

# The Winston School



Student-Led  
Conferences

*Students are the best source for what they know and what they are able to do. If given the opportunity students are able to discuss their learning and their growth competently with others.*

The Winston School is a small college preparatory school designed to maximize the potential of bright students who learn differently<sup>®</sup>. Through individualized learning strategies our students are empowered to meet confidently the challenges of tomorrow.

***Celebrating Differences***

***Character***

***Community***

***Courage***

***Creativity***

The Winston Community believes:

- Learning requires self discipline
- Learning requires the active participation and support of the student and family
- Learning focuses on long-term goals
- Learning is enhanced by understanding one's particular strengths and weaknesses in the learning process
- Learning requires the continual development of technical skills needed for reading, writing, and mathematics
- Learning is the process of continual elaboration on the student's knowledge base
- Learning requires courage and tenacity
- Learning strengthens self-esteem

“Student-led conferences reflect the belief that students should be creatively involved in their learning and assume responsibility for the learning process. Through the student-led conference, students become more motivated, reflective and evaluative. They also become more critical in their approach to Learning.”

~Hazelwood School District, Florissant, MO

## PURPOSE

- *Students accept responsibility for learning and become more aware of the learning process*
- *Students report academic growth to parents and progress toward becoming lifelong learners*

# BENEFITS

- *Requires students to take control and accept responsibility*
- *Builds self confidence and self-esteem*
- *Prepares students to be life-long learners in a very concrete way*
- *Provides an opportunity for students to present themselves as capable learners and goal-setters*
- *Helps students assume responsibility for the learning process*
- *Allows students to connect learning to their lives, interests and goals*
- *Fosters greater commitment to school work and learning*
- *Allows students to critically assess their own performance*
- *Helps move the conversation from grades to understanding and skills*
- *Enables students and parents to assess progress over time*
- *Promotes opportunities for parents to see their child in charge of the learning process professional manner*
- *Allows students, parents, and teachers to appreciate each other in different roles*

# PROCESS

- *Creating portfolios is a community process; the whole community has to support the program*
- *Students need guidance through the entire process, at least initially*
- *Time is needed for students to assemble the portfolio, write reflections and goals, get feedback, and role-play the conference*
- *Students may be nervous as the conference becomes a “performance”*
- *The primary job of the parent and the teacher is to listen*
- *Students may have difficulty bridging the gap between parent expectations and the student’s own understanding of quality, quantity, and presentation*

# Student-Led Conference Organizer

<p>First 2 Weeks of School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students establish goals for the year (SMART)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Specific</li> <li>○ Measurable</li> <li>○ Achievable</li> <li>○ Realistic</li> <li>○ Timely</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Students create plan to achieve goals</li> <li>• Students (teachers/advisors) begin establishing baselines and collecting work for portfolios</li> </ul>
<p>Fall Conference (early October)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students present goals</li> <li>• Students reflect on the start of the year</li> <li>• Students discuss the first grading period report</li> <li>• Students review plan to achieve goals and amend if necessary</li> </ul>
<p>Throughout the School Year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students (teachers/advisors) continue to collect material for portfolios</li> <li>• Students (teachers/advisors) continue review goals and assessing progress toward achieving goals</li> </ul>
<p>Spring Conference Preparation (January-early February)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students (teachers/advisors) review goals and write reflections</li> <li>• Students review and revise portfolio contents</li> <li>• Students (teachers/advisors) rehearse for Spring Student Led Conference</li> </ul>
<p>Spring Student Led Conference Presentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students present goals and assess progress</li> <li>• Students present personal portfolios highlighting their progress and growth</li> <li>• Students discuss their future academic plans and goals</li> <li>• Follow-up survey for parents, teachers, students</li> </ul>

# Student Portfolios

## Artifacts

An artifact is any material possession which demonstrates importance to a student's overall progress.

## Academic Discussion

When students discuss academic artifacts they should discuss strengths and areas for improvement. Student analysis of their learning should empower students to take ownership of their skill development within the context of the Student-Led Conference.

Students may also wish to consider larger conceptual goals such as "I want to improve my understanding of Algebra" or "I want to join discussions more in class" etc.

<u>Artifacts</u>	<u>Academic Discussion</u>
art work test samples laboratory reports sports uniform/award picture creative writing essay	self-advocacy learning strategies learning styles learning risks critical thinking

## **Grades 1-8**

- September: Two writing samples, reading performance scores (dated) math assessment, science assessment, and foreign language assessment.
- December: Two writing samples and reading performance scores
- May: Two writing samples, reading performance scores (dated) math assessment, science assessment, and foreign language assessment.

## **Upper School**

- September: Two writing samples, reading performance scores (dated), math assessment, science assessment, foreign language assessment, history assessment, (baseline for each content area).
- December: Two dated samples that show evidence of performance for each content area.
- May: Two dated samples that show evidence of performance for each content area.

