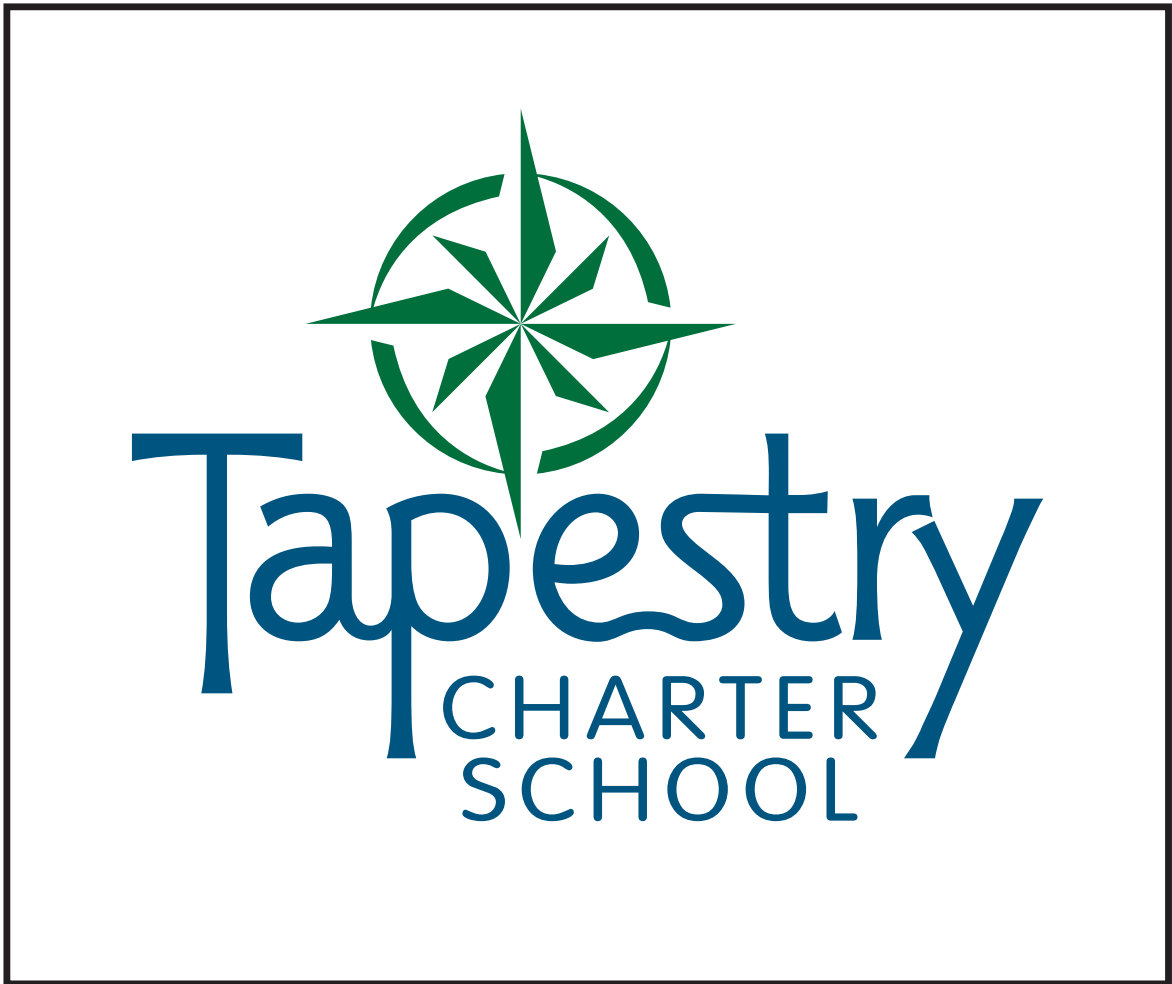


Student-Led Conference Parent/Student Handbook



A Vibrant Community of Learners and Leaders

Christina L. Lesh, Principal

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Adapted from
Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School
Minds in Motion
Brett Kimmel, Principal

Description of Student-Led Conferences (SLCs)

Tapestry Charter School considers the relationship between students' families and the school to be of paramount importance. At two times during the school year, the school invites students and their families to attend formal conferences during which report cards are given to families. At Tapestry Charter School, Student-Led Conferences replace the traditional parent/teacher conference. SLCs are attended by the student, parent/guardian, crew leader, and other adults the student would like present. The crew leader facilitates the meeting, but the student is responsible for presenting what he/she has learned for that trimester.

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

Students reference specific assignments, projects, and/or tests/quizzes that show their mastery of learning targets. Students also complete reflections about their performance in each class and share them with their families. Students are held accountable for their progress when they explain areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. The tone of the conference is positive with a strength-based focus on what can be done to ensure success as opposed to what has been done poorly.

Objectives of Student-Led Conferences:

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

To hone student verbal communication and critical thinking skills.

To emphasize Tapestry's student-directed philosophy toward learning and character development.

To build open relationships with families concerning student progress at Tapestry.

To help students meet speaking standards.

To teach students how to persuade by substantiating claims with evidence.

