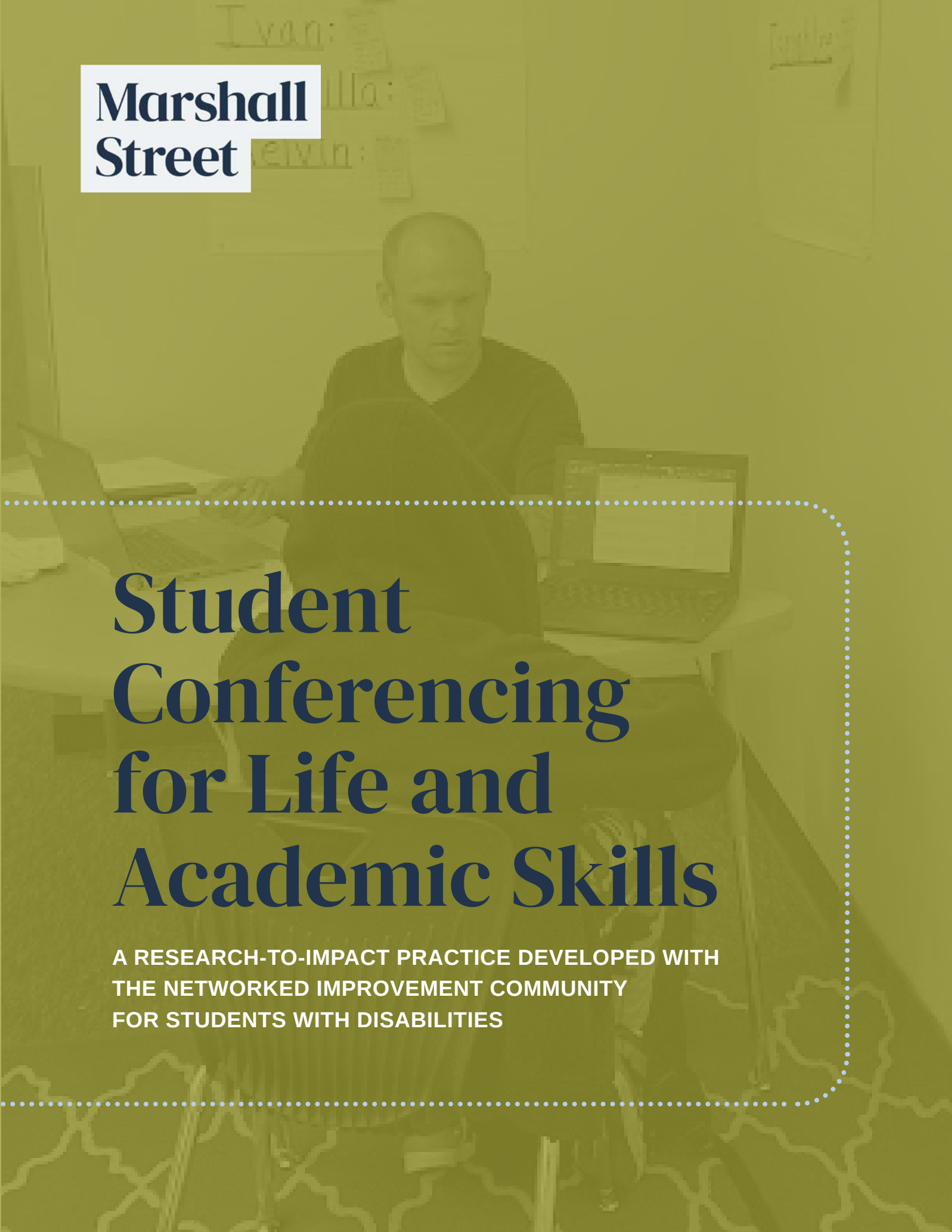
Marshall Street



Student Conferencing for Life and Academic Skills

A RESEARCH-TO-IMPACT PRACTICE DEVELOPED WITH THE NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Student Conferencing for Life and Academic Skills

Implementation Level

- [ ] District/Central Office
- [x] School
- [ ] Program/Department
- [x] Classroom

Who Implements

- [x] Teacher(s)
- [ ] Instructional Coach
- [ ] Principal
- [ ] Central Office Leadership
- [ ] Specialist

Practice Overview

What is the Practice?

Student conferencing is a regular, consistent time during school days for educators to coach students 1:1 on how to set goals, make plans to achieve their goals, enact their plans, and reflect on their progress.

Why is Student Conferencing Important?

Many Black and Latinx students with disabilities experiencing poverty are subjected to school cultures with low expectations, are not given autonomy to direct their own learning, and are not given opportunities to engage in deeper learning.[1] Student conferencing is a structure that helps interrupt the negative cycle of low expectations. It builds students' skills for success by providing a time for students to explicitly learn habits through 1:1 reflections with educators.



Why it Works

David Yeager, Carol Dwek, Angela Duckworth, and many other researchers have demonstrated the importance of habits and skills such as grit, perseverance, and agency for student success in school and life. There is a strong **body of evidence** that underpins student conferencing as a structure that works to build these critical habits and skills for success:

SENSE OF BELONGING AND DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS

The regular 1:1 interaction between students and teachers during student conferencing helps students build positive relationships with adults in the school building. When students have strong relationships with adults, as well as with other students in their school, they can feel a sense of belonging that can translate into increased engagement and, eventually, academic success.[2]

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting is associated with increased perseverance, higher aspirations, and positive homework behavior, as well as some improved outcomes for the lowest-performing students.[3] By explicitly teaching students how to self-monitor grades, identify achievable goals, and reflect on progress, students can be empowered to drive their educational futures forward. Student conferencing gives students the opportunity to practice identifying their goals and to learn from their educators how best to achieve them.

