

Engage49

School District 49

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School District 49 encompasses the east side of Colorado Springs and the community of Falcon. It is divided into four zones: Sand Creek, Power, Falcon, and IConnect covering approximately 133 square miles of both urban and rural communities. A goal to align previously siloed and disconnected family engagement initiatives began by forming a team of district family and community liaisons from Title I schools, each zone, and other district departments that directly interact with families. Utilizing the [FSCP Framework rubric](#), the team determined that Designing Capacity Building Opportunities would be the area of focus for the 2024-2025 school year.

The team joined the [FSCP Collaborative](#) to work in conjunction with CDE and other school districts within the Pikes Peak Region to enhance collaborative efforts and to learn from each other. After learning of the team's goals and plans, the D49 Superintendent, Peter Hiltz, suggested that the team have a 'brand' which led them to adopt the name and identity of Engage49.

Through monthly meetings and exchange of experiences and ideas, the team determined that they would implement a monthly publication for families. Family surveys were sent out with an explanation of the planned monthly publication asking for the highest areas of interest that families would like to see addressed by the school district. Based on this information, the team narrowed down topics to the top ten that would be the monthly themes to begin at the start of the school year. These topics included: An introduction to the District-Wide Family Engagement initiatives; Attendance; Parent/Teacher Conferences; Safety and Security; School of Choice Procedures; Standardized Testing; Pathways; Avoiding the Summer Slide; etc. The publications were distributed via the Smore format, making them easily translatable for non-English speaking families. Every issue included a link for families to add questions, suggestions, or comments; and when applicable this feedback was shared with the appropriate district school or department.



The Engage49 team also partnered with other district departments to initiate LIVE events. The goal of the LIVE events was to create a space specifically for parent and family voices. A group of experts were invited to a panel and who, following introductions, provided a brief explanation of their area of expertise, and then the floor was opened for questions and discussion. By design, the families who attended drove the discussion. The agenda was dinner, panel discussion, and then networking, so attendees could converse directly with the panel representatives if they wanted. By the end of the school year, Engage49 hosted three LIVE events: Health and Hazards, Safety and Security, and Career Technical Education.

The monthly publications were evaluated through the provided Smore program analysis that showed number of views, clicks on links, feedback, and responses to embedded surveys. The Engage LIVE events were evaluated via a follow-up survey that was accessible to all attendees. Challenges included a struggle with promotion consistency to ensure that all district families received both the publication and awareness of the LIVE events. Engage49 is continuing to work on raising awareness and building the brand to improve promotion and enhance participation.

The greatest success was the team effort, including the collaboration with many different entities. The feedback from families was crucial, as well, so including multiple opportunities for family input is key. Finally, be diligent in raising awareness within district departments, schools, and families by presenting the initiative to district School Accountability Committees, District Accountability Committees, principals' meetings, school staff meetings, and Parent-Teacher Associations.