*“Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination.”*

*~ Fitzhugh Dodson*

- Goals are things we want to accomplish. They are the end to which our efforts are directed. Some goals are short term and others are long term. Both are worthy and deserve our best efforts. Goals must be measurable.
- An action plan is what is done to achieve the goal. The goal is the destination and the action plan is the map to get there.

*“Make your goals both realistic and achievable.”*

*“The more reasons you have for achieving your goal, the more determined you will become.”*

*~ Brian Tracy*

# SMART Goal Setting

<b>S</b> pecific	The goal should identify a specific action or event that will take place.
<b>M</b> easurable	The goal and its benefits should be quantifiable.
<b>A</b> chievable	The goal should be attainable given available resources.
<b>R</b> ealistic	The goal should require you to stretch some, but allow the likelihood of success.
<b>T</b> imely	The goal should state the time period in which it will be accomplished.

*"A goal properly set is halfway reached."*

*~ Abraham Lincoln*

# Setting Powerful Goals

Powerful Goals are

- **Stated in Positive Terms**

Write what you want, instead of what you don't want!

- **Clear and Specific**

Use simple words to state exactly what you want to achieve.

- **Measurable**

How will you know when you have reached your goals?

## Examples

Instead of	Write
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get good grades</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Earn A/B Honor Roll for this grading period</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't get in trouble</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Earn an A on Conduct every week</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No more tardies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrive on time for school every day</li></ul>

# Writing Action Plans

## Strong Action Plans

- Tell **HOW** you are going to reach your goal  
Explain what you plan to do, not why you are doing it
- Use Clear and Specific words  
Use simple words to say exactly what steps you plan to take
- Often include more than one step or strategy  
Try to think of at least 2 steps you can take to reach each goal

### Examples

Instead of	Write
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study more</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Write down my homework and check my planner at home</li><li>2. Study at least 15 minutes a day</li></ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't be late</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Set my alarm clock every night</li><li>2. Help mom get my brother ready for school</li></ol>

# Goals Worksheet

**Goal Statement:**

**What do I need to do to reach this goal?**

**Where am I now?**

**Obstacles:**

**Solutions:**

# Individual Student Goals

## Lower School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

	Goal	How I Did	The Best Thing About Trying to Reach This Goal
1st			
2nd			
3rd			
4th			

# Lower School Conference Guide

## **Reading**

- Show your parent(s) your reading level and talk about how you select books to read on your level. Read a passage from a book to your parent(s) and tell them to ask you 3 questions.

## **Writing**

- Have your parents(s) read one of your stories. Show them how you took this piece of writing through the writing stages to publish it.

## **Math**

- Explain a math problem or strategy to your parent(s). Have them ask you questions.

## **Self-Reflections/Goals**

- Share your goals worksheet with your parent(s). Set new goals if necessary.

## Possible Suggestions:

**Reading:** The teacher may choose to have students select a book that he/she has never read (but is on the correct reading level) and mark a passage to read prior to the student-led conference. This will allow the parents(s) to see their child reading on the appropriate level.

**Writing:** Having the parent(s) read the students' stories will let them experience the readability of their child's writing as a published piece; however, teachers may choose to ask the students to read the story to the parents.

**Math:** Students should be able to teach the parent(s) and talk about how they solve the math problems or use the strategies.

**Self-Reflections:** Students should share their goals worksheet with the parent(s). This is a time for possible additions or deletions to the students' goals.

# Individual Student Goals and Plan

## Middle School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

- My strengths as a student:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- My weaknesses as a student:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- My rating as a student (1 being good and 5 being poor)

1    2    3    4    5

- My method for studying for tests and quizzes:

- What “Problem Solving” means to me:

- What makes a good “Problem Solver”?

- My goals for this year:

- My plan to meet my goals:

# Middle School (Grades 5 & 6)

## Conference Summary Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

These are the subjects that I feel I have done well in:	I feel I have been successful because:
These are the subjects that I feel I have struggled in:	I feel they have been difficult because:
My goals at the beginning of the year included:	The goals I achieved:
The goals I need to work on:	The goals I need to rewrite:
Distractions/challenges that kept me from achieving my goals:	The area in which I have made the most improvement is:

# Middle School (Grades 7 & 8)

## Conference Summary Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Language Arts**

I have earned this grade because:

### **Reading**

I have earned this grade because:

### **Science**

I have earned this grade because:

**History**

I have earned this grade because:

**Math**

I have earned this grade because:

**Elective**

I have earned this grade because:

**Elective**

I have earned this grade because:



# Individual Student Goals

## Upper School

The following chart is intended to provide students with more structure to help them prepare for their conferences. It is only a guide and does not constitute a set of criteria set in stone and should continue to encourage creativity.