Teaching and Using SMART Goals

At **KIPP Northern California**, special education case managers begin their conferencing work by teaching students how to create their own SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals. By focusing first on SMART goal setting, case managers can easily direct future check-ins based on those goals. Clear data on student goal attainment also helps case managers consider what steps are most effective in helping students reach their goals.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Students build self-determination — the initiative to plan, implement, and evaluate their own learning needs and outcomes, with or without the help of others[4] — by developing a host of skills that are generally not explicitly taught to students outside of conferencing.

Some of the skills include:

- understanding how assignment completion impacts a final grade, including how some assignments are worth more than others;
- creating a goal to address the high-leverage assignments to get the desired grade;
- making a plan for how to study more effectively for a test;
- connecting learning to personal goals;
- advocating to teachers when extra time or additional help is needed; and
- regulating emotions in response to setbacks.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Students with disabilities, especially those who are Latinx, Black, and living in poverty, particularly benefit from this practice because many disabilities affect executive functioning skills and thus require explicit instruction to increase these skills.[5]

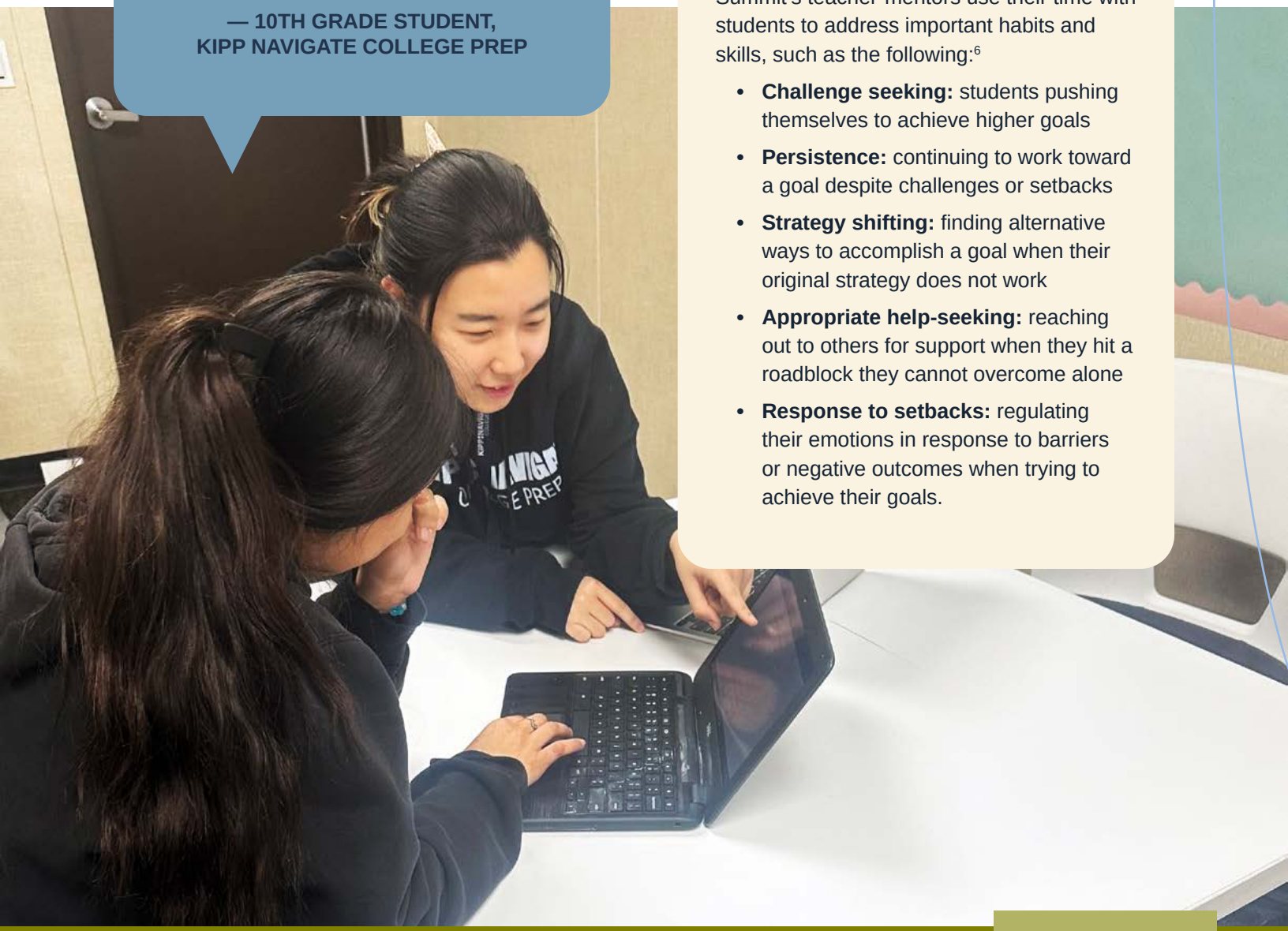
> "I like that I get to talk to someone about school. Even though I see [my teacher] every day, I like having one-on-one time."
>
> **— 10TH GRADE STUDENT, KIPP NAVIGATE COLLEGE PREP**

Summit's Mentorship Structure

Nearly two decades ago, **Summit Public Schools** pioneered weekly 1:1s for every individual student. Over time, Summit has evolved the structure, content, and process for these meetings to better meet all students' needs. Through long-term mentoring relationships, teacher-mentors become the students' advocates, inside and outside of the classroom. Mentors provide guidance, support, and skill-building so that, eventually, the leadership of weekly meetings shifts to students. Mentors also come together to meet and discuss individual student's needs in a structure called Kid Talk.

