

Parent Teacher Conference Guide

High School

High school is the time when parents often feel their presence at parent-teacher conferences isn't needed or valued, but high school is when grades start to count for college, career, and beyond. It's important for you to continue to stay involved and engaged. As the school work gets more challenging, these meetings can be intimidating and overwhelming for parents. Try to remember that building a relationship through face-to-face meetings is an opportunity for both you and the teacher to partner to understand and support your child and his academic and social development. It is even more likely in high school than in middle school for your child to be invited to the conference, and you should encourage your child to join and participate in the discussion.

- **Know what your most important question is going into the conference.**
This has never been more crucial than in high school. The teachers may have as many as 30 or 40 other students in the class and time is even more limited at these conferences. You want to make sure you get the main question answered. How is he doing? Is there anything I can do? Or anything I need to know?
- **Listen as much as you can.**
These conferences are likely to be very short and to the point on how your child is performing in this one specific subject, and you want to try to absorb as much as possible. You are likely to be going to six different classes, and you want to make sure you know how your child is performing in all of them. Take notes. You may even want to ask to record the conversation so you remember everything correctly after the meeting.
- **Ask the teacher how much time your child should be spending on his class per night.**
In high school, parents are often less aware than in middle or elementary school of what is needed for homework. Ask how long it should be taking your child to complete homework at night, and compare that with how long it is actually taking him. If the time is significantly longer, it may signal a problem with the class or understanding. If the time is shorter, and your child's grades are good, it may be a sign that your child is ready for more advanced work.
- **Ask about work completion.**
As in middle school, you want to ask your child's teacher if he is turning his work in on time and if he is completing the assignments. This is especially important in the first year of high school, as your child transitions to an even more rigorous workload than in middle school. Developing time-management skills that will be crucial in high school and beyond will help the transition go smoothly and prepare your child for the years that follow.
- **Ask about extracurricular activities and schoolwork.**
In high school, students often take on more extracurricular activities, and it is important to ask the teacher if your child appears to have enough time to devote to school time. Is he racing to complete assignments the morning after a big game or school play? Does the quality of his schoolwork suffer when he spends extra time volunteering? While extracurricular activities are important to building your child's secondary education applications and contribute to a well-rounded young adult, they shouldn't come at the expense of his grades.
- **Ask what sort of career or college the teacher thinks your child will be successful in.**
As you and your child start to think about life beyond high school, teachers can offer valuable insight into how prepared your child is to handle advanced workflow and time management, whether your child is preparing for a 4-year-university, vocational school, or the workforce.

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