Grade	Requirements
<p data-bbox="402 596 548 632"><b>9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b></p> <p data-bbox="188 688 643 724">Theme: The Winston Student</p> <p data-bbox="188 781 716 951">Assignment: How does the Winston mission statement resonate with your long term goals?</p>	<ul data-bbox="837 688 1430 1728" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="837 688 1430 814">• Students should articulate 1-3 new goals and include at least 3 new portfolio entries.</li><li data-bbox="837 873 1430 1318">• At least one goal must be academic and must be connected to a specific skill rather than grade improvement. Example: I would like to improve my long answer and paragraph writing skills. As a result the student would show a sample of writing and discuss tactics for improvements.</li><li data-bbox="837 1377 1430 1545">• At least one goal must be non-academic and may involve character development, athletics, service, arts etc.</li><li data-bbox="837 1604 1430 1728">• Students may also wish to reflect and celebrate their greatest achievement(s) from last year.</li></ul>

## 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

Theme: "Pay it Forward"

Assignment:

Create a personal statement which reflects your service goals(s). This may focus on school, local community or International initiative.

- Students may wish to briefly revisit 9<sup>th</sup> grade goals and provide an update on their progress.
- Students should demonstrate progress by comparing artifacts between grades 9-10.  
Example: The student could show two laboratory reports and point out their skill development.
- Students should articulate 1-3 new goals and include at least 3 new portfolio entries.
- At least one goal must be academic and must be connected to a specific skill rather than grade improvement.  
Example: I would like to improve my long answer and paragraph writing skills. As a result the student would show a sample of writing and discuss tactics for improvements.
- At least one goal must be non-academic and may involve character development, athletics, service, arts etc.
- Students may also wish to reflect and celebrate their greatest achievement(s) from last year.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

Theme: My College/Career Goals

Assignment:

What are my college/career goals?  
Comment on the skills and values  
which are informing these decisions.

- Students may wish to briefly revisit grade 10 goals and provide an update on their progress.
- Students should demonstrate progress by comparing artifacts between grades 9-11.
- Students should articulate 1-3 goals related to their college/career search. Include at least 2 sources connected to the search process. Example: College applications and college essay.
- At least one goal must be academic and must be connected to a specific skill rather than grade improvement.  
Example: I would like to improve my long answer and paragraph writing skills. As a result the student would show a sample of writing and discuss tactics for improvements.
- At least one goal must be non-academic and may involve character development, athletics, service, arts etc.
- Students may also wish to reflect and celebrate their greatest achievement(s) from last year.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Theme: Past, Present and Future

Assignment:

What are your best memories from Winston?

What is your legacy at Winston?

What do you foresee as being your biggest challenges in your post-Winston experiences?

- Students may wish to briefly revisit grade 11 goals and provide an update on their progress.
- Students should demonstrate progress by comparing artifacts between grades 9-12.
- Students should articulate 1-3 goals related to their post-Winston plans. Include at least 2 sources/examples.  
Example: College acceptance/major and future course plans.
- At least one goal must be academic and must be connected to a specific skill rather than grade improvement.  
Example: I would like to improve my long answer and paragraph writing skills. As a result, the student would show a sample of writing and discuss tactics for improvement.
- At least one goal must be non-academic and may involve character development, athletics, service, arts etc.
- Students may also wish to reflect and celebrate their greatest achievement(s) from last year.

# Individual Student Goal Plan Upper School

9<sup>th</sup> Grade: How does the Winston mission statement resonate with my long term goals?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (Academic):
Plan to achieve goal:
Where am I now?

Obstacles:	Solutions:
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9<sup>th</sup> Grade: How does the Winston mission statement resonate with my long term goals?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (Non-Academic):
Plan to achieve goal:
Where am I now?

Obstacles:	Solutions:
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# 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: “Pay It Forward”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (Academic):
Plan to achieve goal:
Where am I now?

Obstacles:	Solutions:
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# 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: “Pay It Forward”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (Non-Academic):
Plan to achieve goal:
Where am I now?

Obstacles:	Solutions:
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# 11<sup>th</sup> Grade: What are my college/career goals?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (Academic):
Plan to achieve goal:
Where am I now?

Obstacles:	Solutions:
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# 11<sup>th</sup> Grade: What are my college/career goals?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (Non-Academic):
Plan to achieve goal:
Where am I now?

Obstacles:	Solutions:
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# 12<sup>th</sup> Grade: Past, Present and Future

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (Academic):
Plan to achieve goal:
Where am I now?

Obstacles:	Solutions:
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# 12<sup>th</sup> Grade: Past, Present and Future

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Statement (Non-Academic):
Plan to achieve goal:
Where am I now?

Obstacles:	Solutions:
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*"High levels of self-confidence come from the feeling that you are the master of your own destiny."* ~ Brian Tracy

## Student-Led Conferences

### "A Celebration of the Student's Growth"

Student's Role-The student initiates, leads and explains his/her work at the student-led conference. Conferencing skills are learned by the student through role-play and rehearsing. This increases self-confidence.

Parent's Role-The most important task for the parent is to attend the conference. Parents need to listen carefully to what the student says and to ask questions. Praising achievement is always important. Student-led conferencing effectively engages parents in meaningful involvement in the school and in their children's education.

Teacher's Role- It is a very simple but difficult role. The teacher needs to stay out of the conference unless invited. The teacher does not want to do anything that undermines the credibility of the student as the expert on their learning.

*"Are We Preparing Our Students  
For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century?"*



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