Summit's teacher-mentors use their time with students to address important habits and skills, such as the following:[6]

- **Challenge seeking:** students pushing themselves to achieve higher goals
- **Persistence:** continuing to work toward a goal despite challenges or setbacks
- **Strategy shifting:** finding alternative ways to accomplish a goal when their original strategy does not work
- **Appropriate help-seeking:** reaching out to others for support when they hit a roadblock they cannot overcome alone
- **Response to setbacks:** regulating their emotions in response to barriers or negative outcomes when trying to achieve their goals.



Implementation at a Glance

The information in this section provides a high-level view of what to consider when implementing this practice. Enabling Conditions describes the minimum conditions needed for successful implementation, including resources, mindsets, staffing, and recommended time allocation. Steps to Implement presents a concise checklist of action items, which are explained in detail in How to Implement this Practice, below.

Enabling Conditions

Prerequisites	• System for communication across teachers to share information about student needs, priorities, and plans • A schoolwide understanding of the concepts of universal, additional, and intensified supports • Belief among teachers that holding student conferencing can help students achieve their goals
Recommended Materials	• Conference protocol or agenda • Student goal and progress tracker for whole-staff communication
Staff Commitment	**Initial Training** • 1 hour of teacher training on using the school grade reporting system, particularly from the student's perspective **Ongoing PD and Meeting Time** • 1 hour per quarter for ongoing teacher professional development • 1 hour per month meeting time for educators to share student information from conferences
Recommended Time Allocation	• Class time for the general or special education teacher to implement 10–15 minute 1:1 student conferencing (see Conferencing Cadence and Class Blocks)

Steps to Implement

GETTING STARTED

To **get started** at the beginning of the school year, **school leaders:**

- [ ] Use data to identify students who need student conferencing
- [ ] Help educators determine student conferencing schedule
- [ ] Help educators develop a standardized meeting protocol
- [ ] Establish a communication system for collaborating teachers
- [ ] Embed student conferencing supports in coaching structures

HOLDING STUDENT CONFERENCES

Throughout the school year, to **hold student conferences:**

- [ ] Students complete pre-work
- [ ] Educators create independent or partner work for all students
- [ ] Educators set up a conferencing space
- [ ] Students and educators hold student conferences
- [ ] Students implement their plans
- [ ] Educators document outcomes from student conferencing





Bringing this Practice to Life

ACCELERATING LEARNING WITH STUDENT CONFERENCES AT STRIVE PREP

STRIVE Prep Federal[7] in Denver, Colorado wanted their students to take ownership over their short- and long-term goals, grades, and study habits. Teachers there realized that these self-determination skills needed to be taught explicitly for students with disabilities. To do that, STRIVE Prep Federal introduced student conferencing structures. The team piloted student conferencing in one special education math class, and encouraged by the pilot's success helping students pass classes, they have since spread the practice to multiple classrooms across grade levels. The scene described below shows a typical conference between one student and her teacher.

Starting a Conference

Jolisa and her math teacher, Mr. Miller, get settled and organized across from each other at a table with their laptops. Mr. Miller helps Jolisa find the right bookmark and pull up her student portal, while he also pulls out a paper form to start their check-in.

Mr. Miller: How is your week going, Jolisa?

Jolisa: I'm yellow. [points to "yellow" on her check-in sheet]

Mr. Miller: Why are you a yellow?

Jolisa: I'm tired from staying up too late.

Mr. Miller: How do you think being tired impacts you at school? I love how much energy you bring to my math class, and I'd love to see you be able to give the same energy to all your classes. How can we find some ways to help you get enough sleep each night?

This initial interaction between Mr. Miller and Jolisa starts their check-in with an opportunity to build their relationship. Mr. Miller shows Jolisa that he cares about her well-being and sees the positives in her even when she isn't feeling like she's at her best.

Reflecting Using Data

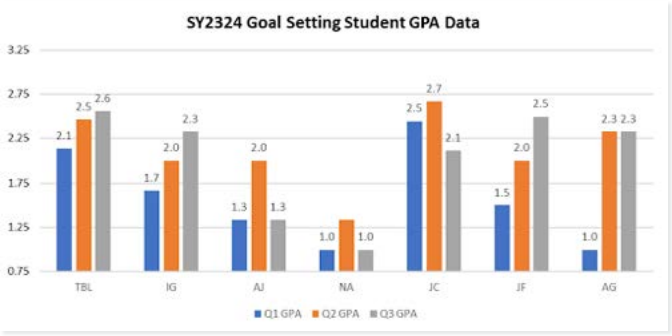
From there, Mr. Miller asks Jolisa questions about her academic successes and challenges from the last week. Her reflections naturally lead them into a conversation about Jolisa's current grades. Mr. Miller guides Jolisa through the process of looking for patterns in her grades. When he sees some troubling grades in her math and English classes, Mr. Miller asks Jolisa to look at her assignments in those classes. Jolisa acknowledges that despite turning in all the assignments, she didn't complete them all and doesn't feel confident that what she turned in was correct.

Mr. Miller then spends time asking about specific, low-scoring assignments, which allows him to work with Jolisa on regulating her negative emotions around her struggles with some assignments. He reminds her of her past successes and tries to redirect her. Mr. Miller also explains to Jolisa that it is helpful to look at her grades in classes to see how she did on assignments because she can usually meet with her teachers to revise her work and get higher grades.

