



# Promising Partnerships Practices

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# 2018

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A collection of initiatives from districts and schools  
about working with families and community partners  
for student learning



State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education



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# Introduction



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The State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education (SACPIE) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is pleased to share this fourth annual collection of *Promising Partnership Practices*. The purpose of this book is for schools, districts, and other educational organizations in Colorado to highlight how they partner with families and the community for student success.

Over 50 years of research indicate that students are more likely to succeed both academically and behaviorally when schools, families, and communities work together. This publication includes over 50 practices categorized by the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships (PTA, 2009), a research-based framework with which CDE and SACPIE align their partnering work (Senate Bill 13-193).



We look forward to highlighting more practices each year and to improving outcomes for students through family, school, and community partnering.

In Partnership,

Stacey Zis, SACPIE Chair

Kim Watchorn, SACPIE Vice Chair

Dr. Darcy Hutchins, CDE Family Partnership Director

CDE and SACPIE would like to acknowledge and thank Hannah Gonzales for helping to write the narratives for this publication.



# 5K Run for Education Rocky Mountain Classical Academy Colorado Springs, CO



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The Rocky Mountain Classical Academy (RMCA) recognizes the important relationship between health and wellness and student achievement. As a result, in fall of 2017, the school hosted its 7th annual 5K Run for Education, the capstone physical fitness and community wellness event within RMCA's Core Knowledge Sequence curriculum. The 5K is open to all grade levels, parents, the RMCA Community, and the entire Falcon District 49 Community.

Over the years, the 5K Run for Education has transformed from a school event to a community event. Schools from within the D49 school district participate. Runners and walkers are encouraged to wear their school colors with pride. The top overall male and female finishers each win a cash prize. The remaining top eight overall finishers also receive prizes. In 2017, the race also featured free Kid's Fun Run 50-yard dash.



Organizing the 5K is a team endeavor. RMCA's Physical Education teacher and Events Coordinator co-facilitate the event. The Events Coordinator shares: "Everyone wins. Adult registrations defray our cost and support wellness, fellowship, and athletics. Racers not from RMCA see half their adult registration fees refunded to their schools. This covers tee-shirt costs and helps fund all participating schools."

The school's Director of Strategy, Innovation, and Development shares the following advice for potential 5K planners: "Know your weather, weather, weather! Many schools do 5K runs in the spring. We moved ours to autumn for nicer weather and to not conflict with the multiple 5Ks that have since sprung up during April and May."

That said, inclement weather didn't stop the community from supporting the event. In 2016, a bad snowstorm hit the day prior to the run. The PE teacher and several volunteers cheerfully shoveled paths along the five-kilometer route, permitting the race to occur.

# Family Resource Center Arvada High School Arvada, CO



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Arvada High School serves a diverse population of 840 students with 66% of the students on free or reduced lunch and an increase of students who are homeless, in transitional housing, or unaccompanied. Seeing the challenges that students and their families face, the principal, family engagement liaison, faith-based community members, and community volunteers created the Arvada High School Family Resource Center (FRC).

The FRC is located on school grounds for students to have immediate access to resources. The goal of the Center is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all of the students and their families, regardless of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, feel valued. School staff have found that the Center also strengthens the school, community, and family connection.

When students and their families enter the FRC, they receive free access to a food pantry, toiletries, school supplies, backpacks, clothing, transportation assistance, and internal and external support services. These supplies are provided by faith-based community members, volunteers, and non-profit organizations.



Over half of our student population and their families at Arvada face challenges outside of the school walls that affect attendance, academics, social skills, nutrition, and health. The FRC is in place to assist in improving families' circumstances and removing barriers so that parents and students can successfully navigate the school, both academically and socially.

Arvada's family liaison evaluates the practices by maintaining a confidential intake form. The intake form provides information to the liaison regarding the positive impact of the resources available in the FRC for the students and family.

The impact of the FRC is apparent outside of the school walls. Several local newspapers have highlighted the systemic support. One parent commented: "I don't have that much income and it's helped where I needed help for what I couldn't provide or afford at that time."

To anyone planning to open a Family Resource Center, Arvada's liaison recommends "to have a clear understanding of their student population needs and the support of their principal and community."

# Grand Night Out Kyffin Elementary School Golden, CO



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Kyffin Elementary School, located in Jefferson County Public Schools, is a collaborative community that uses innovative teaching and learning opportunities to maximize student growth and individual success. The school offers many ways for students to grow socially and academically with after school programs, enrichment rotations, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). School staff wanted to showcase their students and highlight the positive school culture they strive to foster. As a result, in November 2017, Kyffin hosted Grand Night Out.

