How to deal with situations that appear to require two conference rounds at the same time

Applies to: ☑Standalone Conference Manager System Admin
                 ☑PowerSchool Conference Manager System Admin

On occasion there are times where a System Admin may want to have two Conference Rounds open at the same time. Because of logistical considerations, the Conference Manager only allows one Conference Round to be open for booking at a time.

Fortunately, there is no limit to the number of Conference Sessions that can be included in a Conference Round. With some thought, almost all situations that appear to require two concurrent Conference Rounds can be accommodated within one Conference Round by using multiple Conference Sessions and clear information to parents.

The following four considerations can help System Admin users figure out how to accommodate for their needs.

1. Think about the Conference Round as an umbrella setting that encompasses all bookings from the first conference that occurs to the last one that takes place, even if the conferences follow a different format or are for a different purpose.
2. Create a list of the different conference sessions or unique schedules you need to accommodate for all conferences.
3. Review your list of conferences considering each conference session and decide whether there are any that can be combined to reduce the number of sessions.
4. Finally, determine what change in conditions might allow you to reduce the number of Conference Sessions (see scenario 1 as an example) and identify what needs to be communicated to parents to help avoid confusion.

Scenario 1 – Simplifying the number of Conference Sessions.

Conferences are supposed to end at 8:00 PM, but two teachers with larger classes require an extra 30 minutes of conferences to accommodate the additional parents.

The school normally has parent conferences during the evening from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. However, there are two teachers who have more students and require an extra 20 minutes of time to accommodate the parents of all their students and would like to go to 8:30 PM.

Rather than create a separate conference session for the two teachers who need the extra conference blocks, the Conference Manager System Admin decides to create one conference session for all teachers that extends from 4:00 PM to 8:30 PM and then uses the Common Break feature to block off all teachers from 8:00 PM to 8:30 PM. She then goes into the schedules for the two teachers needing the extra time and removes the break times, making the 8:00 PM to 8:30 PM time available to be booked by parents.

The System Admin knows that the all teachers will have time blocks displayed from 4:00 PM to 8:30 PM, but that the conference time slots from 8:00 PM to 8:30 PM for all teachers will appear booked and not available, except for the two teachers who are going to be available for conferences until 8:30 PM.

Scenario 2 – A school initially thinks it needs 2 separate Conference Rounds (One for elementary and one for middle school) but knows only one Conference Round can be open at a time, so configures only one Conference Round that accommodates needs of the elementary and middle school conferences.

An Elementary/Middle School wants to host elementary conferences and middle school conferences one week apart
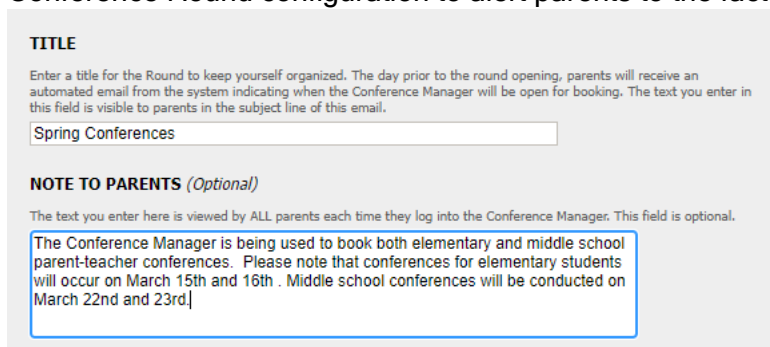
The school houses elementary and middle school grades and the Elementary conferences 15 minutes each and are scheduled March 15th and 16th and Middle School conferences are scheduled for March 22nd and 23rd and are 10 minutes in duration.

In the past the elementary and middle school conferences have been 2 weeks apart and the System Admin has created a separate Conference Round for the elementary and middle school grades. However, he knows that only one Conference Round can be open in the Conference Manager at a time and that that the middle school round can't open for scheduling until the elementary conference are over. With just one week between, he decides that he will create one Conference Round and include booking for both the elementary conferences and the middle school conferences.

To do this, he creates one Conference Round and gives it the title Spring Conferences. He creates the two sessions for the elementary grades, with the conference duration set to 15 minutes. Then he creates the two middle school Conference Sessions with conferences set to 10 conference appointments.

The Conference Manager System Admin knows parents of middle school students will be booking their conferences with much more lead time that the parents of elementary students. To help make sure parents are informed of the change to having both elementary and middle school conferences are to be booked when the Conference Manager opens, he does the following:

1. In creating the round, the System Admin uses the NOTE TO PARENTS field in the Conference Round configuration to alert parents to the fact all parents are booking.
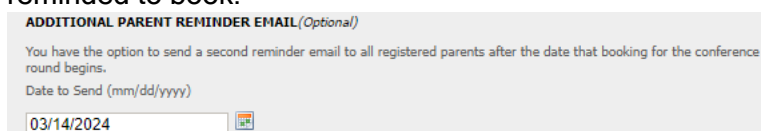
    TITLE

    Enter a title for the Round to keep yourself organized. The day prior to the round opening, parents will receive an automated email from the system indicating when the Conference Manager will be open for booking. The text you enter in this field is visible to parents in the subject line of this email.

    Spring Conferences

    NOTE TO PARENTS *(Optional)*

    The text you enter here is viewed by ALL parents each time they log into the Conference Manager. This field is optional.

    The Conference Manager is being used to book both elementary and middle school parent-teacher conferences. Please note that conferences for elementary students will occur on March 15th and 16th . Middle school conferences will be conducted on March 22nd and 23rd.

2. He includes an additional parent reminder email on March 14th so all parents are reminded to book.

    ADDITIONAL PARENT REMINDER EMAIL *(Optional)*

    You have the option to send a second reminder email to all registered parents after the date that booking for the conference round begins.

    Date to Send (mm/dd/yyyy)

    03/14/2024

3. In configuring each conference session, he uses the Additional Information field in the configuration of the Conference Session to make it clear to the parent which students the conference session pertains to.

SESSION INFO

A Conference Round is made up of one or more Conference Sessions.

Select a date and include any additional information needed to supplement the date. This information is displayed to parents in a drop down menu.

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Additional Information (eg. Gr. 4 - 6 (5:00 to 8:00)) (Optional)
03/22/2024	Middle School Conferences Only

4. Finally, in the Session Notice to Parents field, he includes additional information that further ensures parents are aware the conference booked through the Conference Session pertain to either elementary or middle school students. In this screenshot, the conference session is for March 22nd.

Session Notice for Parents (Optional)

Viewed by parents each time they select this session.

This conference schedule is for parents of middle school students only. Please note elementary conferences take place March 15th and 16th.