Planning for the Future

Key to this redirection is focusing on Jolisa's long-term goals of going to college and studying art. Mr. Miller reminds Jolisa that passing her classes is the way to achieve those goals. He is then able to help Jolisa make a plan of action for how she can revise and then resubmit high-quality work. The two create a new goal for Jolisa to revise one assignment that she needs to resubmit by their next check-in. Mr. Miller asks Jolisa to restate her goal and then to write it on a sticky note to put on the class's public goal board.

Outcomes from Conferencing



The entire student conference takes Mr. Miller about 13 minutes. These steps help develop a culture of care, accountability, and reflection that are reinforced every two weeks during student conferencing.

The initiative has already benefited students. All of the students who had an IEP and met with Mr. Miller for student conferencing passed all of their classes. When Mr. Miller spread student conferencing to his advisory class, 80% of students who had an IEP and met with him for student conferencing increased their GPA that semester. They did that by using self-advocacy skills, by learning routines for completing tasks, and by learning how to transfer good work habits from classes they liked to use in classes they did not enjoy. Improving their grades was just the beginning for Mr. Miller's students, who now also feel valued, empowered, and motivated to reach for their goals in life.

How to Implement this Practice

This section provides step-by-step guidance for implementing student conferencing, along with accompanying resources to get started. The steps are organized into two sections for implementation: Getting Started and Holding Student Conferences.

Getting Started

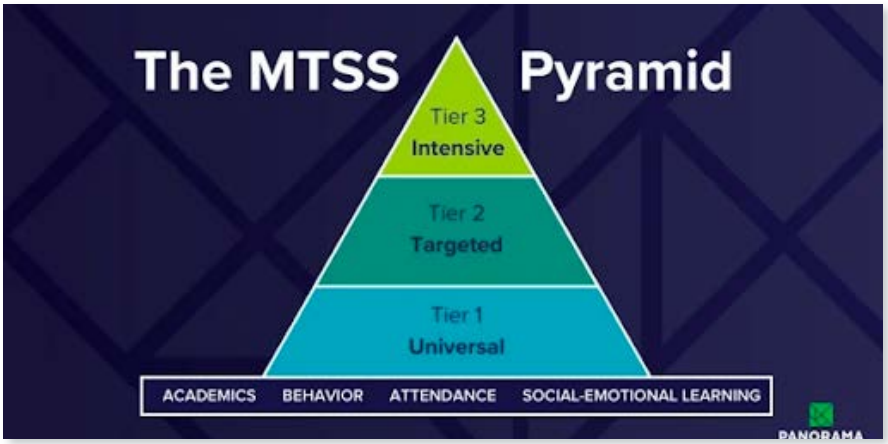
When school leaders set up school-wide systems and supports for student conferencing, the practice thrives and student outcomes improve. Below are various system elements school leaders can implement prior to the start of the school year to enable successful student conferencing.

Step 1: Use Data to Identify Students Who Need Student Conferencing

While conferencing can be structured as a system-wide universal intervention, it can also be done to provide targeted or more intensive support to a subset of students who need additional support in building social-emotional skills, study skills, or relationships. School-based teams can use data to identify a select number of students who need student conferencing the most or to determine whether an entire caseload or class should receive conferencing as a universal intervention. (See ***Establishing Effective Data Routines in School-Based Teams***.)

Student conferencing can also be implemented at varying levels of frequency and intensity. Conferencing can happen weekly, biweekly, monthly, or even quarterly, depending upon individual student needs and educator capacity. In many circumstances, it is not feasible to check in with all students on a biweekly basis, so it is useful to prioritize the students who need conferencing the most. It is helpful to use a variety of data sources to determine which students need conferencing at what level. Student grades, surveys (e.g., Panorama Climate Survey), and staff feedback can all be used to make these determinations. A few students will need the most frequent student conferencing schedule, while students who are independently succeeding in all their classes may just need periodic check-ins.

THE LEVELS OF INTERVENTION STUDENTS NEED IN AN MTSS SYSTEM



Step 2: Help Teachers Determine Student Conference Schedule

Conferences are generally most effective when educators are able to devote 10 to 15 minutes to each conference. When establishing a schedule, educators can use the data analysis from Step 1 to determine how many days per week to devote to conferencing and how often per month they can meet with each student.

CONFERENCING CASELOADS

Available time to conference with students often restricts the number of students who can feasibly have conference sessions.

CONFERENCING CADENCE AND CLASS BLOCKS

The table below presents a variety of ways that schools within the Marshall Street Networked Improvement Community (NIC) built conferencing cadences and class blocks into their school schedules.

Focusing on Students with the Highest Needs

KIPP Northern California started implementing student conferencing with their special educators with just a few students each and gradually added more. They developed the following criteria to decide which students would be introduced to conferencing next:

1. Students who are failing (or are in jeopardy of failing) one or more core content classes
2. Students who are multilingual learners
3. Students who special educators identify as needing the additional support of a check-in

The team amended their criteria as identified student needs changed. Instead of focusing on multilingual learners, they decided to prioritize:

1. Students who are recovering credits from previous semesters
2. Students who have behavior improvement plans

By leveraging student information from project goals as well as educator knowledge to create these priorities, KIPP Northern California was able to maintain teacher buy-in for conferencing.

