

Parent-Teacher Conferences 2015-16 Maximizing Potential to Improve Student Progress

To support our students academically in and out of school, administrators, teachers, and families need to have a shared understanding of their children's learning and work as partners to meet their academic and social-emotional needs. As you plan to implement next year's instructional expectations, consider how open school nights and parent-teacher conferences can engage families and help you meet your goals for students. Last summer we developed resources to help engage families around the Common Core. Visit the [Common Core Library](#) to access these resources.

Maximizing Time with Families

- **Structure your open school nights for maximum success.** Organize parent-teacher conferences around advisory or other groupings of students pertinent to your school. Publicize open school nights through fliers and newsletters to promote parent attendance. Where appropriate, include students.
- **Student-led parent-teacher conferences.** Student-led conferences are an innovative approach that promote a shared responsibility for student achievement and encourages students to apply critical thinking skills. For more information visit the [Family Engagement page on the Common Core Library](#).
- **Schedule appointments with each student's family.** To reduce traffic and ensure you have enough time to meet with families, schedule appointments in advance. Send reminders to families about their appointments one week prior to meeting. Encourage families to also speak with other school staff, like parent coordinators and guidance counselors.
- **Communicate with families on an ongoing basis.** When you communicate with families throughout the year, remind them of upcoming opportunities to meet with school staff, as well as where to direct their questions and where to go to for help and more information. Visit the [Parent-Teacher Conference Resource page](#) for more information.
- **Provide Translation and Interpretation Services.** Teachers should use the translation and interpretation resources and services as needed to better communicate with limited -English-proficient parents. School-based personnel should visit the [Over-the-phone Interpretation Intranet page](#) for instructions on how to directly access interpreters over the phone for conferences. Translate any relevant flyers and signs into appropriate languages. In addition, translated versions of many commonly-used letters, forms, and applications are available on the [Translated Documents Intranet page](#), including a [Parent-Teacher Conference Notification template](#) in nine languages.

School Opening

- **Welcome families to your school.** In September non D75 single session schools should host an evening conference. The September conference shall not be a traditional parent-teacher conference but rather used for an alternative event using one of the following formats: Curriculum Night, Meet the Staff Night, Common Core, other training for Parents Night, or another non-traditional format. The default format for the September conference shall be "Meet the Staff" night.
- **Family Engagement.** Families should be encouraged to ask questions and learn how they should escalate concerns, how they can access information outside of school hours, and when they can visit your school. Give parents specific recommendations for how they can support your school's needs and goals this year, through opportunities such as volunteering, fundraising, and parent leadership.
- **Share the goals of the Common Core with families.** Host workshops where families can learn about the Common Core standards and the skills students should master by the end of their current grade. Ask families to try a Common Core task to help them understand changes they will see in the classroom.
- **Provide professional development.** Provide teachers with information about best practices to conduct effective parent-teacher conferences and help staff plan communication with families throughout the school year.

Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences

- **Make information about student progress accessible.** Help families understand how and when they can access information about student performance and attendance. Be prepared to talk about student strengths and growth areas.
- **Provide strategies to families.** Ask teachers to share one strategy with families that they can use at home to help their child meet instructional goals this year.

- **Share your school's plans for the continued implementation of the Common Core Curriculum.** Discuss the Common Core Curriculum and assessment changes with families. Discuss how their child's classroom and homework may be different as compared to previous years.

Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences

- **Share student performance on the culminating task with families.** Share student work product on the Common Core-aligned task. Compare that to the student's work used for baseline analysis. Help parents understand their child's strengths and development areas in the work.
- **Share a sample of exemplary student performance.** Show families on-grade-level Common Core-aligned work to help them understand the expectations for higher-quality student work.

Preparing for the End of the School Year

- **May Conference.** The conference held in May can be used to review students' promotion forecasts as well as any other aspects of a student's academic portfolio. The programming of this evening is left to the discretion of the school.

Open School Week 2015-16

This year, Open School Week is celebrated from November 16 - November 20, 2015. Schools should encourage families to visit classes during this week to observe what is taking place in their child(ren)'s school. This is a critical time to reinforce parent-school relationships that will lead to the dynamic partnerships necessary to ensure the educational success of each student. Schools should provide stimulating programs and conferences, as well as make available materials and exhibits for children and parents that encourage families to visit schools.

The Division of Family and Community Engagement's Parent Coordinator Connections newsletter will include information and resources on how to support best practices for parent-teacher conferences. Principals should work with parent coordinators to establish procedures for parent visits to classrooms, and include those procedures in notices that schools send home. Those procedures should also be filed with the local district office. All notices should be translated in the home language of parents to ensure greater participation.