The purpose of Grand Night Out is three-fold:

- To honor, recognize, and enlist family support
- To support the school's Book Fair and a focus on the English/Language Arts Major Improvement Strategy of the Unified Improvement Plan
- To celebrate the Arts



The 2 ½ hour evening event includes the coffee and dessert, the book fair, and student performances from Kyffin's choice and dance troupe. Classroom teachers have an open door policy on this night where students can bring their family members into the classroom and share their work and their learning. Because the event is held near Veteran's Day, the school showcases its Wall of Heroes. Attendees can see and honor those who have served in the armed forces.

Planning the Grand Night Out is truly a team effort. The Parent-Teacher Association hosts the coffee and dessert reception. Kyffin office staff prepare the Veterans Wall of Heroes. Teachers share their classrooms with families and the music teacher coordinates student performances. Finally, the School Accountability Committee reviews feedback after the event.

Kyffin's principal shares that Grand Night Out is the perfect opportunity for students to share with "grand" guests all of the hard work they do in school. It may also provide families ideas with how to support learning outside of school.

# Holiday Family Fun Night Eiber Elementary School Lakewood, CO



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Eiber Elementary School, located in Jeffco Public Schools, partnered with the Holy Shepherd and Saint Paul's Church to create the Holiday Family Fun Night. The goal of the Holiday Family Fun Night was to provide an opportunity for families to gather for dinner, make holiday cards, and celebrate traditions with their others in the community. Teachers at Eiber Elementary also snuck in a few educational games and crafts at math stations.

The event begins with a free dinner provided by the community and Holy Shepherd and Saint Paul's Church. Families then created holiday cards and made new friends with other Eiber families. Students and their parents then visited math craft and game stations based on grade level and interest. Some of the math games included card games, rolling dice to create place value, and addition and subtraction using a deck of cards.

Eiber's family liaison explains: "Math games can bring fun to the constant drills students endure during homework or during class. Parents will find out that their student will apply math skills more readily when they are entertained. These math games make practicing concepts learned at school fun, emphasizing

mathematical concepts without the

monotony of drills. Every family has the opportunity to build math games which they can then take home to play with their families over the winter break."

Participants shared feedback with school staff after the event. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with families indicating that they wanted more opportunities to socialize and learn throughout the year.



# International Night Lawrence Elementary School Arvada, CO



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For the fourth consecutive year, Lawrence Elementary School, located in Arvada, hosted an International Night to engage the broader community as well as expand all students understanding of the world. School staff collaborate with community to provide demonstrations, activities, cultural artifacts, and international food to enhance students' and families' learning.

International Night planning begins with an invitation to families to share their specific culture at the event. After assessing parents' interest in sharing their cultures, the planning committee meets to brainstorm about what other cultures are represented at the school. The committee also identifies potential community partners to share cultural resources and knowledge. One week prior to night, a blitz of advertising begins to get everyone excited; the halls are decorated, calls are made to invite families, and music is played on the announcements.

As families enter Lawrence Elementary on the evening of the event, they sign into the Travel Log and receive a passport to get stamped throughout the school at each cultural destination. Food is available in the cafeteria, courtesy of many community restaurants committed to partnering with the school. This partnership is a win-win, since International Night is a way for the restaurants to advertise their business.



Families make their way through the school into each room to experience a culture through a performance, activity, music, decoration, traditional dance, or craft. The idea is to give everyone a better understanding of the cultures represented at Lawrence and to show the similarities and differences with their own cultures. Some families dress in ethnic costumes and take a Polaroid picture to add to their passport.



A few grade levels display students' projects. This year, the sixth grade presented their Western Hemisphere projects throughout the hallway and enjoyed sharing and talking about the unit. Third grade also presented their Native American dioramas in the hallway. This is a great way that students participate and show off their learning.

Standard 1--Welcoming All Families

# Jefferson Community Center Jefferson Jr. / Sr. High School Edgewater, CO



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Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School has become the hub of the Edgewater, CO community since establishing its community center. The goal of the Jefferson Community Center is to provide the entire community with all the resources to achieve success. The center is open to all students, families, and community members in order to provide resources to achieve success.

Jefferson is the first Community School in Colorado. The term “community school” refers to a type of publicly funded school in the United States that serves as both an educational institution and a center of community life by uniting families, educators, and community partners to provide all students with enrichment, health and social services, and opportunities to succeed in school and in life.