	Advisory/Homeroom	Core Classes	Block Classes
Class Schedule	30-minute period, three days per week	50-minute period, two days per week	120-minute period, once per week
1:1s per Class	Two	Three	Seven
Level of Intervention	Targeted Conferencing*	Targeted Conferencing Universal Conferencing**	Targeted Conferencing Universal Conferencing

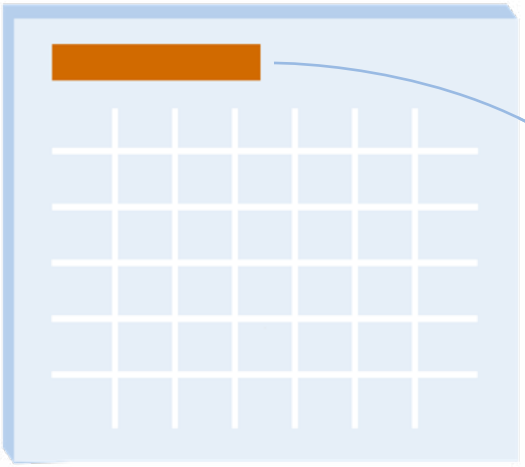
** Targeted Conferencing: Up to 12 students receiving biweekly 1:1s*

*** Universal Conferencing: Up to 28 students receiving monthly 1:1s*

Implementing Conferencing with Less Structure

KIPP Northern California began implementing student conferencing with three special education case managers. Each case manager first conferenced with only one student who they knew would be willing to participate for several months, and later added to their conferencing schedule two additional students who had a greater need for this time. These conferences had to be slotted into the weekly schedule wherever possible because the case managers did not necessarily have the students they managed in their advisory periods. The challenge for case managers was to ensure they still prioritized student conferences amid the multitude of other tasks they were responsible for in a week.

KIPP's initial pilot was able to prove the value and effectiveness of student conferencing to the school leader, who created two dedicated conferencing periods for special educators the following year. By making this shift to teacher's schedules, the school was able to offer biweekly conferences to more than twice as many students.



Keeping Conferences Meaningful While Scaling

STRIVE Prep initially implemented student conferencing in a math class for students with disabilities. The special educator was able to use classroom stations during normal class periods to conference with students. As STRIVE Prep looked to scale its student conferencing practice to more classrooms, they found a way to do student conferencing during shorter advisory periods. The implementation meant conferences went from 12 or 13 minutes to less than 10 minutes, but they accomplished the same purpose of helping students set and meet goals.

Step 3: Help Teachers Develop a Standardized Meeting Protocol

A conference protocol guides the conversation between teacher and student and provides an accessible way of taking notes and recording information. The protocol can be built into a web or paper form for ease of use. Consider how the protocol can let students have control and responsibility for conferences and for decisions made during conferences. It may also be helpful to have slightly different protocols based on the time of year:

Use *beginning-of-the-school-year conferences* to build relationships, establish trust, and ensure a strong foundation.

Beginning-of-year conference protocols could include the following:

- Relational check-ins for teachers to get to know their students and their students' values, mindsets, motivations, and roadblocks. This is also when teachers can discover students' long-term goals to better understand what students and teacher are building toward.
- Opportunities to **build trust**, create a space where students want to be, and establish a relationship that they value as an important part of their week.
- Explicit instruction on writing SMART goals, how to get into student portals, expectations around independent or partner work, and the difference between short-term goals and IEP goals.

Orientation is a great time to set the stage for these foundational conversations so that when conferences become more data-driven and students start setting more concrete goals, teachers can use students' personal information to provide them guidance.

***Middle-of-year conference* protocols could include:**

- focus on academic performance,
- setting specific learning goals,
- creating plans to reach those goals, and
- reflecting on previous weeks.

Explicit Instruction of Conferencing Skills

STRIVE Prep's math teacher who piloted student conferencing taught his classes the steps of the conferencing process with activities to illustrate each strategy. For example, he started with lessons explicitly teaching his entire class how to write SMART goals. KIPP Northern California, on the other hand, chose to teach **these lessons** during the first few conferences between students and their case managers.

Letting Conferences Change During the Year

KIPP Northern California created a series of conference protocols, which changed based on the time of year each conference would be held. This allowed case managers and students to shift their discussions, for example, to set new goals at the beginning of a semester or focus on course finals at the end.

By the *end of the school year*, some students may be able to run conferences themselves. Educators can use various gradual release strategies to support this level of student agency. Some strategies include:

- asking students to check and document their grades before their check-in,
- providing students a script for leading each section of the check-in,
- having students calculate their progress toward their goal, and
- asking students to write their own SMART goals and give feedback during check-ins.

Because conference meetings are very short, staying on schedule may be the biggest implementation challenge. Schools in the NIC used several successful strategies to manage time during conferences:

- Teachers gave conference pre-work to students, prompting students to review previous goals and to reflect on progress and barriers prior to their conference check-in. This ensured students came to conferences ready to share.

- Teachers used a clear time-keeping strategy — such as assigning students to keep time or use a projected timer on the board — to help keep conferences at their designated times.
- Teachers prepared a bank of action steps for students to choose from, rather than having them come up with ideas for actions on their own.
- Teachers created cloze statements and sentence starters for key elements of the meeting so students could focus on the objective of each task — creating SMART goals, for example — rather than on constructing sentences.
- Teachers adjusted the protocol to meet individual student needs, focusing on specific components different students may need rather than trying to cover every subject.

