

CRC to all D75 & MS principals + ESs, Supts, BCO EDs – 3/10/20

From: Chancellor Richard Carranza <NYCChancellor@schools.nyc.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, March 10 2020 6:48 PM

Subject: [Action Item] Changes to Parent Teacher Conferences This Week

ATTACHMENTS: None

Dear Colleagues,

The health and safety of all students, staff, and families continues to be the DOE's first priority. Based on current recommendations from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and in an abundance of caution, **we are asking all middle schools to use phone or technology-based options to conduct March Parent Teacher Conferences this week.**

Parent Teacher Conferences scheduled for Thursday evening and Friday afternoon will still take place; however, **parents should not attend in person.** Instead, we are asking that Parent Teacher Conferences occur by phone or virtually. The Department is issuing the following planning considerations and will provide additional guidance by Wednesday (March 11):

Scheduling

- Since time is already held on school and parent calendars this week for conferences, we suggest that Parent Teacher Conferences proceed Thursday, March 12 – Friday, March 13 as planned but, instead of performing them in person, are performed virtually or by phone.
- Additionally, schools also may establish a more flexible schedule for afternoon and evening Parent Teacher Conferences based on school and parent schedules. Conferences can take place during Parent Engagement or Other Professional Work time throughout the month of March 2020 to ensure flexibility both for parents and teachers in this alternative mode of engagement.
- Contact parents to offer the opportunity to participate in a conference via phone and/or videoconference, e.g. via Microsoft Teams. Teachers should be thoughtful in deciding how to prioritize contacting families and, if possible, electronically send relevant materials (e.g. student report cards) in advance (see more below).
- Utilize Parent Engagement Time, Other Professional Work time and/or professional activity periods (if teachers still have it available) to contact parents to schedule a conference time and prepare for engagement with parents throughout March.
- In the event a parent is unable to connect by phone or virtually during the afternoon or evening conference, schedule a time to connect with the parent on another date in March during the regular work day (e.g. Tuesday Parent Engagement time).

Logistics

- Teachers may also use the afternoon and evening Parent Teacher Conference time to draft communications to the parents for future conferences.
- If a school leader and chapter leader wish to postpone the evening Parent Teacher Conference that is currently listed on the school calendar for this week, the principal should contact his/her superintendent and, with superintendent approval, the evening conference may be rescheduled for another evening this Spring (the date may be determined at the school level but cannot be later than March 31, 2020).
- Schools should establish a room schedule for teachers conducting the conference calls from school.

- Schools should identify all available resources (e.g. phones, Ipads, laptops) and confirm availability of software (e.g. Teams, Skype, FaceTime). Teachers may voluntarily use personal cell phones/computer equipment.
- If using their personal cell phones/computer equipment, teachers can choose where to make the calls from: in school, at home, or any other appropriate location. They can also choose to block their personal number when calling parents. For calls from any location, the privacy of the student must be considered, i.e., locations must be chosen where the teacher cannot be overheard. In addition, if calling from outside of school, care must be taken to safeguard confidential documents.
- Each teacher must keep a log of all calls made to parents including date, time and parent whom they held conference with.
- If teachers do not wish to use their personal cell phones/computer equipment, they can use available technology in the school building. Guidance for using Microsoft Teams is forthcoming.
- Parents can schedule time to interact with each teacher using an online scheduling form or app; by email; or by calling the school. Principals should work with their teaching staff to establish the most efficient way to schedule these conferences, and the DOE can provide additional support to do so.
- Principals will review the scheduling and occurrence of these phone- and virtually-based parent teacher conferences via Microsoft Teams, where applicable, or the principal may suggest another mechanism for tracking with their superintendent – including paper logs of phone calls that have taken place submitted by teacher to principal following conferences.

As a reminder: the easiest way for parents to access their child’s report card will be through the [New York City Schools Account \(NYCSA\)](#). Hundreds of thousands of New York City parents have already signed up for this important resource which helps provide information on their child and their school. We will continue encouraging all parents to do so as soon as possible and urge you to inform parents about signing up for a NYCSA account as well. If parents do not have access to, or do not know how to use, their NYCSA, teachers are encouraged to make other arrangements to provide the report cards to parents, including sending the report card home with the students as a backpacked letter, as a PDF document via email, or via the regular Post Office mail.

A letter to staff as well as a letter to parents will be sent to schools tomorrow for distribution.

Additional resources are available to help you and your school to plan:

- Planning: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/get-involved/families/parent-teacher-conferences>
- Interpretation Services: <https://infohub.nyced.org/nyc-doe-topics/communications/translation-and-interpretation-unit>

We appreciate your flexibility at this time of heightened awareness and focus on the health of our school communities. We are confident this change will advance our shared aims of safety and health of parents and students, while also continuing to elevate these critical conversations on the academic progress of all students.

In unity,

Richard

BCC includes:
All Principals MS (DIIT)
District 75 Principals
BCO EDs
All Supts
Exec Sups