

Highlighting Student-Led Conferences

By Elsie Nabukenya



Senior Ian Sousa and his crew leader Dr. Mark Connor talk at his conference October 13, 2025. (Photo Credit: Katie MacDonald)

At Principia School, students are taking the lead when it comes to sharing their academic progress. During this year's Family Weekend, Principia hosted its annual Student-Led Conferences, a special event that gives students the opportunity to reflect on their learning and discuss their goals directly with their families.

"The process a child goes through mentally, when you defend or explain your learning, doesn't happen in any other setting except in that setting. In terms of when you have to explain your growth to your parents is hugely beneficial to you as a student," said Samantha Dry, the Upper School Principal.

Instead of traditional parent-teacher conferences, where teachers do most of the talking, these sessions put students at the center. Each student prepares a presentation or portfolio showcasing what they've accomplished so far this year, including projects, essays, lab work, and personal reflections.

"It was impactful to hear how each student is thinking about their progress so far, and especially with seniors, to hear how much their retreat impacted them," said Katie MacDonald, the Perrin senior crew leader.

Family Weekend is a long-standing Principia tradition that brings the school community together. So with this comes a lot of preparations. "We answered questions in this document that have asked us like, what is an achievement you've had in academics? Or like not just sports, but outside of the academic world," said Anzu Carpenter, a senior.

By turning the focus toward reflection and student voice, Principia's Student-Led Conferences continue to strengthen the connection between home, school, and student success.

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