Step 4: Establish a Communication System for Collaborating Teachers

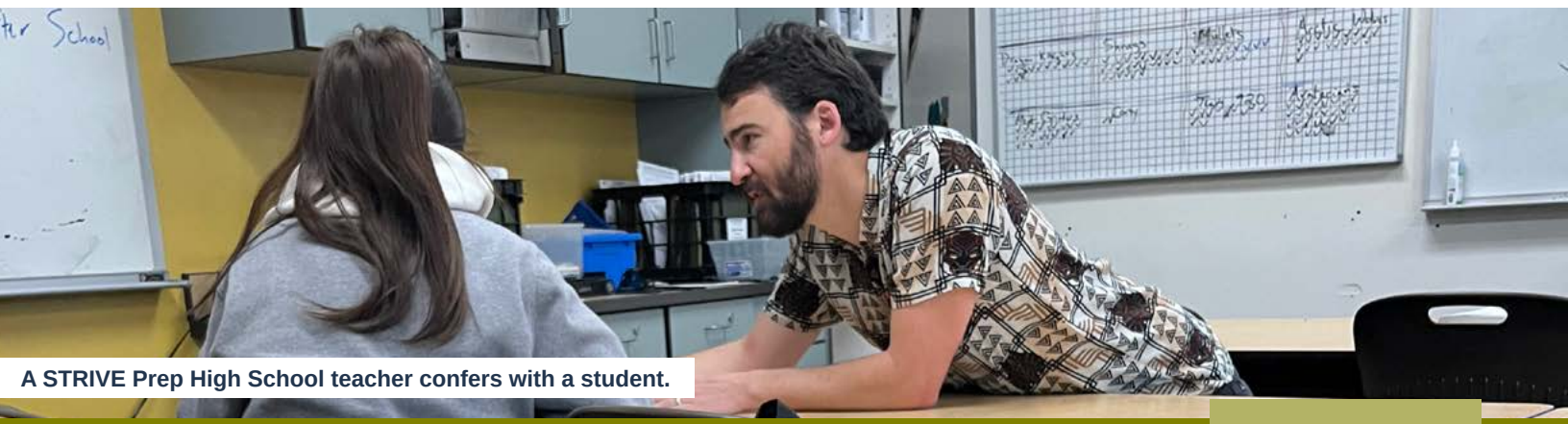
It is important that collaborating teachers can easily document and share student goals, plans, and progress. This information aids teacher follow-up with students and communicates the current status with other staff. A shared spreadsheet can allow staff members convenient access to conference documentation. School leaders can use existing structures to create a time and place for sharing information from conferencing, such as grade-level meetings, co-planning sessions, or schoolwide "kid talk" sessions.

Step 5: Embed Student Conferencing Supports in Coaching Structures

Collaborating teachers benefit from coaching support and professional development focused specifically on student conferencing. Examples of this might include the following:

- **Observations of student conferencing:** Ideally, instructional coaches observe student conferencing so educators can receive constructive feedback on how to improve conferences.
- **Training on school grade reporting system:** By giving teachers training on using the school grade reporting system, particularly from the student perspective, teachers are then equipped to help students navigate the systems.
- **Professional development on teaching skills:** Through school-wide professional development, teachers can gain skills to build relationships with their students, coach students on habits of success, and help students manage setbacks.

A simple guide can also help educators hold high-quality conferences.



A STRIVE Prep High School teacher confers with a student.

Holding Student Conferences

Step 6: Students Complete Pre-Work

Student conference meetings are very short, typically 10–15 minutes. Completing pre-work before the conference ensures the best use of that 10–15 minutes. For example, students can look up grades or other data related to their goals and begin filling out information on the conference form. This pre-work can be assigned as either homework or classwork.

Differentiating Conference Structures

At **STRIVE Prep**, some students complete their grade reflections independently, ahead of the 1:1, once they've shown that they know how to independently review and reflect on current grades. This practice can also save time in cases where a teacher needs to shorten the conference length for some students.

Step 7: Educators Create Independent or Partner Work for All Students

In order to be free to conduct 1:1 conferences during class, teachers must create independent or partner activities for all students to work on during conferencing. Additionally, teachers will need to spend sufficient time setting expectations for students during independent work.

Step 8: Educators Set Up Conferencing Space

Because teachers conduct 1:1 conferences in the same classroom as the rest of the students, a dedicated space for conferencing will be needed. Teachers should set up a conferencing space in the classroom such that they can see the rest of the students while maintaining some privacy for the student in the 1:1 conference.

Step 9: Students and Educators Hold Student Conferences

Though students need different amounts of support and time in each part of their check-in, 1:1s typically will cover the following steps:

- Relational check-in (2–5 min.)
- Goal setting (2–4 min.)
- Plan (2–6 min.)
- Accountability and next steps (2–4 min.)

The sample agenda on the following page is for a biweekly conference with a middle or high school student with a disability.

SAMPLE CONFERENCE AGENDA

Relational Check-in (~3 min.)

- Ask the student how they're doing.
- Ask a follow-up question for more detail, to clarify, or to ensure they feel heard.
- Ask for a "win" the student has experienced since the last conference.

Goal Setting (~2 min.)

- Pull up the student's goals from the prior meeting, along with data on whether or not they met their goals.
- Ask the student what the data tells them about their progress. Help them understand whether it shows that they got closer or further from their goal.
- Ask students which classes they want to focus on this week and why, based on their progress, they have selected those classes.

Plan (~2 min.)

- Ask the student to consider barriers to reaching the SMART goal they just created. Gut check whether there is a "root cause" that is going unaddressed that could inhibit the student's progress toward their goal.
- Help the student modify their plan based on both where they are focusing their energy this cycle and their reflection on prior barriers. Make sure the student can give their rationale for modifications. For example:
  - "I will go to the teacher's office hours two days a week because I'm running into too many questions that I need the teacher's help to understand."
  - "My 'plan B' for when my parents can't give me a ride to school is to text my neighbor by 7:30 a.m. to get a ride with them instead."
- Ask the student if there is anything they need from you or other staff members at the school to help them be successful in acting on their plan.

