

Principal's Letter October 16, 2009

Dear Parents,

Conferences are scheduled for next week, and unless things have changed since my children went to school, there is a certain amount of trepidation that parents feel as they enter the classroom. Is my child "measuring up?" Will I be in for an unpleasant surprise? Should I have done more to help my child? I think it's good to look at the purpose of the parent-teacher conference so that we can ease the stress associated with conferences and better understand the role of the parent and the teacher in the equation.

The conference allows the teacher to become better acquainted with the relationship between parent and child. It presents an opportunity for the teacher to interpret to parents their child's growth and progress in school. The conference also serves to create a positive home-school working relationship with parents and teachers so that the needs of the child can best be met.

During the conference, the teacher gets to see the child through the parents' perspective. With a common understanding, the teacher and parent can work together to establish mutual goals for the good of the child.

How can parents help to prepare their students for the conference? Whether or not the students are in attendance, some children voice concern that the coming together of parents and teachers during the conference is a conspiracy. Please stress to the child that we have their best interests in mind. Invite them to share with you any concerns that they think should be discussed at the conference. Ask them to tell you what they are proud of, and what areas they can identify where they might need help.

After the conferences, discuss with your children the results of the conference. Celebrate the successes, and work together to develop strategies for making positive changes. Let them know that assessments are a way to measure where we are and where we need to be.

Talk about the role assessment plays in your adult world. Adults get job reviews and improvement plans that help to guide them in their careers. We all have room for improvement, but change does not occur unless a person has insight. Help your child to develop insight-what is motivating them, what is holding them back, what areas do they need help in, how do they get help, and how hard work does eventually pay off.

Finally, offer the hope of new beginnings. Each day is a new day; encourage your child to realize that they have the power to make changes that will affect their future. Then go out and eat ice cream!

Have a great weekend,

Sheila