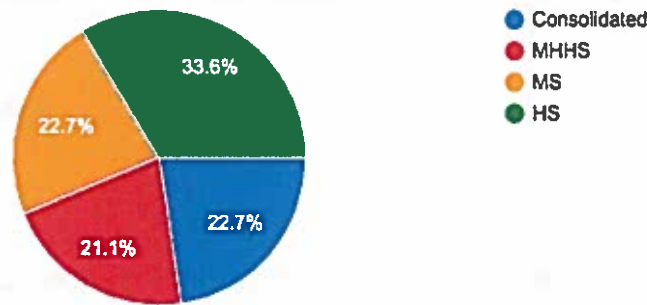


Spring Conference Teacher Survey 2018

The Board of Education Communications/Community Outreach Subcommittee is interested in some feedback regarding spring conferences. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following three questions.

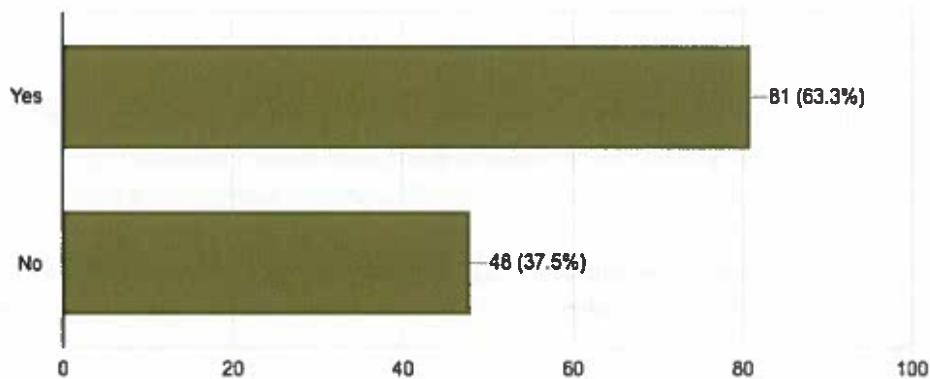
Select the school at which you teach.

128 responses



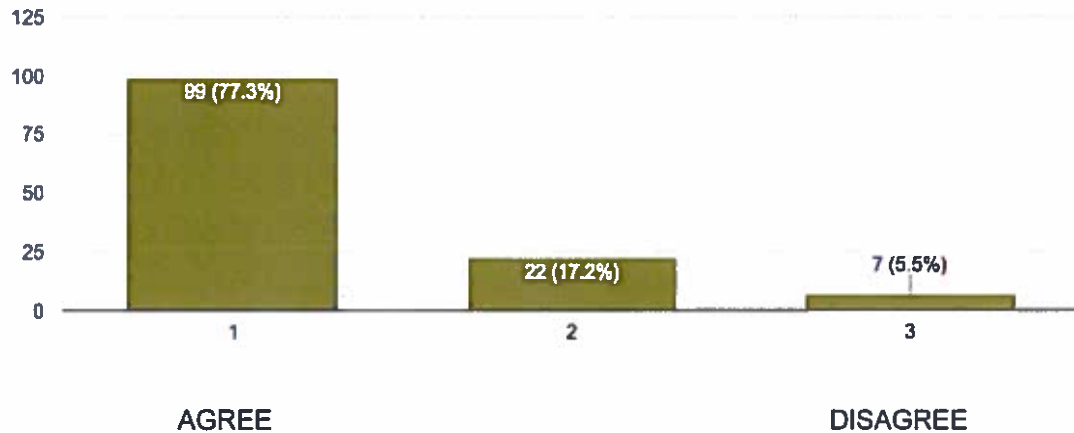
The majority of the families of the students I teach attended spring conferences.

128 responses



Families who attended the spring conferences left with a solid understanding of the academic status of their child at the school.

128 responses



Please include any other information you wish to share about spring conferences. (59 responses)

CONSOLIDATED

There seems to be a trend where more parents want morning and evening conferences rather than afternoon conferences.

I enjoy the opportunity to meet with parents to discuss their child's progress.

4 days is too long!

I love meeting with parents to discuss their child's academic, social and emotional progress! The time spent together is invaluable. Most of the parents that attend have children that have high academic achievement. I was pleased to have had a conference with a family member of each of my students.

I would like to ask that something be considered regarding conferences. I feel that it is difficult to have evening conferences, followed by morning conferences. Perhaps this could be considered for next year. Many thanks.

Conference time at our building is vital to building a strong school to home connection. It is very rare that a family does not schedule and come to a conference. I spend between 20 - 30 minutes with each family (sometimes more if more support staff is involved) discussing student academic progress, but even more important discussing their social/emotional progress.

Conferences are so important, especially at the younger grades. (I say that as a parent with older kids.) For both Fall and Spring conferences I had all 19 families attend. The schedule is so disruptive though. A thought~ maybe 2 night conferences and one FULL day conference or something of that sort could possible help teachers, parents and kids? I feel this winter was insane with all the weather related things, and then the conferences thrown in made teaching hard to stay on track. Next year I may feel differently if we don't have all of these storms.

MEETING HOUSE HILL SCHOOL

This year I had every parent attend both fall and spring parent conferences.

Give report cards at conferences.

I am a specialist. I had more families stopping in this year for a conference than ever before. Ignore my response on the second question,

We held student led conferences, which includes the student in the sharing and reflection of their progress. I find the spring to be a good opportunity for this.

Our conferences were student-led; I think that I can provide parents with a better solid understanding of the academic status of their child at school. I don't like student-led conferences much, but as the rest of my grade was doing them, I felt obligated to go along.

There are too many interruptions to the schedule when we have four days of conferences. Any chance we can scale it back to three? Possibly having the fourth day during a Tuesday PLC/Staff meeting?

The schedule works well! My morning conference time was well attended this spring. That helped reduce the number of evening conferences I had. I met with 7 families in the evening instead of 10 or 11 like in the fall. That gave me more time to spend with a few families.

4 days is too long. I think you need 1 morning, 1 evening & 1 Afternoon

The two days of afternoon conferences are my least attended each year. It may be better to consolidate those days into one.

I would like to see the addition of two mornings of conferences, and one afternoon and one evening. Perhaps we could start the morning session earlier to help accommodate families who work further away?

There were a lot of issues using the scheduling online- parents had the wrong times, teachers that blocked out bathroom times had parents able to schedule at that time.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

This allowed for parents to ask questions and have conversations with teachers where 3 minutes conferences is too quick to answer all questions asked. The flow was a lot better as students were able to switch classrooms once they finished the slides. It was nice hearing conversations parents were having with their children as the night went on and how students really knew the information they had on their slides. Some parents came in who I have never seen at an open house or conferences, and I was able to check in with them. I was able to check in with parents about placement for high school and answer any questions asked. Each parent had a sheet where they could write any questions or comments they had for a teacher and turn them in at the end of the night and I did not receive any questions from any parents – meaning they had all questions answered while going through conferences. Being less rushed allowed for a nicer flow and it was nice having students be part of the conversations. It showed students how their teacher and parent are on the same page and that it isn't one or the other feeling a certain way about grades, studying, or anything else that comes up in a conference.

Since I was at the middle school, and since student-led conferences were new and held in a team-centric way (I do not teach a team subject), it is difficult to tell how well families understood their child's progress and how many of my students' families attended. My answers are based on the room that I monitored.

We had roughly 68 out of 73 families plan to attend our SLCs. In addition, the team met with 12 families to discuss specific academic and/or social emotional concerns. We also sent home a total of 22 positive letters (handwritten by all team members) to students that are exceeding our expectations on a daily basis.

Allowing every team to design their own rules and process made things very difficult for students and non-team teachers. I prefer traditional conference.

I think standards based grades in the middle school in the academic areas are creating significant confusion for parents and they are taken aback by the Marsano grade conversions. Conferences this year were student led, leading many parents to have questions they did not feel they could adequately get answered.

The conferences were ran closer to a celebration of learning. The parents did learn about work their students are doing, successes they have had and areas where students feel they can improve. It is difficult to know if this lead to a clear understanding of the student academic status because it was told through only the lens of the student. Some parents did ask questions but not all. The parents did seem to enjoy the interaction with their child.

students put in a lot of work into their slides. think the student slides should be the same across the school. parents expressed how they felt and it half seemed to enjoy and others didn't enjoy or like the set up of slc.

Many parents commented on our survey that they'd prefer a face to face private conference with the teacher versus a Student Led Conference. They value the teacher's input. The SLC also took up a lot of

instructional time and PLC to prepare students' presentations. In middle school, it seems that the parents prefer a more traditional conference. Maybe a different time set aside for a student showcase may be better. There were some parents who did enjoy the SLC time with their child. Thank you for asking for our feedback.

I think parents get a better understanding of their child's progress when they talk to the teachers. The majority of children do not have a clear understanding of their academic strengths. In my opinion, SLC was not successful.

We received a lot of feedback stating that parents prefer teacher conferences not SLC. Parents also stated that they wouldn't mind having a combination of the two. Parents at the end still requested a conference from us. There were parents who did not attend because they felt that their child could show them the slides at home and that they already know what they are going in school. Another response we received was teachers walking around talking to parents and other parents and students could hear the conversation. They felt there wasn't enough privacy.

The preparation required for student led conferences was a lot of class time.

In general, conferences at the middle school have not been effective only being able to talk with parents for 5 minutes. With many teachers teaching over 100 students and very few parents opting to not attend - the time is not enough and is very rushed. While many parents expressed their satisfaction with the student-led conferences, there are many parents that were not happy. I did notice that parents that expressed that they wanted time with the teacher to talk about progress did not request for parents to reach out to them. I wish we could come up with a different structure for PTC in general and see what other schools have implemented with success.

We at the middle school would need another half hour in total. That way, parents would both get a chance to see their child's progress and also get a minute to receive a strength and weakness update from the teacher.

I wish more parents cared about the true academic standing rather than "grades"

Many parents expressed a preference for traditional conferences or a traditional conference in addition to SLCs. It was possible to conference directly with parents and students when a small group was in each classroom (up to 6). It was more difficult to meet with people when larger groups were present in each room.

Do I feel parents left with a lot of confusing paperwork that they need to decipher and sometimes cannot in order to understand the academic status of their child.....Yes.

Am I comfortable with that as being a benchmark to be used an effective "Conference"No I do not.

I don't know if families have a solid understanding of their child's academic status.

Beginning to plan for student led conferences in September would alleviate a lot of the stress teachers and students felt in trying to prepare for them in only about 6 weeks. I believe it would be more effective to have time to teach students about writing goals that are measurable and having them track these goals throughout the year.

I think student led conferences are developmentally appropriate for high school students not middle school students. I think students lost a lot of valuable instructional time making slides for their presentation. I think our students could benefit from having time to prep for the SBAC Test in April like other districts do to bring up the scores. Many of my parents seemed confused about which conference to attend and wanted more feedback from the teachers.

I felt rushed to make sure that I touched base with all groups in the room and that proven difficult when there were 9 or more. Parents and students did not stick to their schedule and floated from room to room making more than the 9 groups that were scheduled for each room at a time.

HIGH SCHOOL

At the high school, where you have potentially 100+ students and only 42 slots, it is impossible to see all parents. Year after year, I have parents begging for slots and I book up in under an hour. It is impossible to accommodate all requests I get for conferences and feel like there needs to be a better way. Given that parents have 24 hour a day access to student grades, there has to be something that makes sense taking all that into account. The weather didn't help, but even without the weather, I find myself giving up weeks worth of prep time to meet with or call parents who couldn't get a conference, even if they really didn't need one. During the conference schedule itself, we are forced to end after 10 minutes because someone else is waiting. When they get scheduled after the fact on the phone or otherwise, they tend to run much longer and everything else gets halted as a result. It makes for a few very stressful weeks when work can't get done because all prep time is designated to these additional slots.

To prevent disruptions due to snow days, could the conferences be scheduled at the end of March or the early weeks of April.

Most of the parents of students who were struggling had already been regularly contacted throughout the year so did not need a conference. Some of them also could not schedule a conference due to slots already being full from parents whose student did not necessarily need a conference.

With Infinite Campus data, is it really necessary to have Spring Conferences?

Although the conference slots are filled, I mostly see parents of the higher achiever and often do not see parents of students who could benefit from parent involvement.

They left with a solid understanding of the academic status of their child and what practices are in place to improve that status for my class. I can't speak about the school in general. Parents have different experiences with each teacher.

Most other districts have spring conferences by teacher invitation only. I do not find it necessary to have a conference for every one of my students unless there is a specific reason. Fall conferences are beneficial to meet parents but throughout the year we communicate as needed.

I feel it would be more beneficial to the students and their families if conferences were held later in the year (maybe during SBAC time?). Modifying the schedule would provide students more of an opportunity to reflect on the depth and breadth of their learning.

When the event was cancelled some parents wrote emails asking for updates on their child, I responded in a timely fashion, and they were appreciative.

The majority of parents coming in are not the majority of parents that should be coming in.

I don't think that having time taken away from classes to have conferences is the best use of time at the high school level.

It is a wonderful opportunity to meet with families. It is difficult to have conferences with the snow schedule. It would be nice if we could try for an alternative time where there is less disruption to the schedule/learning. I have thought of an open house in the second semester to show parents what they are doing instead of conferences. The rest of the information could be individually provided through individual meetings/email/phone calls.

The conference process was productive and purposeful. I enjoy the opportunity

At the HS there are not nearly enough time slots for teachers who teach 100+ students.

I teach semester classes and have more underclassmen 2nd semester than 1st and I had a terrible showing!! I think I had over 20 for the first semester, but only 5 for 2nd!

1. I know that spring conferences are sparsely attended (I was booked solid in the fall!!!!) but there are many students and families that enjoy meeting teachers face to face. I have also seen an increase in students attending conferences in the high school--I think conference time is best used when the student is there to address any questions, concerns, and celebrations of effort! Also, even though we employ Infinite Campus and google classroom, I (and many other teachers) have seen a rise in BOTH students and parents who claim that they cannot access accounts, simply don't check them, and say they are "too confusing" (?). I think that by not having conferences there will be an increased request for before or after school parent meetings, via phone or in person. While I cannot speak to the time constraints of the elementary schools, I have 112 and 101 students per semester, and meeting with parents at their request is challenging and often times cannot occur when it will most benefit the student (in terms of aligning schedules). An email of "conference quality" will definitely take much more time than 10 minutes of face to face discourse, where classroom and academic expectations are clearly and explicitly discussed. Already there are parents who "could not find time to meet for spring conferences" and now want phone conferences, lengthy emails where I address specific concerns and suggestions to improve grades, or to meet after school (when they should and could be checking with their child or IC).

Please keep conferences--at least they provide an opportunity for people who are invested in their student's learning. (Maybe only keep one night of evening conferences instead of getting rid of them?)

2. I do not think that parents in the community are aware that there is a movement to omit conferences. I think if this is the direction we are headed in, then a survey should be sent to parents as well.

They are an excellent component of partnered education. Parents are usually a great resource to support learning objectives.

I provide all parents who come for conferences a written synopsis of goals and strengths. Parents are free to keep these notes, share them with their child and many have appreciated receiving a written reflection at this juncture of the school year.

Conferences are really important in my practice. We need to encourage more parents to come. Scrapping conferences shouldn't ever be on the table: we can only build understanding with our community if we sit down face to face with them and build that understanding one conversation at a time.