Tips for Contacting Parents about Student Concerns

- Begin with a statement of concern. Let the parent know that you care about the student.
- Describe the specific problem and present pertinent documentation. Explain in specific, observable terms what the student did.
- Describe what you have done. Explain exactly how you have dealt with the problem so far. Make sure that the parent is aware of the steps you have already taken to solve the problem.
- Get parental input on the problem. Listen carefully to what the parent has to say. Here are some questions you may want to ask: “Has your child had similar problems in the past?” “Why do you feel your child is having these problems at school?” “Is there something (divorce, separation, siblings, a move) going on at home that could be affecting your child’s behavior?”
- Get parental input on how to solve the problem. Parents may have a good idea that could help solve a specific problem. Ask for input, and listen carefully to the responses.
- Tell the parent what you will do to help solve the problem. You’ve already explained what you have previously done. Let the parent know exactly what specific actions you are going to take now.
- Explain what you need the parent to do to solve the problem. Clearly and carefully explain specifically what you would like the parent to do.
- Let the parent know you are confident that the problem can be worked out. Wrap up the conversation or meeting on a positive note.
- Tell the parent that there will be follow-up contact from you. The parent needs to know that you are going to stay involved. Provide this reassurance by giving a specific date for a follow-up call or note.
- Recap the conference. Clarify all agreements. Restate and write down what you are going to do and what the parent is going to do. Keep this information in your files.