

Partnering with Your Child's Teacher

Presentation by:

Dr. Wafa Westervelt, Assistant Superintendent

Lorraine Bellmann, Gr. 2 (Manorhaven)

Joseph Lorge, Counselor (Schreiber)

Gail Martin, Gr. 1 (Salem)

Stacey Mullins, Counselor (Weber)

Heather O'Shea, Math Resource (Guggenheim)

Laura Staib, Gr. 7 Social Studies (Weber)

Eric Sutz, Gr. 3 (Salem)

Port Washington School District



Introductions: Wafa Westervelt



Parent-Teacher Partnerships/Meetings are:

- ❑ Critical building blocks for home-to-school communication;
- ❑ A time for listening, sharing, and working together;
- ❑ An opportunity for teachers to explain your child's progress, grades, and the grade-level standards; and
- ❑ Effective when parents and teachers have two-way conversations about how to help your child.



Gail Martin
The Formative Years



Things to know going into the conference...

- Remember that school/home are different places and children react differently in different situations
- Best way to gain the most from the school year is to have a partnership with home/school
- Come in to the conference with something positive that has worked for your child this year
- Prepare what you want to say: what concerns do you have about your child academically/socially
- Let the teacher know what has worked for your child academically/socially



How to Get a Clearer Picture of your Child's Academic Capabilities...

- Allow your child to complete their homework independently
- Look at returned assignments and tests
- Talk about what they're reading with your child (book chats)
- Have conversations when needed with the teacher about areas of concern



Questions to Ask the Teacher...

- How is my child with organizational skills and assignment completion?
(study and organizational skills are important for upper grades)
- Can I see sample work?
- How is my child doing socially? Are they respectful of others?
- Is my child flexible in their thinking?
- How does my child work in groups? Are they a leader or a follower?
- How are you meeting the needs of my child? What can we do to further strengthen their strengths? What can we do to help them in their areas of need?



Lorraine Bellmann:
Before & During the Conference

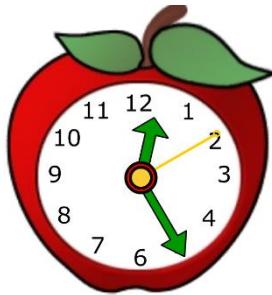
Before the Meeting

1. Write notes to share with the teacher about:
 - Things in your child's life you feel are important for the teacher to know (birth of a child; loss of someone close; divorce, etc.);
 - Questions about your child's progress; and
 - Your concerns.

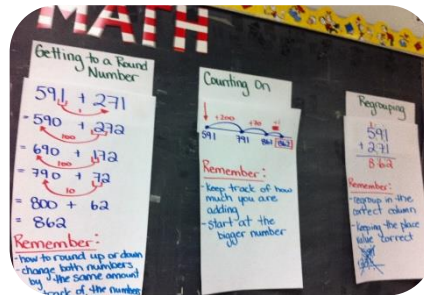
2. Ask your child questions, such as:
 - a. What do you like about school?
 - b. What do you dislike about school?
 - c. Is there anything to ask or tell your teacher?



During the Meeting



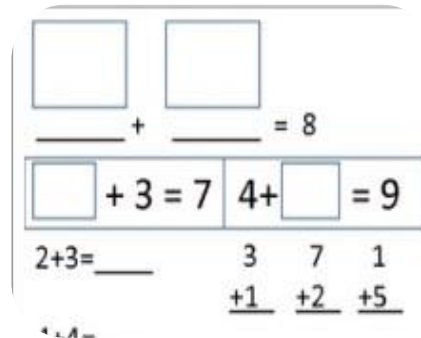
Arrive on time, have questions ready.



Look around the room.



Begin with the positive.



Ask to look at books, folder and other work.

During the Meeting (cont'd.)

5. Ask questions about what your child is learning.
 - a. Is my child at grade level with his/her reading, writing, and math?
 - b. May I see some of my child's work?
 - c. What are my child's strengths and weaknesses in class?
 - d. What can I do at home to support what my child is learning in school?
 - e. What expectations do you have for children in your class?

6. If you run out of time but have more to discuss, ask for another meeting at a later date.



Eric Sutz

Establishing A Culture of
Partnership:
Growth Mindset



Growth Mindset

“In a **growth mindset**, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.” Carol Dweck



What does this look like in a class?

Focus: Process over Results

Process means the path or journey we all take to learn and grow as people and students.

Results are scores, grades on tests, quizzes, projects and assignments.

We can always control our process, but we can't always totally control results.



Ways We can Control our Process

Effort

Energy

Grit

Focus

Organization

Hard Work



How Growth Mindset & Process over Results Impact Home-School Partnership

- Allow Teachers & Parents to focus on individual students strengths and areas that need to be developed
- Establish that learning takes place over the course of the school year and milestones need to be celebrated
- Spark the conversation about negative and positive self talk
- Allow for the setting of goals

Say This

Not That

"I can see you worked so hard on this!"

"You are so smart!"

"It seems like it's time to try a new strategy."

"It's okay. Maybe you're just not cut out for this!"

"I like watching you do that."

"You're a natural at that!"

"It looks like that was too easy for you. Let's find you something challenging so your brain can grow."

"That's right! You did that so quickly and easily; great job!"

"That's not right. You don't understand this yet. What strategies can you try to understand it better?"

"That's not right. Are you paying attention in class? It seems like you're not even trying."



Heather O'Shea: Math Resource

**If your child works with any of the support staff or building specialists,
here are a few questions to consider:**



How is it that you came to know about my child?

How often does my child work with you and in what setting does that take place?

How can I support the work my child does with you, at home?

Is my child's academic/social/emotional progress developmentally appropriate?

Can I work on organizational or study skills?

Is there someone I can speak to regarding interpersonal or attentional issues?

What do you see as his/her strengths? What can we do to support continued growth in this area?

Are there programs/groups available in school? Outside of school?

Are there other community resources?

In what areas could my child improve? What would you suggest support looks like at home and at school? What goals do you suggest setting?

Are there programs/groups available in school. Outside of school?

Are there other community resources?



The Middle-Level Perspective: Laura Staib & Stacey Mullins



The Weber House Structure:

- ❑ Large school → small school (school within a school)
- ❑ Four houses → Blue, Green, Red, Yellow
- ❑ 300 students per house
- ❑ 100 students per house, per grade
- ❑ House structure facilitates communication between faculty and parents
- ❑ Weekly team meetings with core teachers, counselors, and assistant principals
- ❑ Parent-teacher conferences scheduled as needed



Maintaining the Home/School Connection

- ❑ E-mail is the most efficient means of communication
- ❑ Parent-teacher conferences scheduled to discuss your child's progress in depth
- ❑ Open door policy of staff
- ❑ Teaching self advocacy to middle school students – extra help times, etc.
- ❑ Staff always available for you in an effort to maintain the home-school connection.



Joseph Lorge



Closing:
Wafa Westervelt

After the Meeting

Talk about the meeting with your child, and share the positive comments made by the teacher.



Develop a plan with your child to act upon suggestions from the meeting.

Maintain communications with the teacher.



Positive School Messages

- ❑ Share goals with your child.
- ❑ Provide your children with an important message: *Your teacher cares about you and believes I am important for helping you to learn and succeed. We have agreed to work together to make this a great school year.*
- ❑ Refrain from finding fault – no problematic individuals; rather a problematic situation that requires our attention.
- ❑ Celebrate “our” successes/achievements.
- ❑ Establish a way to contact your child’s teacher.



Together we will continue to
make a difference in your child's
learning!!