

PORTFOLIO CONFERENCE

PARENT INFORMATION

Student-Participation Portfolio Conferences

PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT

The Central Bucks School District believes that the core element of effective standards-based education is well-designed lessons with clear and meaningful instruction. It is our belief that varied forms of assessment are valuable in providing important information about a student's learning and that careful examination of student work products gives vital insight into a student's growth and development. Teachers and students share the responsibility for imparting this information to parents. Through the use of Student Participation Portfolio Conferences, the student will be able to share his or her understanding of the skills and concepts that have been presented to date, which will allow the child to accept greater responsibility for personal learning. This practice of student and parent participation in examining work products in relation to applicable standards, anchors and rubrics allows for a more meaningful experience for all participants.

Student As Participant Portfolio Conferences FAQ'S

What's a Portfolio Conference?

A Portfolio Conference, which is held in the spring, is a meeting to celebrate the growth your child has made in the areas of writing, reading and math. In addition, you, your child and your child's teacher will analyze pieces of your child's work and plan how your child can improve the quality of his/her work.

When will the Portfolio Conference be held?

Portfolio Conferences are held in the spring of the school year, usually in April. Your child's teacher will contact you in late February or early March to schedule a time to meet. Both day and evening hours are available to parents.

Will I have the opportunity to review my child's portfolio before the conference?

Previewing the portfolio will occur in one of two ways. Your school may opt to send the portfolio home with your child. You will be given a reflection sheet to complete as you review the work products. This, along with the portfolio, will be returned to the teacher in preparation for the conference. Other schools may send home a date and time for you to come to school to preview the portfolio. This will not be a time to meet with the teacher, but it will be a good opportunity to write down any questions for your child's teacher on the reflection sheet. Both of these opportunities will allow your child to sit with you and share his/her work by examining and explaining the collection of assignments.

Should I bring my child to the conference?

The Central Bucks School District expects all students in grades 1-6 to attend the portfolio conference. A meaningful examination of your child's work can be enhanced if he/she is part of the process. Research shows that significant student growth takes place when the student takes responsibility for his/her learning.

The presence of your child at the Portfolio Conference supports this concept.

How will my child participate?

Your child's participation in the conference will depend on what is developmentally appropriate for him/her. At its simplest level, it can mean that your child sits in on the meeting and listens. It could also mean that your child is ready to accept a larger role in the conference and be part of the discussion or perhaps even lead a portion of the meeting.

What student work will be shared with me during the conference?

Throughout the elementary curriculum there are core assessments in math, language arts and reading that will be examined with the parents. The teacher may also share work samples from other academic areas.

What new vocabulary may I encounter at the conference?

You may hear the following words at your conference: rubrics, anchors, exemplars and continuum. A rubric is a form of measurement. It will show you what is being assessed and then provide information which allows you to identify the level at which your child is working. Anchor papers and exemplars are examples of work at the Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced level. These will be used as a basis of comparison to your child's work. Finally, a writing continuum is the chart that shows the developmental stages of writers in kindergarten through third grade.

Will my child receive a report card for the 3rd Marking Period?

Your child will not receive a traditional report card for the third marking period. In an attempt to answer questions about your child's educational progress, teachers have developed a reporting system. This will allow you to see the standards your child has or has not met. The Portfolio Conference will allow you to examine the progression of your child's work and set goals for future achievement. Letter grades will be replaced with rubrics and scoring guides that describe the levels of proficiency your child has achieved.

During the conference, I saw the reporting document. Does the proficiency ranking translate into letter grades? (I.e., A, B, C etc.)

No. The proficiency rankings do not translate into letter grades. Along with the Central Bucks School District, the Pennsylvania Department of Education looks for students to be Proficient to Advanced in reading, math, and language arts.

Will I have time to speak to my child's teacher privately during the conference?

Yes. It is an option for you or your child's teacher to excuse your child for a portion of the meeting so that the adults can address any issues privately if necessary.

Final Thought

At the completion of the Portfolio Conference, you and your child should walk away with a detailed understanding as to how well he/she is progressing toward meeting the standards. Near the end of the conference, you, your child and your child's teacher will outline areas of strength and developing areas after discussing the student work. Those areas, along with goals that are developed, will give everyone a clear, detailed understanding as to what your child needs to do to meet the desired proficiency levels. All participants should walk away from the conference feeling informed about the progress that the student has made to that point in the school year. The conference will produce a roadmap that should lead to continued academic growth and success.