Accountability and Next Steps (~5 min.)

- Have the student set reminders, identify how they want to communicate with other teachers or do follow-up, and publicly post their goal (to support accountability, transparency, and relatability across students).
- Set a date for the next check-in and any intermediate steps. Provide recommendations based on knowledge of schedule, upcoming deadlines, and the like.

Step 10: Students Implement Their Plans

After the meeting, have students fill in any data that will be public, whether in a shared document or on a poster in class. Additionally, students will be responsible for implementing the plan they created during the conference.

There will likely be more times than not that students struggle to enact their plans. A host of barriers both within and outside of school can impede a students' ability to do what they said they would. Educators can use these opportunities to model the compassion and mental fortitude necessary to overcome obstacles to achieving one's goals. Both students and educators are likely to experience frustration at times, but persevering in the face of frustration is what will lead to success.

Characteristics of a Good Conference at Summit Public Schools

1. Uses an agenda with timings set for the meeting
2. Allows time for personal matters, but does not let those impede having time to focus on academics
3. Builds trust by demonstrating **active listening techniques**
4. Spends time on both reflection (looking back) and goal setting (looking forward)
5. Gives the student feedback on their habits and skills

Step 11: Educators Document Outcomes from Student Conferencing

Once conferences are over, educators document outcomes to aid in their own follow-up with the student, as well as to have a way to communicate the information to other staff. Use the communication channels established in Step 4 to share this information with other staff members and use structures such as grade-level meetings, co-planning sessions, or schoolwide conversations about students as a time and place for sharing information from conferencing with other staff members. Educators can also help students feel accountable and see that other students are working on the same skills by having a place in class to display students' goals and progress publicly.



Goal setting and goal tracking tools for students at STRIVE Prep Federal



Practice Snapshot

BUILDING MEANINGFUL STUDENT CONFERENCES AT KIPP PUBLIC SCHOOLS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

KIPP Navigate College Prep's special educators built relationships with students while teaching them essential skills through biweekly student conferences. The team built their conferencing program gradually to ensure that time spent in conferences benefitted students as much as possible. Whether writing SMART goals or advocating their needs to teachers, students who participated in student conferencing demonstrated that KIPP Navigate created systems and structures that can benefit all students.

The special education team at KIPP Navigate noticed a trend that was negatively impacting student performance. Students, particularly students with disabilities, were waiting until the end of a semester to take action on missing work that was preventing them from passing courses. The end-of-semester rush made it difficult for students failing multiple classes to catch up. Students needed to learn the skills to help them stay on track in their classes all semester through regular touchpoints with their special educators.

To address this challenge, the special educators wanted time to meet personally with students to discuss their grades and to help students devise action steps to improve those grades. Holding biweekly student conferences during advisory seemed like a feasible way for the school's special educators to have the types of interactions with students that they felt could have a real impact on their attendance and grades.

Yet KIPP Navigate special educators had a logistical barrier: special educators each taught an advisory class that was made up of students not necessarily in their caseload. This meant that special educators had to find time outside of advisory when they could pull students from class to hold conferences with them. Making this time within the weekly schedule also meant that special educators would only be able to conference with a subset of students.

KIPP Navigate identified eight students for biweekly conferencing in their first year of implementation.

With the students identified, the special educators developed a conferencing protocol focused on students identifying SMART goals and developing steps to achieve them. Additionally, special educators reviewed how to write high-quality SMART goals in order to then support students in developing their own.

The results of student conferencing were positive. All of the participating students increased the number of classes they were passing during the school year, and over 75% of them passed all their classes. Even the most skeptical students at the beginning of their conferencing experience were, by the end, convinced of its benefits to them, as they were able to see their own progress and meet their goals.



"I've learned [through the check-ins] that I need to be specific because it helps me meet my goals. I also learned how to better organize my thought process about my grades. The meetings helped me pass my classes because they kept me accountable."

— KIPP STUDENT

Based on the initial positive reception to student conferencing, in 2023–24, KIPP Navigate built in two periods per week for special educators to conference with their students, more than doubling the number of students with whom they can meet. Additionally, special educators are continuing to calibrate their protocol and train students to complete prework, both of which will help reduce the length \of each conference. Special educators hope that spreading student conferencing to all of their students with disabilities will help them more quickly achieve their network goals for these students.

