

**Feedback on Changes to the  
Report Card and Conference System**

Lincoln Public Schools  
School Committee, 12/15/16

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**Charge to the Committee, 2015-16:**

*“Recommend improvements that will help the district better meet the needs of students, families, and educators.”*

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- Conferences**
1. High value to parent/guardians and faculty
  2. Information shared should be personal, precise, and timely
  3. MS would like increase to two conferences

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### Recommended changes for K-5

Conferences

Oct./Nov.  
March/April

Report cards

January  
June

*And - new conference forms*

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### How did we do this fall?

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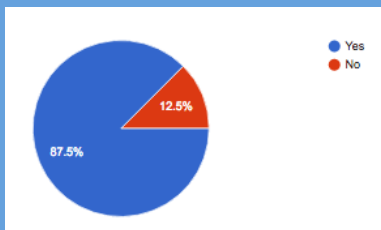
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Did you receive a conference form during your conference?



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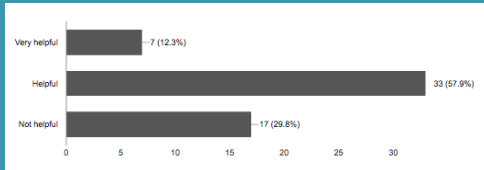
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### What are your thoughts about the helpfulness of the document?



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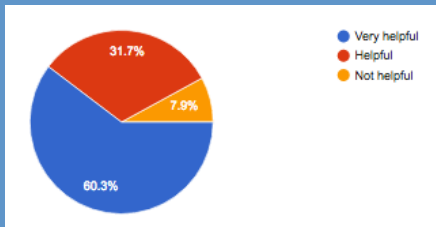
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### How well did this fall's conference and conference form together meet your need for two-way communication about your child as a learner?



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### Conferences #1

*"The teacher was amazing: warm, receptive, and already knew my child and was pushing him to be better than he thought he could be. I was very pleased not only with his academic improvements that were demonstrated by the work products the teacher shared, but also with how interested and caring the teacher was regarding my child..."*

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### Conferences #2

*“Through the discussions, it was clear that the teachers had our children’s best interests in mind. They knew their personalities and expressed stories that let us know that they were keeping an eye out for our child. The examples that they brought to show us (writing, math assessments, etc.) helped the conversation and supported their comments. It could be the teachers we have this year, but they were the best conferences we have had in that they were focused, stayed on point, and allowed for some two-way communication.”*

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### Conferences #3

*“With one teacher we had an extensive discussion about areas of growth for my child; with the other teacher, we simply were shown some assessments with not much detailed information about strengths or areas of growth.”*

*“The form for ... was not helpful; the teacher only wrote that my child was making appropriate progress in all areas, with no detail.”*

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### Themes in parent/guardian feedback

- Parents and guardians value conversation with knowledgeable teachers more than they valued the conference form.
- The language on the form (“making appropriate progress” or “needs support”) was confusing to some, particularly when samples of student work were not shared
- Some parents/guardians viewed the conference form as a report card.
- Parents/guardians highly value frequent, brief communications from their children’s teachers, (emails, photos, newsletters, blogs), including information about general topics of study in the class.
- Wish that conferences could be longer.

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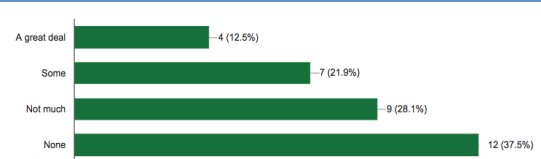
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How much impact has the reporting system change had on the quality of information shared in your parent/guardian conferences this fall?



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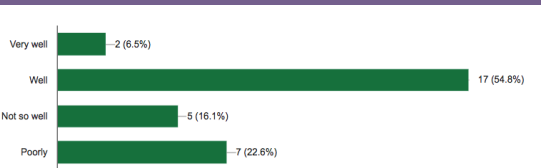
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Once we iron out the technical glitches, how well will the conference form work as brief documentation of information shared in conferences?



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### Faculty response to new conference forms, #1

*“Not a lot of work; simple communication that is documented; works fine for me...I think [the change in number of report cards] is a positive step forward and the timing of reporting feels much better. It also lessens the workload on teachers, which is greatly appreciated.”*

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### Conference forms #2

*"Parents did not seem interested in the form, nor were they thankful. It was very repetitive information which was what we were trying to originally eliminate with getting rid of one report card."*

*"I always like to take my own notes regarding each student to prepare myself for conferences. I think about each major area and job down what would be important to pass on to families. I didn't have time to do that for these past conferences because the time I would have spent not taking for myself, I had to use to fill in the conference forms. I personally felt less prepared for the conference even though the parents left with more formal documentation."*

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### Themes in faculty feedback

- Faculty highly value the opportunity to talk with parents and guardians, and they prepare carefully for those conversations.
- Preparation of the conference forms, for many faculty, had a negative impact on how they prepared for conferences.
- The introduction of the conference forms to faculty was not as well-executed as it should have been. This caused difficulties for faculty in completing the forms and eroded some of the good will that we had hoped to generate with changes to the reporting system.
- Some faculty viewed the introduction of the conference forms as an indication the district thought they were not doing a good job communicating with parents.

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### Spring conferences: March/April

Before then...

- Share summary of data with families and faculty
- Analyze survey data more closely:
  - Admin Council
  - Report Card and Conference Committee
- Identify options and make decisions regarding adjustments in time for spring conferences

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