



McCracken
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Student Led Conference

**PARENT and STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

*Inspire and Equip Every Child With Every
Opportunity Every Day!*



Dear Parents,

We are so excited about our upcoming student led conference days and we know you are too. For many of you this will be your first student led conference and we know you may have some questions about what is involved and what is the role of each person in attendance. For these reasons we have developed this handbook to answer those questions and to lay the foundation for a successful and positive conference. We hope you will find this helpful.

By your conference date your child will have worked for weeks during our SOAR time preparing a portfolio to share with you. Included in the portfolio your child will share with you is

- Student Produced Script for the Conference
- Successes and Areas for Improvement
- Assignments from All Classes
- MAP Scores and Explanation
- SCPASS and SC College and Career Ready Test Scores
- School Experiences
- Learning Goals for the Year
- Plans for Increased Success Experiences
- Suggested Parent Questions

Building positive, strong and dynamic relationships with our families is so important. The Student Led Conference is a fantastic opportunity for your child to share with you in a positive way the accomplishments of the first nine weeks and plans for the remainder of the school year. We look forward to seeing you on October 23 or 25 this year.

With Eagle Pride,

The Faculty and Staff of McCracken Middle School

McCracken Middle School Student Led Conference Handbook

What is a Student Led Conference?

“Without a significant relationship, no significant learning can occur.” James P. Comer

McCracken Middle School values the relationship between our students’ families and our school staff and considers it to be one of the most important factors in a student’s success. It is of paramount importance. During the school year, we extend a formal invitation to our parents and students to attend a student led conference (SLC). At this time the student presents his/her report card to the parent and begins the student led conference. A content area teacher is present to help facilitate, but the student is in charge of this conference.

During the conference, students explain their progress toward and mastery of both academic and character (habits of work and learning) learning goals. Students justify their progress by leading their families through a portfolio of assignments selected from all classes.

Students justify 9 weeks grades in each class by discussing specific assignments that show their mastery of learning goals. Students also complete self evaluations of their performance in each class and share with families. **The tone of the conference is positive with a focus on what can be done to ensure success as opposed to what has not been done well. It is our goal to “Inspire and Equip” students for success by providing every opportunity for every child every day.**

Objectives of Student Led Conferences:

To increase student accountability and autonomy concerning academics along with their habits of work and learning.

To improve student verbal communication and critical thinking skills and to teach students how to substantiate claims with evidence.

To build dynamic relationships and forge partnerships with families concerning student progress.

To provide quality student-parent time with 100% participation for both.

To focus on learning instead of behavioral issues.

To help students develop soft skills and increase communication about learning goals between the parent/guardian and student.

To help parents understand what is happening in the classroom through the eyes of the child.

Role of the Student

The student is the main player in the student led conference. Teachers guide the students through the conference process and help the students prepare, but the responsibility of conveying information to parents and families rests on the students.

Students continually self assess their progress based on learning targets.

Each student keeps graded assignments in the appropriate binder or student work folder on his/her MacBook or in the folder provided by the teacher.

Several weeks before conferences students will select one to two pieces of work from each class that demonstrates their ability to meet learning targets. Students put work in a single SOAR folder that they take from class to class.

Students complete self evaluation checklists for each academic class. They reflect on their progress and the areas in which they need to improve. Students are prepared to share goals and strategies to obtain these goals with adults who play a significant role in their lives.

Students discuss strengths and areas for improvement during the conference.

They practice substantiating and explaining their grades with evidence from various assignments in all classes.

Students extend formal invitations to their parents to invite them to the SLC.

Students make sure that their parents complete surveys at the conclusion of the conference.

Students write a thank you note after the conference to their parent or caring adult for attending the SLC.

Role of the Academic Teacher

Each subject area teacher is responsible for keeping the student informed about his or her progress based on student learning goals. The teacher is also responsible for helping students select academic work to bring to the conference.

Teachers on a team share significant academic or behavioral concerns with each other and the student's SOAR teacher and adult advocate weekly. When those concerns arise the student's team of teachers contacts the parents to schedule a time to talk. All teachers of the student are invited to attend or to contribute thoughts for the conference.

Each teacher maintains a file of student work either electronically or with paper.

Subject area teachers work with students to create goals for classroom and standardized tests. Subject area teachers work with students to keep them apprised of their progress towards their goal and encourage students to check PowerSchool gradebooks frequently for averages. All grading is transparent and not a surprise to students at any point in the nine weeks.

Teachers will allow students an opportunity to select work for their conferences.

Teachers will coach students on how to substantiate grades with evidence from assignments.

After the SLC, teachers will contact any parent who is concerned about his/her child's progress in a timely manner.

Teachers will be prepared to speak to the parents of any child who has failed a class or has dropped significantly in either conduct or academic performance.

Your child's SOAR teacher will serve as a facilitator/monitor while your student leads the conference.

Role of the Parent

The parent is the second most essential attendee of the SLC and will be briefed on the format and objectives of the SLC so that the conference runs smoothly.

The parent must be willing to let the student speak, saving questions for the end.

The parent will arrive on time to the conference to allow the appropriate amount of time for his/her student to share the contents of the portfolio.

The parent shares any concerns following the conference with the SOAR teacher who will share them with the academic teacher.

The parent helps the student meet his/her academic and behavioral goals by supporting their progress at home.

Plan to spend 30 minutes in a conversation with your child about his/her learning and school experience.

Role of the School

The school will prearrange the conference days, notifying teachers, students and parents in a timely manner.

The school shares the student led conference format with the parent and is clear about the objectives of these meetings.

The school encourages parent questions about the SLC format.

The school sends multiple reminders home to families about the SLC.

The school provides teachers with PowerSchool access in advance so that students are not surprised by grades so that they can practice for their conference. Students and parents are also encouraged to check PowerSchool regularly for grade updates.

The school will respond to parental concerns in a timely manner.

