebrations (aka “smile file”)
- Evidence of leadership (e.g., work habits noted on report card, certificate for leadership roles, pictures)

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The leadership notebook should not contain so many work samples and assessments that it becomes overwhelming. Be thoughtful about what is incorporated into the notebook. All the extra “stuff” can be sent home after the conference.

For conference purposes, organize the notebook so that you will be able to work through it in order- it's one less thing for students to manage.

Considerations

- **Consistency within the school-** The Lighthouse team should identify those components of the conference that all students must do or incorporate. That said, student-led conferences are an awesome way to highlight the unique aspects of a student, class, or grade and autonomy to personalize the experience is encouraged.
- **Essential skills-** It's important to have students share about their work habits, soft skills, and social skills, not just academics.
- **100% of students-** All students should have the opportunity to practice and present their conference to an adult (even if family doesn't come). There are other adults in the school or volunteers who would love to have a conference with a student.
- **Demo conference-** For new teachers or staff that are unsure about conducting student-led conferences, provide a demonstration for them, share a video, or provide other necessary supports.
- **New process-** If student-led conferences are new to your building, you may want to consider an introduction by the student that will explain the agenda for the night. Also, invite parents to hold their inquiries for the teacher until the end of the conference.
- **Student self-assessments-** These tools can be included to reflect leadership inventories that students completed that highlight their perceptions of themselves as leaders.
- **Scaffolded support-** For younger students, students who struggle socially to communicate, or who have any special need, think about accommodations that can be made to help them have a successful experience: