



**STUDENT-LED CONFERENCE GUIDE**

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## Introduction

Student-led conferences are an important aspect of outcome-based education. In a student-led conference, students, parents, and teachers come together to discuss, plan, and celebrate student learning. As a team, students, parents, and teachers develop plans for continuous learning and student growth. This may also be time when teachers support students and families to connect to school, division, and community level supports.

These conferences provide the opportunity for students to be actively engaged in the learning process. Students present work samples to their parents and explain their level of achievement on these assignments. During the conferences, **parents develop a better understanding** of what their children are learning and how they are being educated. Teachers gain valuable insights into their students by listening to and participating in the conversations of the conferences.

Student-led conferences are appropriate for students from **Kindergarten to Grade 12**. The level of teacher involvement changes as students' progress through the grades. Teachers begin as a guide and support students during the student-led conference process. As students are able to take control of this process, teachers step back and move to the role of facilitator. They encourage students to lead the conferences and only step in and provide support when needed.

It is important to note that for some students, a traditional parent-teacher interview may still be required beyond (or in replacement of) the student-led conference. If teachers or parents have a need to meet outside the student-led conference to discuss academic or behavioural concerns, arrangements should be made for these interviews.

## Evidence of Learning

**Evidence of learning** provides the foundation for the student-led conference. Teachers may choose to collect pictorial representations of student work. They may gather a variety of print based examples of student work. Teachers may also look at using technology to capture student learning. This decision is left up to the professional judgement of the teacher. Regardless of the format, evidence of learning guides students as they present their learning to their parents. Good Spirit School Division has created **assessment rubrics for every subject from Kindergarten to Grade 9**. Teachers (and students when appropriate) use these rubrics to determine their current level of achievement on targeted outcomes and then choose work samples and assignments that demonstrate their achievement levels. During the student-led conferences, students show their work to their parents and explain how the samples demonstrate their achievement level on the rubrics.

Mathematics Grade 6 Patterns (P)				
Outcome	1 - Beginning The student is having difficulty demonstrating an understanding of the concept.	2 – Approaching The student is developing an understanding of the concept.	3 – Meeting The student consistently demonstrates an understanding of the concept or has achieved the concept.	4 - Exceeding The student independently demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the concept, and consistently applies this knowledge to new situations.
<b>P6.1</b> <b>I can extend understanding of patterns and relationships in tables of values and graphs. [C, CN, PS, R]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>With help,</b> I can create a table of values for a concrete or visual pattern.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can create a table of values <b>OR</b> a graph for a concrete or visual pattern.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can create a table of values <b>AND</b> a graph for a concrete or visual pattern <b>AND</b> for a given equation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can identify and explain errors in a given graph and table of values.</li> </ul>

**Sample GSSD Math Assessment Rubric**

Other documents that may be included as evidence of learning and shared during student-led conferences are interest inventories, learning style profiles, checklists, surveys, projects, quizzes, special assignments, self-assessments, peer assessments, rubrics, photos, etc.

## Goal-Setting

An important part of the student-led conference is goal-setting. Students set goals based on their individual strengths and areas of need. They can set **academic or behaviour goals** based on their performance during the previous term. There is an example of a goal-setting template for younger students and a goal-setting template for older students included in Appendix B and C of these guidelines. Consider the age, grade, and ability of your students when designing the goal-setting template for your class. Note that schools have the freedom to choose the type and format of the goal-setting forms they choose to use. It is the act of goal-setting that GSSD is encouraging, not the format.

At the end of a term, students can reflect on their goal(s) and determine if they have achieved their goal(s). Examples of goal setting reflection templates are provided in Appendix D and E. Students can share their reflections at the student-led conferences and discuss their level of achievement with their parents and teacher. Teachers are encouraged to think about how the student-led conference process and the act of goal-setting might link to curricular outcomes.

