

# Building Trust with Families Project

## Eagle County School District

### Eagle, CO



Eagle County School District (ECSD) has a district-wide focus on equity and the importance of being bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. Half of ECSD programs, PreK-12, offer 50/50 Dual Language Education. ECSD participates annually in district-wide Professional Development training on Cultural Proficiency and Equity. The goal of the Building Trust with Families Project is to improve trust between IEP teams and families, thus supporting families to play a more engaged role in IEP meetings when establishing goals and services that support student outcomes.

The ECSD Building Trust with Families Project was a collaboration between the following team members: Elizabeth Hoeft, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Disability Coordinator and Child Find Team member; Daniela Melgarejo, Child Find Coordinator and Bilingual Speech- Language Pathologist; Rocio Garcia-Aguirre, Early Childhood Family Service Team Coordinator; Jessica Martinez, Director of Multilingual Education; Angelica Espinosa, District Interpreter/Translator; and Monica Villalobos-Russell, District Interpreter/Translator.

One of the most important keys to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents. Many ECSD IEP teams felt that not all families play active roles in the creation and implementation of their children's IEPs due to a lack of trust. To address this concern, the team established the following practices:

- 1) An IEP Parent Video and meeting documents that are shared with families prior to meetings to help them learn about the purpose of IEP meetings, what to expect, and how to prepare.
- 2) An ECSD IEP team member connects with families prior to meetings to help them prepare and identify topics of discussion.
- 3) IEP teams collaborate with interpreters and share student information so they are prepared to support the discussion.
- 4) ECSD staff is trained annually on how to build trust with diverse families, including helping staff to understand the issues and reflect on current practices, as well on how to work with an interpreter.

Preservice training plans were also facilitated to grade level teams to fit the unique needs of each level. Supplemental training materials included an additional video on how to work collaboratively with interpreters.

School districts have departments that often operate separately from each other. The key to the success of this project was to ensure that experts from many different departments worked together to achieve the common goal of building trust to increase the engagement of parents who need an interpreter within the IEP process. A committee with diverse members helps to design a more holistic approach to meeting that goal.