

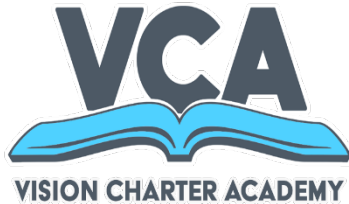
Learning Sessions

Vision Charter Academy

Delta, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education



Vision Charter Academy was founded on the belief that parents should be an integral part of their child's educational experience. Therefore, Learning Sessions were active from the beginning. The goals of the Learning Sessions were to establish with families a common goal around educational success, to honor the expertise of each person in the group, to establish what worked well that week and what didn't work well that week, to confirm skill acquisition of learners, and to provide resources (i.e., if it didn't go well, how do you remediate or provide resources? If it did go well, how do you enrich the learning and success?).

Highly Qualified Coordinators (HQC) meet weekly with families to conduct Learning Sessions. Each HQC only has a certain number of families so they can be sure to meet consistently, but also have flexibility when scheduling with families. A key factor to Learning Sessions is relationship-building. The HQC must have a strong relationship with the student and family in order to provide needed support and resources that will lead to greater learner success.

Learning Sessions take place mainly with K-8 students. The student and their family meet weekly with a HQC for one hour. The student brings work samples and they start the session with how their week has gone. They discuss the successes and challenges they are having. The goal is to build a relationship with the staff, so the family feels comfortable sharing difficulties. This information is not used to get the student out of doing work, as there are accountability systems, but the school staff provide understanding and support/resources that the student or family may benefit from accessing. The HQC checks on progress for the week and if the student is on target with skill acquisition. If parents miss meetings, the HQC will call and send letters to ensure consistent communication.

The program hopes to evaluate its data using a learning management system. However, the current system cannot pull data very well so that has been a challenge. The Academy will move to another data system (Performance Matters) that will allow for better data review, such as a checklist that will allow administrators to see that the meetings are happening. The data will show who is meeting their targets, what interventions are being used, and what parents have disengaged from the program and are missing their meetings. One of the biggest challenges is disengaged parents and parents who do not show up for the meetings. The HQC tries different things including persistent contact or directly communicating with the student instead.

For those hoping to implement this program, communication training for staff is crucial. They must be able to actively listen and be willing to say the hard things. This means staff must establish a relationship in a way that allows them to say challenging things. Lastly, ensure both documentation and data analysis systems are in place to help review and improve the program.