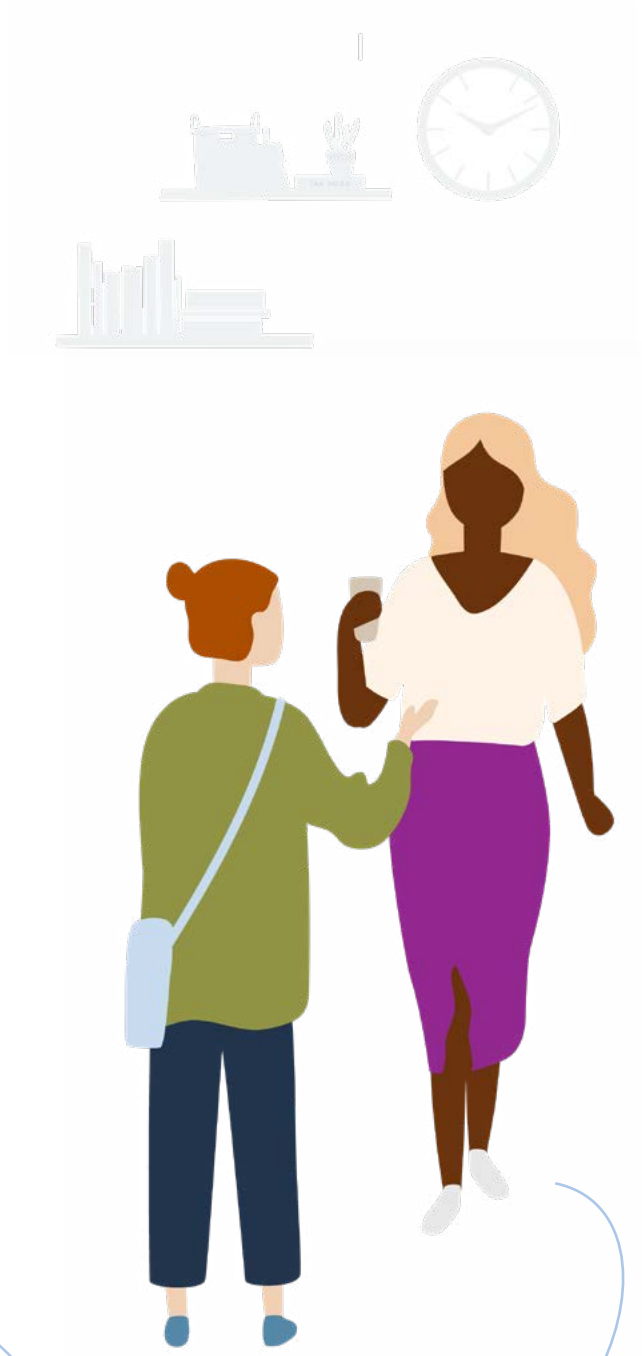


"I like the check-ins and talking. I do work better after the check-in because I set up goals for myself. They've helped me with completing school work, and are a reminder for me to do my work in order to pass."

— KIPP STUDENT

Summary

Student conferencing is a useful strategy for helping students acquire habits and skills that aren't explicitly taught in school. Conferencing helps break the cycle of low expectations as students learn to monitor their grades and set reasonable goals for themselves. The time spent conferencing with students also helps develop student-teacher relationships that enhance a sense of belonging in the school setting. Implementation of student conferencing requires careful consideration of the needs of students, as well as planning of schedules and conference protocol. With such planning, student conferencing can be an effective way of improving student outcomes, particularly for Black and Latinx students with disabilities experiencing poverty.



FURTHER LEARNING

Introducing Students to Goal Setting
PANORAMA EDUCATION

What is active listening?
COURSERA

STUDENT CONFERENCING FOR LIFE AND ACADEMIC SKILLS

Appendix

Appendix

How to Measure

When implementing student conferencing, monitoring how useful, usable, and utilized the practice is by team members and across the school system can accelerate learning to improve outcomes for students. At minimum, these measures are most essential:

PRIMARY MEASURES					
Measure Type	**Data Collection Type**	**Question Asked**	**Results**	**What does success look like?**	**Examples and Notes**
Process (utilization)	Survey Conference notes	Are check-ins being held? Yes / No	Percent of students with a check-in held at desired cadence	Increasing percent until 100% of students receive a check-in at desired cadence	
Process (usefulness)	Conference notes Goal tracker	Are students meeting their conference goals? Yes / No	Percent of students who met their conference goals	Increasing percent over time until 100% of conference goals met	This measure can be displayed publicly in the classroom so students can see the whole class's progress graphically.
Outcome	Gradebooks	Are students submitting assignments at a higher rate? Yes / No	Percent of assignments missing in each class Fraction of classes with no missing assignments	Decreasing percent of assignments missing until reaching zero Increasing fraction of classes with no missing assignments	This measure can be used to prioritize which classes to focus on with students during student conferences.

Additional measures can guide a team to know whether the routine data protocol is leading to the desired improvements for students:

SECONDARY MEASURES					
Measure Type	**Data Collection Type**	**Question Asked**	**Results**	**What does success look like?**	**Examples and Notes**
Process (usability)	Conference notes Calendar review	On average, how long do student conferences take?	Average duration in minutes of student conferences	There is no one correct conference duration; the ideal conference length will be adequate to hold meaningful conferences for all of the participating students at the desired frequency.	Consider looking at the range of conference durations as well to see if some students need more time and why.
Outcome	Gradebooks	Are students passing classes at a higher rate? Yes / No	Average percent of classes students are passing	Increasing average percent of classes passed until reaching 100%	
Outcome	Survey	To what extent are students feeling an increased sense of self-efficacy?	Average student ratings on a self-efficacy survey construct	Increasing average rating over time	A survey construct is composed of several questions that target the same concept. Example survey question: “I believe I can meet the goal that I set this week.”
Outcome	Survey	Are students feeling a greater sense of belonging?	Average student ratings on a 1–5 Likert scale	Increasing average rating until reaching 5	This measure could be considered a process measure depending on the theory of action for conferencing. Sense of belonging is best measured using a survey construct rather than using one survey question.

Notes

1 Haberman, “The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching”

2 Hattie, *Visible learning*

3 Martin et al, “Growth Goal Setting in High School”

4 Knowles, *Self-directed learning*

5 Perna and Loughan, “Executive Functioning Skills”

6 The habits and skills listed come from the work of Dr. David Yeager.

7 Strive Prep Federal is now known as Rocky Mountain Prep Federal.

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