



Where Excellence Is Tradition

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Parent Involvement is Important

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We recently completed our first semester parent teacher conferences and this year we added a new feature – student interpreters for parents who only spoke Spanish. Through an application process, dual language speaking upperclassmen were selected and trained to assist in translating parent-teacher conference sessions. The results were amazing: 136 families chose to use a trained student interpreter during their parent-teacher conferences. For many parents who had previously avoided conferences due to the language barrier, this was their first successful experience.

We appreciate Mireya Vera, who is a member of our Student Performance and Achievement Committee, volunteering to train students as interpreters for the conferences. Ms. Vera trains interpreters professionally and volunteered to train a select group of Spanish-speaking students at each school to provide this service for our pilot program.

These parent-teacher conferences were truly a partnership between students, parents and teachers. Breaking down a language barrier is key to that partnership. The students who translated at our conferences empowered parents to be informed of their teens' progress in the classroom. Parents who are informed and engaged in their children's education can help their teens make adjustments, guiding them toward good study habits and grades.

High levels of parent communication and involvement are important for the success of every student.

Researchers have found that:

- Parent involvement is a better predictor of academic success than test scores.
- Parent involvement boosts student achievement, attendance and behavior.
- Seventy percent of teachers believe their students would perform better in school if their parents were more involved.
- Two-thirds of parents surveyed said they wanted to be more involved in their child's education, but didn't know how.
- Schools are utilizing the Internet and social media, with success, to overcome barriers to parent involvement.

(Source: parents-in-the-know.com)

Parent-teacher conferences are an important opportunity for parents to learn how to help their teens do their best in school, and they let students know that what goes on in school *will* be shared at home.

Parents and our teachers have the same goal in mind: to help students succeed in school. Ongoing communication between the home and the school is key to achieving that goal. We are pleased with the results of this pilot program and plan to build on the initial success.

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