The community center is very unique in that it consists of a Family Engagement Liaison, a Community School Site Coordinator, and a community representative all under one roof at Jefferson. Each staff member focuses on a different Pillar of Community Schools, but all work with the same end goal in mind.



The Family Engagement Liaison builds relationships and connects the families, students, and community of Jefferson Jr/Sr High School and Edgewater to the center’s resources. The community center is used as a place for families to come and use computers, expand their knowledge with various workshops, and attend meetings.

The Community Schools Site Coordinator is an alumnus of Jefferson High School and a part-time Advanced Placement Social Studies and Economics teacher. The community representative oversees the coordination and implementation of the Six Pillars.

The Community Representative is the Founder and Executive Director of the nonprofit Edgewater Collective, whose mission is cultivating partnerships to foster thriving Edgewater schools. Edgewater Collective is the backbone organization working behind the scenes to bring organizations and community partners together around the goal that all kids in the 80214 zip code succeed from cradle to career.

# Jump to the Middle Everitt Middle School Wheat Ridge, CO



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Each year, the school administration from Everitt Middle School go to the elementary schools in the area to promote Jump to the Middle. The Jump to the Middle program is an informational night designed to engage families of incoming elementary students and provide an opportunity to see and better understand the middle school experience.



The night provides an introduction of the programs and classes at Everitt Middle School. The evening also allows students and their families to have conversations with teachers, administration, counselors, and other staff about concerns they may have regarding the elementary-to-middle school transition.

During the night, students and their families first meet according to grade level. Staff present topics such as the daily bell schedule, locker rules and usage, homework policies, lunch and recess procedures, and problem-based learning.

After the information session, students and their families tour the school. During this tour, they see current student work, practice opening a locker, and stop by the library to speak with the school principal.

Everitt Middle School's family liaison attributes many factors to the program's success. The planning committee advertise early and often. School administrators go to feeder elementary schools to speak with students and get them excited about attending Jump to the Middle. Finally, Everitt's entire school community participated in the evening and helped students and families feel comfortable about transitioning to middle school.



# Mother Read/Father Read Literacy Program

## Wiggins School District RE 50 J

### Wiggins, CO



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It's never too early to encourage family-school-community partnering. Staff in Wiggins School District understand this. For many years, preschool and elementary staff have worked together to implement the Mother Read/Father Read Literacy Program. The goal of the program is to engage adults in reading with their children.

Adults and children attend six to 12 weekly sessions that last approximately two hours each. Food, child care, and all materials are provided. The program is extremely beneficial for children from birth through third grade. Families of all reading levels and languages can benefit from this literacy program.

Wiggins School District held two different sessions this past year. One group included elementary age children and families who spoke English as a second language. Books and materials were provided in the families' home language. The second group was comprised of preschool age children and families, although many parents had older children as well.

Mother Read/Father Read focuses on the following themes: Expressing Needs and Feelings, Establishing Independence, Understanding What Families Value, Sharing/Cooperating, and Self-Possibilities. These themes allow families to interact, engage, share, and support each other in a variety of ways. During each session parents practice reading the books for the week and discussing the following literacy components:

- Literacy as Experience – Connecting text/themes to personal context
- Literacy as Art – Reading role model skills aloud
- Literacy as Process – Adult literacy skill development including reading and writing

Families receive reading materials and a reading log each week. Families note any reading conducted with their child or any reading conducted by the adult only. Additional story extenders are included which provide fun and easy activities to increase engagement between adult and child. Adults return the books and log each week.

Wiggins' Preschool Director shares: "Adults develop relationships with each other, which often results in families expressing their desire for the sessions to continue. This outcome is completely opposite of the concerns at the beginning of the sessions for some families – which is the commitment in signing up for at least six sessions."

# Polar Express Night Little Elementary School Arvada, CO



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Little Elementary School's Polar Express Night created an opportunity for staff to work with partners to provide family-friendly pathways to access community resources during the holidays. During the evening, which many attendees described as "magical," families formed valuable partnerships with Little staff and community organizations.



Having a committee of staff and community members meticulously plan the event led to its success. An Arvada-based church, the Arvada Food Bank, and the Arvada Center partnered with Little Elementary. The church provided volunteers, food donations, crafts, and Santa Claus and his elves. The Arvada Center provided a closing of the event with ballet dancers performing "Dolls Tea."

