Good evening,

I hope you had a wonderful winter break. This is just a reminder that HPA’s winter conferences are coming up. Our next round of conferences will be happening January 25th and 26th from 4:00-8:00pm. This round of conferences, the fifth grade team will have student-led conferences in which each student is responsible for reporting his/her growth to their family member. We believe that this helps the student to better understand their progress and hold them accountable for their work.  During each conference students will have 45 minutes to present their portfolio binders and STAR test scores from the fall and winter. This may be the first time that students are leading their own conferences. We will practice sharing our binders, but please be patient during conferences.

In order for your student to have the necessary time to show you all of the growth that they have experienced so far this year, each conference section will have up to 4 families participating. Each student will have their own conference area within the classroom to use to showcase their work, goals, and talk intimately with their family. I will rotate to each student’s area to answer questions that student’s may not be able to answer periodically throughout the scheduled session.

These conferences are for students to not only showcase their work and growth, but are also to meet Colorado State Standards on Communication and Presentation. Your attendance in this process is a very big part of their success. In order for these conferences to be meaningful for students and families, please read through the roles of each participant below, as adapted from “**A Guide to Student-Led Conferences**” by Edudemic Staff [http://www.edudemic.com/guide-to-student-led-conferences/].

Role of the student: Students compile their portfolios consistently and thoughtfully. After assembling the portfolio, students maintain them in an organized fashion. Students use self-evaluation checklists or learning surveys to determine their areas of strength and weakness and set learning goals. Students must provide a clear picture of their school year and progress. Most important, students clearly communicate their progress and learning processes with their parents. Students rehearse while teachers model the process and give students time to practice in class prior to the conference. Additionally, students can communicate their academic or study needs during the conference. Because student-led conferences are reflective by nature, students must be honest with themselves and their parents when reflecting on their grades, effort, and study habits. They also should set appropriate goals for the next grading period or semester.

Role of the parent:  During student-led conferences, parents focus the conversation on their children and reflect on their work with them. They look at samples and listen to their children’s explanations and reflections. Then, they ask how they can help and what the students need from them. This way they can participate in developing strategies to support their students and then remain consistent long after the conferences end. This also helps them to be open-minded about their children’s areas of improvement and to support their goal-setting process. For parents, it’s important to embrace the student-led conference format and allow children to take the reins so they can act as responsible learners.

Role of the Teacher: During student-led conferences, teachers take on the role of facilitator, rather than that of leader. In preparing students for conferences, teachers outline student portfolio requirements and prepare students for presenting their work. Ultimately, the goal is to help students communicate their learning and processes to their parents through work samples. Teachers act as student advocates throughout the student-led conference. For this reason, teachers instruct students to begin on a positive note with their strengths and then work through their challenges and areas of improvement. Finally, teachers encourage families to create strategies for supporting student growth and improvement.

 If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me for further information regarding this process. Please sign up for a time that suits your family at <http://doodle.com/poll/4b58xcpn2dsnvmka> and I look forward to seeing you either the 25th or the 2600th of this month!

Warmest regards,

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