Parent-Teacher Conference Policy

The parent-teacher conference dates listed in this communication are not intended to limit other types of meetings that take place between teachers and families throughout the school year. In addition to the dates listed below, the use of grade, class, guidance, and individual conferences between parents and school personnel, are excellent practices that should take place throughout the school year.

Schools should not deviate from the citywide dates for afternoon conferences listed below; doing so may create issues with transportation services. If individual parents have date and time conflicts, they should be encouraged to schedule a parent-teacher conference at a mutually agreed-upon time. To ensure maximum use of available instructional time, scheduling additional half days for parent-teacher conferences is not permitted. One afternoon parent-teacher conference date each semester is scheduled per school level. Schools receive conference day credit toward meeting the 180-day State instructional requirement. For purposes of the Period Attendance Report (PAR), all days scheduled for afternoon parent-teacher conferences should be recorded as instructional.

2015-16 Parent-Teacher Conference Dates

Single session, non D-75 schools will now hold 4 evening conferences throughout the school year (including Meet the Staff Night in September). *Schools may obtain a School Based Option (SBO) and select dates for evening conferences that are different from those listed. The date and time selected must be conducive to parent participation; conferences should not begin before 4:30 p.m. and end no later than 8:00 p.m. Afternoon dates should not be rescheduled without central approval.

Please note that for single session, non-D75 schools, a three-hour time period is required for evening conferences. Principals are reminded to request security coverage at least one week before evening conferences. For half day pre-kindergarten programs at public school sites, see the section below. Parents should be notified at least four weeks' prior to the conferences. Notices should be translated into languages represented in the school population.

District 75 school programs co-located with non-D75 schools should adhere to their co-located school's afternoon and evening parent-teacher conference dates as indicated below. Self-contained District 75 schools should follow the schedule below for District 75 school programs.

Note: Schools that include grades with more than one instructional level (i.e., a K-8 or 6-12 school), should choose one of the citywide dates at either of the instructional levels of the student which it serves.

High Schools should **Cancel Evening Activities on Sept. 30, Nov. 19, March 10 and May 10**. For high schools: adult and continuing education activities will be canceled in schools on the evenings conferences are held.

Grade Level	Fall 2015		Spring 2016	
	*Evening Date	Afternoon Date	*Evening Date	Afternoon Date
Elementary	ⁱ Thur., Sept. 17 Wed., Nov. 4	Thur., Nov. 5	Wed., March 2 ⁱ Thur., May 12	Thur., March 3
Intermediate & Junior High Schools	ⁱ Wed., Sept. 16 Wed., Nov. 18	Tue., Nov. 17	Wed., March 16 ⁱ Wed., May 11	Thur., March 17
High Schools	ⁱ Tue., Sept. 30 Thur., Nov. 19	Fri., Nov. 20	Thur., March 10 ⁱ Tue., May 10	Fri., March 11
District 75 School Programs	Mon., Nov. 9	Tues., Nov. 10	Mon., March 7	Tues., March 8

ⁱ The evening conferences held in September and May only apply to single session, non-D75 schools

Transportation Procedures for Students on Days of the Afternoon Conferences

Two hours of school time are devoted to afternoon parent-teacher conferences at each school. Students are released early from school for this time period. Students will receive bus transportation in accordance with their dismissal schedules. **Student dismissal should be three hours prior to what would have been the regular dismissal time for the day.**

The Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) will handle arrangements with bus companies to pick up students on the shortened days, provided schools have followed the conference schedule listed above. While schools do not need to contact OPT, it is recommended that schools confirm with the bus drivers a few days prior to the scheduled shortened days. Principals should make appropriate arrangements regarding lunch schedules and ensure that parents are informed of any changes.

Scheduling Half-day Pre-kindergarten Programs at Public School Sites

The fall and spring terms should be equal in length for all students. On the fall term elementary school afternoon conference date, a.m. pre-kindergarten students should attend the morning session, while p.m. pre-kindergarten students should not be scheduled to attend school on that day. On the spring term elementary school afternoon conference date, p.m. pre-kindergarten program pupils should attend the morning session, while a.m. pre-kindergarten program pupils should not be scheduled to attend school on that day.

Report on 2015-16 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conference attendance data should be reported on the [Parent Coordinator Activity Report](#). Principals and Parent Coordinators have access to this tool and principals may also designate another staff member as a PCAR User in Galaxy. The information should be entered for the week that the parent-teacher conference was held. Parent coordinators should submit this data by the 15th of the following month. Detailed instructions are available [here](#). For questions, e-mail FACE@schools.nyc.gov.

Have your Questions Answered:

- For questions regarding pupil transportation of pre-kindergarten children, call (718) 482-3800. For all other transportation questions, schools should contact OPT at (718) 392-8855.
- For all other questions regarding this document, Principals should contact their Superintendent.
- View the [translated report cards](#) for all grades.