Little Elementary's family liaison explains: "The church group showed exceptional dedication by providing many volunteers, food donations, crafts and even Santa Claus and the elves! Parents and staff were also an integral part of the event, and many students added their unique artistic talents, transforming the school building to recreate scenes from the movie."

Of course, the Polar Express would be incomplete without its conductor. Luckily, Little's principal was on hand to fill the role. The principal clipped golden tickets as families entered the event, much to the students' delight!

Polar express night celebrated multiple traditions that Little's families enjoy throughout the year. A Chanukah table was particularly popular as families competed playing the dreidel game.



Polar Express night was very well attended, with more than 320 people in the building. Staff distributed close to 100 pictures with Santa to students and 50 food baskets to families. The atmosphere was festive and feedback was positive throughout the evening and the following week. Families expressed that they felt welcome and special. In addition, many families received help that they needed over the holiday season.

Standard 1--Welcoming All Families

# Through the Eyes of a Molholm Student

## Molholm Elementary School

### Lakewood, CO



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Molholm Elementary School, located in Jeffco Public Schools, is a dual language community school, where families feel welcomed to walk into their school and talk to teachers/staff about their children, to access the coat and clothing bank, stop at the Food Pantry, use the washer and dryer, utilize the stove and oven, or do research at the Community Computers Corner. School staff and the family liaison created “Through the Eyes of a Molholm Student” to ensure that every family continues to feel welcomed and valued.

Providing resources for families in need of additional supports is a team effort. Molholm families volunteer in organizing the *many* community donations that come in three-to-four times a week all school year long! Volunteers come in daily and ask, “Que necesitamos hacer hoy?” “What do we need to do today?”

The school’s family liaison makes the initial connections with community donors; families and staff are also very generous. They donate clean clothes, coats, shoes, etc. for other families to select. The initiative has changed the culture to a school that values volunteerism and giving back!

Students are encouraged to come into the family engagement liaison’s office to have their backpacks filled with food! Every Thursday and Friday, Jeffco Eats delivers weekend bags filled with food for children to take home. Weekly, school staff pick-up large bins of food from neighboring school, Cheltenham. Volunteers distribute them to the students in classrooms.



Families join the family engagement liaison in a morning Walk around Molholm’s 600 yard track to share ideas, suggestions, comments, talk about their children, visit with other parents, laugh, or to just walk. Monthly, Family Nights are fun-filled with families spending time together doing educational activities, and sharing a meal. Molholm is an inclusive community school, where there are no invisible families! As a result of this work, the school has an environment where every family feels welcomed, valued, and heard.

Standard 1--Welcoming All Families

# Birthday Bag Celebration

## Rose Stein International Elementary School

### Lakewood, CO



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Rose Stein International Elementary School was looking for new and exciting ways to share information about student's progress. As a result, the principal, community members, and parent volunteers partnered to create a Birthday Bag Celebration. The goal of this practice is to bring parents and guardians into the school to create a birthday bag for their child and engage and support learning and building connections between the community and school.

Rose Stein's family engagement liaison explains: "The birthday bags are a complete package that meet our goals to increase family engagement. Families are invited to make their child's birthday bag, which include everything from books to cake baking ingredients donated by community partners."

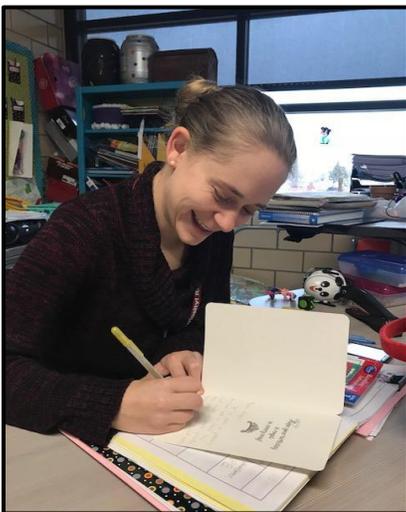
The bags aren't just a celebration of the students' birthdays. Academic and behavioral success is celebrated through a card that the student's



teacher writes. The teacher comments are specific to the child's academic growth and is another communication opportunity.

A side benefit of the Birthday Bags is improved face-to-face communication between teachers and families. Since instituting the program, school staff regularly receive thank you cards from parents saying how much they appreciate the project.

In order to carry-out the potentially costly project, Rose Stein's family engagement liaison recommends: "Reach out to multiple community members for donations so the program is sustainable and able to be offered school-wide."