English Language Arts Grade 3 Assess and Reflect				
Outcome	1 – Beginning The student is having difficulty demonstrating an understanding of the concept.	2 – Approaching The student is developing an understanding of the concept.	3 – Meeting The student consistently demonstrates an understanding of the concept or has achieved the concept.	4 – Exceeding The student independently demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the concept, and consistently applies this knowledge to new situations.
AR3.1 Reflect on and assess their viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, and other representing experiences and the selected strategies they have used (e.g., using class-generated criteria).	With help, I can identify strategies I have used in my viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, OR representing.	I can identify a few strategies I have used in my viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, OR representing.	I can say why strategies I have used in my viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, AND representing have worked for me, with teacher guidance.	I can independently say why strategies I have used in my viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, AND representing have worked for me.
	With help, I can apply some of the criteria developed with the teacher to assess the quality of my viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, and representing.	I can apply most of the criteria developed with the teacher to assess the quality of my viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, and representing.	I can apply almost all the criteria developed with the teacher to assess the quality of my viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, and representing, and provide a few examples from my work.	I can apply all the criteria developed with the teacher to assess the quality of my viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, and representing, and provide examples from my work.
Comments:				

Sample GSSD ELA Assessment Rubric

## Role of Students

Students are an integral part of the student-led conference. They take an active role by leading the conference. Students share their learning by looking through their evidence of learning and discussing different work samples. As they discuss their work, students explain what they did to demonstrate their learning when they completed the assignments. Students determine how they will continue to grow by setting goals and identifying what they will do to improve on their current learning. By taking this leadership role in the student-led conference, students are developing their **oral communication skills** and taking responsibility for their own learning. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on the skills students employ during the student-led conference when assessing certain curricular outcomes. A possible example could be the Comprehend and Respond strand of the ELA Curriculum.

\*\* An example of a checklist to guide students during the student-led conference is included in **Appendix A** of this document. This checklist outlines possible steps involved in the student-led conference and provides students with a visual to follow during the conference. Teachers should feel free to adjust the checklist as needed so it is appropriate for the age, grade, and ability level of students.

## Role of Parents

**Parents are actively involved** in the student-led conference. They make comments, give praise, and ask questions as they listen to the information being presented by their children. Asking questions allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and provides parents with clarification on what and how their children are learning. Parents can also support students as they set goals to further their learning of the skills and concepts presented during the conference.

## Role of Teachers

The teacher's role during student-led conferences is that of **facilitator**. They guide students through the process and ask questions or provide cues when needed. Teachers are more involved at the younger levels and step back as students get older and are able to take ownership in leading the conferences. As with other instruction and learning, teachers differentiate their involvement and support given to each student based on individual need.

\*\* Teachers are encourage to use the 'Student-Led Conference Implementation Rubric' included in **Appendix H** of this document to guide the implementation of student-led conferences.

## Possible Student-Led Conference Guidelines

### Before the Conference:

1. Gather evidence of student learning to present to parents in celebration of outcomes achieved and those in progress of learning.
2. Walk through the conference with the students. Consider having different students role play conference participants (teacher, parent, student) so students are aware of process and expectations.
3. If appropriate, have students reflect on the goals they set for the current term (**Appendix D: Goal Setting Reflection Template for Younger Students** and **Appendix E: Goal Setting Reflection Template for Older Students**).
4. Discuss goal setting and have students begin thinking of possible goals to set for the next term.
5. Provide opportunity for students to ask questions or clarify the process of student-led conferences.

