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Personalizing Learning/Goal Setting at Heather

1 message

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Principal's Bulletin

September 25, 2019

Personalizing Learning: Goal Setting at Heather School

This year, we are joining the district with a new approach to conferences in order to support increased student ownership, rigor, and engagement. We want our students to embrace new challenges with confidence, and we are eager to help each child take their next "just right" learning steps.

These conferences are about the teacher and parent getting to know each other and developing a partnership for the coming year.

Student Goal Setting

- In the fall and throughout the year, teachers will observe students as they learn and play. Throughout the year, teachers will gather data about where children are excelling, and where they are ready to grow. Teachers prioritize getting to know each child's learning strengths and needs, and expertly watch for moments when children are ready to move forward academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. We know that knowing each child is the heart of personalizing learning.
- As the year progresses, and at age-appropriate levels and with guidance from teachers, students will identify learning goals, identify how they will work towards these goals, and reflect on their progress. Teachers will provide instruction, support, guidance, encouragement, feedback, and learning resources. Learning resources will include recommendations from the classroom menu of homework options.

Progress Updates

- Teachers share feedback about student progress in a variety of ways with students and their parents. Feedback occurs in 1:1 coaching conversations, during small group lessons, as well as in written feedback as children become proficient readers and writers. During conferences, your child's teacher will explain how they will communicate with you about your child's progress over the course of the school year. We consider you essential partners in your child's education!
- Conferences will take place Wednesday, October 2 - Tuesday, October 8. During conference week, all students will be on a minimum day schedule, attending school from 8:25 am - 12:25 pm so that teachers can meet with parents in the afternoons.. Conference week at Heather will align with minimum day schedules at Mariposa and Tierra Linda Middle School to support families who have children at more than one school.

- During the conference, teachers will share initial observations about what your child is doing well, and areas where he/she needs to grow. This process will be in the form of informal goal sharing between parents and teachers, and could focus on academics or social and emotional learning. Although weekly instruction touches all areas of the curriculum, this conversation will focus on key aspects that are relevant for your child, drawing from core academic areas as well as work habits, social skills, and the 5Cs (Creativity, Critical Thinking, Citizenship, Communication and Collaboration).
- Report cards will be provided in November, March, and June, aligning with our trimester calendar and academic benchmarks. Please remember that we are working toward mastery of grade level skills by the end of the year. Reports along the way reflect where students are in their practice. The progress report that you will be receiving in November allows insight into which areas require more practice and support, as well as the areas in which students are ready to expand and deepen their understanding. As goals are met throughout the year, new goals will be set. Sometimes, this may occur before a reporting period. When students are ready to take their next steps, we will be ready to help them move forward!
- Teachers and parents have always been able to call a conference as needed, and this practice will continue throughout the year. Parents may request to meet with the teacher at any time to review student progress, ask questions, express concerns, or learn more about their child's growth.
- Chart explaining the differences between [Conferences and Report Cards](#)

Why?

In preparation for our preschool-third grade configuration, district staff engaged in a series of evidence-based conversations about what young children need in order to thrive, anchoring our work in the [SCSD Strategic Plan](#). The following key points from research and our experience have been highlighted along this journey:

- Children learn at different paces and in different ways, thriving when they can practice with guidance at a level just beyond their independent "learning zone". We want to have early conversations that target each child's learning profile, needs for support and challenge, and emerging passions.
- Young children grow in "spurts", leaping forward when they are developmentally ready to take the next step. Personalized goals will inform targeted teaching and learning, allowing teachers to coach each child towards mastery. We'll begin with goal setting, and then give children learning time to practice with support before we ask them to demonstrate mastery.
- Supporting students' ownership over their own learning is an essential part of how we prepare students for the future. Our students are little people with big ideas! We want to help them feel a powerful sense of agency over their own learning. Student goal-setting conversations in the classroom will help them own their own learning and experience the journey of working towards a target.
- We're building a school culture that fosters a "Mindset for Learning". We know that a spirit of "I can-do-it-ness" combined with meaningful learning goals will foster habits of hard work, perseverance, flexibility, curiosity, and resilience, laying foundations for success.

Measuring Success

We closely monitor each child's progress in the classroom and review school-wide data at key instructional points throughout the year. As a staff, we will be devoting time during our meetings to share successful strategies and feedback with each other.. We also hope you'll share your experiences along the way. We value your insights and partnership, and we welcome your questions and ideas as we work together to support your child's happiness and success.

Best regards,

Principal Pam Jasso and the Heather School Staff
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Find our strategic plan at <http://www.scsdk8.org/strategic-plan/>

Dates to Remember

School Site Council / ELAC Meeting

Thursday, September 26,
3:05 pm

School Board Meeting

Thursday, September 26,

7:00 pm

Parent Ed: Motherload - Film Documentary Screening; San Carlos Youth Center	Friday, September 27, 6:30-8:30
Picture Day	Wednesday, October 2
Parent Teacher Conferences Minimum Days (8:25-12:25)	October 2 - 4, 7-8
PTA Meeting	Tuesday, October 8
School Board Meeting	Thursday, October 10
Local School Holiday- no school	Monday, October 14
Parent Ed: Parent Ed. No Such Thing as a Bad Kid: Using a Positive, Strength-Based Approach for Effective Parenting; Menlo-Atherton HS	Thursday, October 24, Details TBA
Halloween Parade & Classroom Parties	Thursday, October 31, starting at 8:45 am

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For questions or comments regarding anything in this Principal's Bulletin, please contact [Pamela Jasso](#).

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