# Bi-Weekly FSCP Tip

## Englewood School District

### Englewood, CO



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Englewood School District recognizes the importance of having a staff member designated to support family-school-community partnerships. As a result, the Englewood has a district-level Family-School-Community Liaison. This staff member attends the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) Coffee Chats; an opportunity for district staff from across the state share family engagement strategies. Based on advice from other school districts and feedback from Englewood school leaders, the liaison instituted Bi-Weekly Tips.

The goal for the Bi-Weekly Tips and reminders is to build the capacity of school leaders about best practices for successful family, school, and community partnership. The hope is that the quick tips will remind leaders to keep partnering in the forefront when thinking of ways to improve student outcomes.

Many of the tips come directly from School Accountability Committee (SAC) meetings. This is a time when families and community partners have a voice about how they would like to be involved and support student success. The tips follow the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and are sent to district-wide principals from early childhood to high school. Other tips are related to specific, timely happenings within the district (i.e., parent teacher conferences). Finally, some of the tips, ideas, and questions come from CDE's monthly Coffee Chats.

Englewood's liaison offers the following advice for replicating the communication strategy: "Building and administrative leaders are BUSY. They do not want to read a novel, so a quick FSCP tip is all that is needed to get them thinking. Really listen at your parent meetings. Families are the best advocates for their students. Sharing their thoughts across the district may prompt ideas that one may never have thought of before."

Below is an example of one Bi-Weekly Tip.

*Our favorite time of year is upon us...state testing. As we know this may be an anxious time for students. This is a perfect time to help parents support student success. Start with a quick positive reminder to families on why we give state tests. This may alleviate some issues with the importance of test taking. Examples below, but feel free to use your own.*

- *Testing helps teachers and administration measure student achievement.*
- *Testing helps prepare students with real world skills for college or beyond, etc.*
- *Testing indicates how the Colorado Dept. of Education establishes district ratings, etc.*

# Cultural Sharing Conversations

## University of Denver

### Denver, CO



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A Cultural Sharing Conversation (CSC) is a required assignment completed by all first year graduate students in the Child, Family, and School Psychology Program at the University of Denver. Students preparing for licensure as a special educator or school psychologist complete a CSC assignment as part of a seminar associated with an initial school-based practicum.

A CSC is a reciprocal, strengths-based story sharing exchange developed with input from Community Navigators at the Colorado African Organization who themselves are former refugees. A CSC is designed as an alternative to structured initial interviews to foster authentic relationships and is viewed as a social bridging experience between aspiring educators and a newcomer immigrant or refugee family.

Pairs of students engage in a CSC with a volunteer newcomer family at a time and place most convenient to the family. Families invite personal interpreters if translation is needed. A nondirective, unscripted framework is followed that prompts a bi-directional conversation where all participants share personal stories across four domains:

- Life Journeys: Past experiences that have brought them to this place and time.
- Family Traditions: Treasured family experiences, activities and learning that occurs at home.
- Schooling Experiences: Prior and current school culture, practices, expectations and policies.
- Future Ideas: How to best welcome, build relationships, communicate, and educate each other.

After completing the CSC, students prepare a visual representation and give an oral presentation of the personal takeaways gained from this experience. Students also submit a written self-reflection summarizing: a) what was shared during the CSC; b) what was learned about this culture, this family, and oneself; c) how this experience relates to ideas presented in several assigned readings; and d) how this experience will impact their future practice and efforts to collaboratively partner with culturally and linguistically diverse students and families.

Overall, it is clear from a review of these reflections over the last several years that this assignment enhances preservice educators' self-assurance about relating, engaging, and collaborating with diverse newcomer communities.

Standard 2--Communicating Effectively

# Improving Latino Parent Involvement through Home Visits

## Johnson Elementary School

### Fort Collins, CO



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Johnson Elementary School staff have established many activities over the years to strengthen home-school collaboration and culture, including positive phone calls home, text messages, and parent teacher conferences. During the 2016-17 school year, staff decided to organize more opportunities for Latino parents to partner with school personnel. As a result, staff started a six-month home visit program focusing on ELL students and their families.

During the first parent meeting held in September, staff distributed a calendar for parents to choose the time and date for a home visit. The visits were offered to all 23 English Language Learners' students, regardless of their academic performance or behavior issues so the visits were not associated with problems or disciplinary actions. All the families had at least one bilingual parent and requested at the beginning of the school year that all school communication be in Spanish, their native language.