### At the Conference:

1. Student introduces parent(s) and teacher (**Appendix A: Student-Led Conference Checklist for Students**).
2. Student identifies personal strengths and areas to develop on Goal-Setting Template (**Appendix B: Goal Setting Template for Younger Students** and **Appendix C: Goal Setting Template for Older Students**).
3. Student celebrates the achievement of curriculum outcomes this term. Student presents evidence of learning – report card, portfolio, work samples, rubrics, etc. and explains current level of achievement.
4. Parents and teacher are encouraged to make comments and ask questions to clarify understanding of material presented by student.
5. If appropriate, student discusses his/her reflection of the previous term's goals (**Appendix D: Goal Setting Reflection Template for Younger Students** and **Appendix E: Goal Setting Reflection Template for Older Students**).
6. Student identifies outcomes and/or behavioral areas to work on during the next school term.
7. Student sets a goal for the next term and identifies supports needed from teacher(s) and parents.
8. Student asks parents and teacher if they have any further comments or questions.
9. Student thanks parents for attending conference.

## **After the Conference:**

1. Reflect as a class on the success of the student-led conferences.
2. Have students and parents complete a post-conference reflection (**Appendix F: Post-Conference Reflection for Students** and **Appendix G: Post-Conference Reflection for Parents**).
3. Identify plans of action needed to achieve academic and/or behavioral goals.
4. Ensure supports are in place to support student goals.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **My school conducts student-led conferences in a different manner than what is outlined in this guide. Should I change what am I doing?**

Not necessarily. The division has developed this document to support teachers in this process. We hope this guide will provide examples for those who are struggling to see how student-led conference could be implemented. If your school has a slightly different approach that works for your school community, that is perfectly acceptable. The essence of the GSSD approach to student-led conferences is as follows: evidence of learning, student involvement in the process, goal setting and reflection. How each teacher gets to these key ideas is completely up to each professional and school community.

### **I am a Kindergarten teacher. How can my students lead a student-led conference?**

The level of participation will vary depending on the age of the students. With modeling and practice, younger students can take an active role in their student-led conference. Depending on the age and ability level of students, teachers will guide the students by providing verbal prompts and supports necessary for a successful conference.

### **I have a student with significant behaviour issues. How do I address these behaviours at the student-led conference?**

Student-led conferences are meant to be a celebration of learning. Significant behaviour issues should be discussed with parents at a separate interview time. Depending on the age and nature of the behaviour, the student may or may not be included in this separate parent-teacher interview. Behaviour issues should be dealt with as they arise and teachers should not wait until student-led conference time to discuss with parents.

### **There is a student in my class that is not achieving at grade level, even with differentiation. How do I address this issue at the student-led conference?**

Student-led conferences are meant to celebrate learning. Set up an additional meeting time to discuss your concerns with parents and explain how a referral to the RTI team is needed for more intensive supports. Consider the age and ability level of the student when meeting with parents to discuss academic concerns to determine if the student should be involved in the meeting. This is not an appropriate conversation to have with younger students present, as they might not understand. However, older students need to know the facts so they can adjust their learning appropriately and should be a part of these conversations. Some parents may prefer to have the initial conversations

without their child in attendance. Communication is a key component when dealing with both academic and behaviour concerns. As with significant behaviour issues, academic struggles should be communicated with parents when they become a concern and teachers should not wait until student-led conference time to discuss with parents.

### **Do I only include work samples that demonstrate mastery of skills or concepts?**

In the student-led conference, it is important for students to give evidence of their learning. This does not mean that every work sample or assignment needs to be at the highest level of achievement. Students should be encouraged to share work samples that demonstrate their learning. This could mean providing a work sample that shows how they have learned one skill but still need to work on another. For example, students may include a writing sample. For one student this writing sample may be a celebration because they have written a paragraph with more than three sentences. Another student may have no trouble getting his/her ideas down on the page, but lacks attention to detail in their writing. This student may include a work sample that demonstrates this attention to detail.

### **Should goals be set before a student-led conference?**

Goal setting is an important part of learning and students should have the opportunity to think about possible goals before the student-led conference. Discuss possible goals with students that they may choose to work on during the upcoming term. Consider brainstorming lists of possible goals and role play the goal setting process before the conferences so students will know what is expected of them. During the conference, students, parents, and teachers can all provide input about student goals and discuss what actions students will need to take to achieve goals and what supports parents and teachers can provide to support students.