

### Tips for Effective Parent/Teacher Conferences

The Parent /Teacher conference is an informational exchange between the parent and the teacher. You bring to the conference information about your child's interaction with people outside of school, his home life, and previous experiences in school. The teacher brings information about your child's interaction with others in school, performance on tests, and knowledge of learning strategies. Let the teacher know if there is anything happening in your child's life that may have an effect on his/her performance at school. Together this information gives you both a better picture of your child's strengths and weaknesses, and lets you develop an effective plan for helping your child succeed in the classroom.

#### **Follow these tips to make your parent/teacher conferences more effective:**

- **Bring your questions.** Parents should prepare questions in advance. Examples of questions: What groups has my child been assigned to? Is my child finishing the work assigned in class? The most important question of all is "How can I help my child at home?"
- **Be specific.** Bring with you any of your child's graded work that is of concern. Ask the teacher to describe your child's strengths and weaknesses. Ask to see your child's work.
- **Take notes.** Your conference may result in several actions for both you and the teacher. Taking notes will help you remember what was discussed.
- **You and the teacher are a team.** If there is a problem, use positive comments such as "How can we solve this problem working together?" this will be the first step in coming up with good solutions.
- **Support yourself.** If you are not confident about your communications skills, bring someone to help. If your understanding of English worries you, bring a friend to translate for you.
- **Allow enough time.** If you have an appointment, be on time so that the teacher can stay on schedule. The teacher wants to give each parent enough time to discuss their student's progress.
- **Leave the conference with a plan.** The conference should end with a clear statement of what you will do and what the teacher will do. You and the teacher should schedule follow-up meetings or telephone calls to be sure the plan is working.