Once all families were scheduled, the family liaison sent an email to the school's staff letting them know about the upcoming conferences and visits. A week before the home visit, the family liaison met with each classroom teacher and with the Integrated Services teachers when applicable. Most of them added materials to be included to the backpack that each family would receive during the visit (number lines, lined paper, flashcards, etc.). Teacher feedback and information about the students was crucial to find the appropriate materials and activities to bring to each home visit.

The backpacks were donated, and the supplies cost a total of \$10-15 per backpack (example of supplies: dice, cookie trays, shaving cream, notebooks, number lines, 100s charts, pencils, crayons, flashcards, card decks, manipulatives, workbooks, chalk, books in Spanish, etc.). During the visit, parents and family liaison talked about the teacher's feedback, and all the contents in the backpack. All the questions and concerns from the parents were written down (and later shared with the student's teacher). Visits lasted between 50-90 minutes.

In the short two years of implementation, Johnson Elementary has already seen the positive impact of home visits. Teachers report that students turn-in homework more than they used to. Students read more at home and engage in practicing skills regularly with their parents. Parents check backpacks more often, communication is more effective, and teachers sent more communications in Spanish. Even if teachers didn't participate during the home visits, for the first time Johnson had 100% attendance at parent-teacher conferences!

# Middle School Transition Informational Meeting

## Webber Middle School

### Fort Collins, CO



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Transitioning from elementary to middle school is often a stressful time for both students and their families. Many parents report not knowing proper channels of communication in middle schools or other policies and procedures. Webber Middle School staff sought to demystify the transition through the Middle School Transition Informational Meeting.

Webber's family liaison partnered with feeder elementary school liaisons to encourage rising 5<sup>th</sup> graders' participation in the meeting. Current 6<sup>th</sup> grade students also attend the meeting, as the most recent experts in surviving the transition to middle school. Sixth-graders welcome parents, provide insights about their experiences, and answer questions from incoming students.



The meeting lasts about an hour and a half. After participating in an icebreaker to introduce everyone in the room, middle school staff provide parents with information about important days to remember and contact information. The meeting ends with a question and answer session.

Since beginning this practice three years ago, Timnath staff have noticed measurable results. The opportunity for rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders to hear experiences from their peers eases anxiety and allows them to focus on academics instead of the angst that accompanies being in a new school. Similarly, parents leave the meeting better equipped with information they need to access educational opportunities and support their children's success.

Webber's family liaison explains: "I have been doing this for 3 years and each year there is something that I added or removed trying to provide the best information possible. It benefits students, parents and the school. Family liaisons benefit from knowing the parents before the next school year starts as a great way to establish good relationships."

# Passport to Literacy Swanson Elementary School Arvada, CO



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Swanson Elementary School staff created the Passport to Literacy Program, which strives to support all students and their families with literacy through multiple events that take place throughout the year. The main goal of the program is to increase student achievement by encouraging children and their families to read at home. A side benefit of the program was more consistent communication channels between families and the school.

One portion of the Passport to Literacy Program was the Colt Reading Challenge calendar. This calendar reminded students to read at home and alerted parents to upcoming school events, particularly around literacy.



Swanson partnered with a community organization, Ride for Reading, to kick off the Colt Reading Challenge. Ride for Reading is a nonprofit organization that delivers books to Title I schools or low income communities. They educate students on the importance of reading and how to be safe when riding a bicycle. At the kickoff event, each family receives three books to take home.



Organizing the literacy program takes a village! One Swanson staff member explains: “While the Colt Reading Challenge calendar is created by the Family Engagement Liaison, our events are created with the help of teachers, staff, and students. This year we formed a committee called the Family Engagement Committee which consists of 2 teachers in primary grades, 2 teachers in intermediate grades, the ESL teacher, and myself, the Family Engagement Liaison. The FEC team gets together monthly to plan school events. When planning, we

consider what activities students can do in the classrooms based on theme and grade level. It is beautiful way for teachers and students to be involved and encourage participation within our school community.”

# RISE Night Stevens Elementary School Wheat Ridge, CO



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Stevens Elementary School sought to change the dynamics of traditional parent-teacher conferences and wanted to build community and family relationships in the process. They adopted RISE, a framework for collaborating with families on student needs and goals. Through RISE, the community comes together to share food, fun, community resource access and authentic learning experiences.

The first RISE night started with a nice meal that families and teachers enjoyed together. Teachers then escorted all families on a tour of the school, and led them into their children's classrooms. While parents and guardians were learning about their children's curriculum, students were engaging with their peers by having purposeful play that supported positive social interactions.



