

Preparing for the First Day of School



CREATED BY: TeacherVision Staff

Discover great ideas on how to introduce yourself to your new middle grade or secondary students and their parents.

GRADES: [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [10](#) | [11](#) | [12](#)

[+ show tag](#)

Preparing for the First Day of School

Your first contact with parents and guardians sets the stage for communication the rest of the year. We know that **kids do better in school when parents are involved** in their children's school. We also know that parents' influence on their teens is far greater than they think.

What do you want parents to know about you, the course you're teaching, your expectations for yourself and your students? It's likely that you won't see parents at a school open house until several weeks into the school year. Take advantage of "back-to-school" anticipation and anxiety by **communicating to parents during the first week of school**.

Write a letter to parents or guardians

- This letter can go home at the beginning of each new quarter, **providing a snapshot of each quarter's highlights** and a preview of what's coming up. These quarterly communications can also provide the opportunity for students to share their own reflections, self-assessment, and goal-setting as part of letters that are sent home.
- **Send the letter home on the first day of school.** It's one way to let parents know that their support and encouragement is important to you.
- Give two copies to each student so parents and guardians can keep one copy and sign the other letter for students to return to you.
- **Make your letter one page.** This is an introduction and you can always communicate more details later.
- Choose **two to three things** that you want to emphasize.
- If some of your students live in families whose parents' or guardians **primary language is not English** see if someone from your Bilingual or English as a Second Language Department can help you translate your letter.
- If you have students whose families speak a variety of languages, you might invite your students and an English as a Second Language teacher to come in at lunch to work on **writing translations of important points** in your letter to be sent home with the letter you wrote in English.

Parent Letter Ideas

- Describe **what your course is about** including requirements, goals, and key learning experiences.
- Describe your **hopes and expectations** for students.
- Share **what might be challenging for students** in this class. Have a sense of humor – tell parents if they hear their kids sighing and moaning, it's probably because...
- Let parents know **what steps students can take if they're having difficulty** meeting class requirements.
- Let parents know **how they can communicate with you if they have questions or concerns.** Give them the school number.
- Let parents know **what kinds of homework assignments students can expect.** Suggest specific ways that they can support and encourage their child's success in the classroom.
- Emphasize **how much effort, attitude, and participation count** in your classroom. Identify some of the social skills that you hope will help create a respectful, responsible, and caring classroom.

Other Ways to Introduce Yourself

- If you feel comfortable doing so, **introduce yourself by video**. Create a 5 to 10 minute recording where you introduce yourself and highlight a few important things that you want parents to know. If you'd rather not be on camera, you can share the same information in a [Slideshare](#).
- **More [Personalizing the Secondary Classroom](#)**

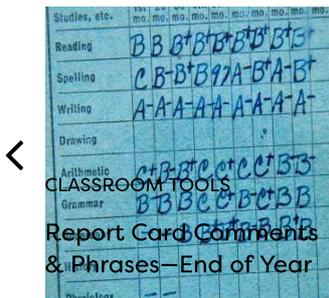
Adapted from *Partners in Learning: From Conflict to Collaboration*
by Carol Miller Lieber



Engaging Schools

Provided by Engaging Schools

Featured High School Resources



Search our growing library of professionally created teacher resources.

Enter your search here...

Search

With the help of certified and current classroom teachers, TeacherVision creates and vets classroom resources that are accurate, timely, and reflect what teachers need to best support their students.



[Benefits of Premium Membership](#)

[About TeacherVision](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Blog](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Teacher Advisors & Experts](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Publisher Partners](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Advertise with Us](#)

[Cancellation Policy](#)

[Do Not Sell My Info \(for CA Residents\)](#)



TeacherVision is part of the FEN Learning family of educational and reference sites for parents, teachers and students.

familyeducation



FEN Learning is part of Sandbox Networks, a digital learning company that operates education services and products for the 21st century.