Tapestry Student-Led Conference Learning Targets

Learning Targets	
HOW (Habits of Work)	I can make consistent eye contact when speaking.
	I can speak clearly, audibly, and at an appropriate pace.
	I can use an appropriate and respectful tone.
	I can answer questions directly and honestly.
	I can communicate ideas in an organized and coherent manner with appropriate and precise vocabulary.
	I can take responsibility for progress, explaining how and why I have improved.
	I can take ownership of my failures and mistakes.
	I can reflect on my work habits.
	I can create and share a plan for improvement or continued success.
	I can demonstrate my ability to follow the <i>Tapestry Traits</i> .
Content/Skills	I can explain the learning targets I met in each of my academic subjects.
	I can share examples and evidence from specific assignments in each of my academic subjects.
	I can use notes and outlines to help me present.
	I can include details and examples relative to the audience.
	I can conclude my presentation by reviewing the main points.
	I can synthesize and paraphrase information.
	I can make connections between sources of information.
	I can persuade my audience by substantiating claims with evidence.
	I can use language and grammar appropriate for purpose and audience.
	I can use grammatically correct sentences when speaking.
	I can use facial expressions and gestures that help in communicating my point.

Role of the Student

The student is the main player of the student led conference. Teachers and crew leaders *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 their portfolio.

Before conferences, students collect two to three pieces of work from each of their “active files” that demonstrate their ability to meet learning targets.

Students complete self-reflections for their assignments, projects, and tests/quizzes. 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 the important adults in their lives.

They practice substantiating their grades with evidence from various assignments and their mastery of learning targets by taking part in mock conferences during crew.

Students write formal invitations to their parents to invite them to SLCs.

Students write formal thank-you notes to their parents post SLCs.

Role of the Crew Leader

Crew Leaders must stick to the schedule. If a parent arrives late, the conference must be shortened out of respect for the other families, but students may continue to share work in the hallway and report cards may be given to parents.

Crew Leaders welcome each family, preferably using names, and thank them for coming. Crew Leaders remind families that the student will do most of the talking and that it is best to save questions for the end.

Crew Leaders let the student speak. Crew Leaders may ask probing questions or direct the student to the agenda, but they do not dominate the conversation. Crew Leaders help the student if the parent is talking too much, and try to redirect the conversation if the parent begins to get upset.

Crew Leaders make sure all of the paper distribution and signing happens without taking away from the student's presentation.

Crew Leaders are prepared to answer questions about why the parents are meeting with them and not the subject teachers and SLCs in general.

If a parent wants to meet with a teacher, then Crew Leaders record that information and tell the subject teacher the next day.

Crew Leaders thank each family for coming and reaffirm availability for current or future concerns.

After the Conferences:

Crew Leaders inform subject teachers of any parental concerns.

Crew Leaders help students write thank-you notes to family members who attended the conferences.

Role of the Parent/Guardian

The parent/guardian is the second most essential attendee to the Student-Led Conference and should be briefed about 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 until the end.

The parent/guardian arrives on time.

The parent/guardian shares any lingering concerns with the crew leaders who will inform the subject teacher.

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

Role of the School

The school prearranges Student-Led conference days, notifying teachers, students, and parents in a timely manner.

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

The school sends multiple reminders home to families in both English and other appropriate languages.

The school provides teachers with report cards two days prior to the conferences so that students are not surprised by grades and can practice their conferences with concrete information in front of them.

The school provides translators for teachers who do not speak students' home language.

The school responds to parental concerns in a timely manner.

Tapestry Charter School

Student Preparation Checklist for Student-Led Conferences

- I have work from each of my academic classes in my portfolio.
- I have completed reflections for each academic class.
- I understand how my work and mastery of learning targets have resulted in my final grade in each academic subject.
- I know my strengths and weaknesses as a student.
- I know how I can improve for next trimester: I have set goals and created an action plan for each class.
- I know how my behavior, attendance, and tardiness are affecting my academic progress.
- I have practiced speaking about my work.
- I feel comfortable talking about my progress.
- I understand how my performance during student-led conferences will be assessed.
- I am familiar with the conference agenda.
- I have given any information about conferences to my parents.
- My parents know when we are supposed to arrive and where the conference will be held.
- My parents understand that if we are late they will not be able to have the full conference time.
- My parents know that I will be doing most of the talking during the conference and that my leader will be with us.
- My parents know why they are meeting with the crew leader and how they can schedule a meeting with a subject teacher.

Tapestry Charter School

Name:

Date:

Crew Leader:

SLC Sample Student Agenda

1. Arrive on time.
2. Sit outside the classroom until I am invited in by the Crew Leader.
3. Reintroduce Crew Leader and my family members.
4. Thank my family for coming.
5. Briefly explain the format and objectives of the student-led conference, reminding my parents to save questions for the end.
6. Show my family my work samples, pointing out academic grades, as well as how I met each long-term learning target, and sharing my goals and action plan for improvement.
7. Mention which subject seems to be where I am most successful and also the one in which I am struggling the most.
8. Share with my parent(s) how they can help me at home.
9. Ask my parents if they have any questions.
10. Give my parents and my Crew Leader time to fill out paperwork.
11. Thank my family and my Crew Leader.

Tapestry Charter School
A Vibrant Community of Learners and Leaders
 Christina L. Lesh, Principal

TAPESTRY ACHIEVEMENT SUPPORT PLAN

STUDENTS NAME: DATE:

ACADEMIC	
STRENGTHS:	NEEDS:
Suggestions for support:	

HABITS OF WORK	
STRENGTHS:	NEEDS:
Suggestions for support:	

ACHIEVEMENT PLAN:

THE STUDENT COMMITS TO:

- HOMEWORK ATTENTION/AFTER-SCHOOL HELP: M T W R F

THE FAMILY COMMITS TO:

THE SCHOOL COMMITS TO:

_____ _____ _____
 STUDENT CREW LEADER FAMILY MEMBER