The Stevens team works collaboratively to present information in grade-level teams to assist families in understanding and experiencing what is being taught systematically, K-6. RISE gives visual representation of where students excel, meet grade level, or need extra support in expressing their critical thinking skills. Both teachers and families fully embrace a growth mindset around helping students RISE during their career at Stevens.

Families receive tools during the RISE meeting to support the learning environment at home. These tools support Steven's students and their family's communication with one another, critical thinking, and ability to explain and write their thoughts.

The RISE schedule consists of three family meetings throughout the year, as well as one parent or guardian one-on-one conference with the student's teacher. These meeting build on each other to show how students are achieving their goals, while continually adding resources and skill building for both students and families.

Steven's family engagement liaison offers the following thoughts about RISE's success: "The importance of collaborating with the community is valuing each person's attendance and opinions to make the event and comprehension successful for everyone involved."

# Shout Outs

## Foothills Elementary School

### Lakewood, CO



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Department of Education

Staff at Foothills Elementary School, located in Jeffco Public Schools, understand the importance of teaching the whole child. In order to foster positive social-emotional learning, a planning committee (staff, community partners, PTA officers, Partners in Education (PIE) members, principal, Family Engagement Liaison) instituted Foothills Shout-Outs. The goal is to promote positive reinforcement that celebrates specific character traits that are practiced at school and at home.

Foothills Elementary encourages eight character traits: Zest, Social Intelligence, Curiosity, Growth Mindset, Self-Control, Grit, Optimism, and Gratitude. The creed of the school and the eight character traits are interwoven to heighten the practice of positive reinforcement and recognition that encourages students and adults to soar and achieve the character traits within themselves.

The most important aspect of the Foothills Shout-Outs is the social-emotional outcome for students. Shout-Outs meet the whole child by pointing out precisely which character trait he or she has achieved through actions and words. Students achieve Shout-Outs through positive phone calls home, postcards home, and public acknowledgement at morning meetings.



Even though students are at the center of this communication practice, staff and families see clear benefits as well. School staff now have an outlet to develop positive relationships with families. Families feel compelled and empowered to be more responsive and encouraged to take an active role in reinforcing their child to be a *Character Champion* at home and at school. Foothills Shout-Outs breaks the cycle of families being on the end of a negative phone call home. The result is a healthy partnership built on trust between school and home. These newly formed bonds of trust facilitate effective communication between home and school.

In addition to sending regular Shout-Outs home, Foothills also held a Shout-Out Pep Rally. Over 60 families attended. During the rally, families “shouted out” to teachers, teachers “shouted out” to families, and kids “shouted out” peers, families, and teachers. Foothills’ family liaison states: “When you can give a child a ‘pat on the back’ in front of their peers and teachers for having ‘Self-Control’ (1 of the 8 Character Traits) they can now see the power positive behavior holds and they gain a great sense of pride in themselves.”

Standard 2--Communicating Effectively

# Visiting our Families

## Poudre High School

### Fort Collins, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Poudre High School serves the largest population of newcomer and Hispanic students in the Poudre School District. In order to build positive home-school relationships and create an inclusive culture within the school, Poudre High implements the Visiting our Families program. This practice provides staff with the opportunity to get to know families in their own environment, hear their experiences, hopes, successes, and the struggles of living in a new country.

Visiting our Families takes place twice per semester, allowing classroom teachers the ability to choose when they can attend. This is a voluntary activity and teachers must take time off of their regular schedule to participate.

The Family Liaison selects two families to host for each opportunity. One family will host lunch and the other one a dessert. The teacher group is regularly no more than six people. The Family Liaison checks on the availability with families two weeks in advance. When the Family Liaison asks the family to host, they explain the goals of the visit, letting them know they can feel free to share and ask questions of the visitors as they feel comfortable.

Once the date is confirmed, the Family Liaison sends an email to teachers attending and gives them the name of the students and parents, and the family's address. Additionally, the Family Liaison gives them topics, ideas and recommendations of conversation topics, so they may enjoy and benefit from this opportunity. Host families receive a grocery gift card and a plant as a thank you at the end of the visit.

Students, families, and staff have all remarked about the evident benefits of Visiting our Families. Students report having more open communication channels with teachers, as well as more positive conversations with their parents. Family feedback indicates a deeper trust in teachers, increased opportunities to ask questions, and a feeling of support from the school. Finally, teachers report a better understanding of families' cultures and a recognition of the assets parents bring to the home-school partnership.

Poudre High School's family liaisons recommend using the website [Story Corps](#) to create a list of questions to use during the home visit. The liaisons also comment: "The best part is that we notice teachers spreading the word to others colleagues. Buy-in is important for the growth and sustainability of this initiative and so far, its future looks very promising!"

# 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Pie Making with Fractions

## Welchester Elementary School

### Golden, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Is there a more fun or delicious way to learn fractions than through making (and eating) pie? Staff, students, and families at Welchester Elementary School don't think so! Right before their fall break, Welchester staff hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Pie Making with Fractions. This experiential learning project highlighted the practical use of fractions.



The event takes a lot of planning and preparation. Fifth Grade teachers work with families and the Family Engagement Liaison weeks in advance to gather ingredients and support from the community. Students receive the ingredient list and practice reading it, manipulating measurements, and prepping for the big day. A local grocery store (King Soopers) supplies pie boxes to make transporting pies home a breeze. The school receives most of the ingredients for pie night through donations.

On the day of the big event, students bring ingredients - including peeled and sliced apples, tools and baking supplies to make and measure their 'school-made' pies. Attendees gather in the cafeteria with scrubbed hands and aprons, and everyone starts mixing! Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and sometimes even former teachers stop by to assist the students with their pie making. Teachers walk around and supervise, reminding students that flour must be measured just right, or that 3 teaspoons equals a tablespoon. Students mix and measure all the ingredients. They even make the pie crust from scratch!

The pie making activity is directly connected to the 5th-grade math curriculum fractions unit with an emphasis on adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing fractions. After the activity, students wrote a Procedural Text on how-to make an apple pie. They could draw from their experiences and make the recipe on their own.

Welchester's family engagement liaison shares: "The biggest challenges we face with this event are securing donations in time and the clean up! Luckily, the community comes together to help with these matters, and every year so far we've been able to pull it off!" Not only does Welchester receive a lot of community support, they also give back. The day of pie making, families and students take time to make additional pies that are donated to a local shelter.

Standard 3--Supporting Student Success

# 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Night/Graduation Celebration

## Fort Collins High School

### Fort Collins, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Fort Collins High School (FCHS) offers many events for students' transition into and out of the school. Middle school family liaisons in Poudre School District invite transitioning 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and their families to FCHS for a student-led event to help them understand some of the challenges and complexities of high school. Students and families meet in the school's media center for a short PowerPoint presentation, followed by a student panel, and a small group Q&A session. Current FCHS students are responsible for all aspects of the evening, as well as modeling the high expectations for students at FCHS.



After the 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition portion of the event, families go to the cafeteria to celebrate the accomplishments of graduating seniors.

Participants enjoy cake, ice cream, and a slideshow. Current students are again responsible for this portion of the event, including an opportunity for all attendees to write thank you notes to school personnel. Inviting future FCHS Lambkins to the event help incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders understand that studying and being involved are important while in high school and that the ultimate payoff is graduating. Additionally it gives students and families an opportunity to connect with the school and to communicate with other parents.

Event organizers explain how they evaluated the event: "9<sup>th</sup> grade parents were given an opportunity at the end of the evening to share their thoughts about the event. All comments were positive, with the student-led panel and presentation noted as especially powerful. Senior parents were asked for their input as well. Those in attendance were grateful to have had an opportunity to thank the school and teachers for supporting their children. From the evaluation, we learned that one should not underestimate the importance of caring adults in the school."



#### Upcoming Transition Events at FCHS

##### 8th Grade Information Night & Curriculum Fair, Thursday, January 11, 2018

Fort Collins High School invites you to attend our annual 8th Grade Information Night and Curriculum Fair. Come learn about our curriculum and courses, take a tour of our building and ask questions about our school, programs, clubs, and athletics.

**8th Grade Information Night, 6 to 7 p.m., McNeal Auditorium**  
**Curriculum Fair (grades 9-12), 7 to 8 p.m., Commons (cafeteria)**

##### Registration Event & Information, February 15 & 16, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

(students will be bussed from their middle schools to FCHS)

February 15th—Boltz, Preston, and CLP Middle Schools

February 16th—Kinard, Leshner, and Lincoln Middle Schools

Liberty Common students are welcome to attend either day.

Liberty and CLP students will need to provide their own transportation.

##### Registration Q & A, February 22, 2018

Fort Collins High School, Room M205, 4:00 pm & 6:00 p.m. (two sessions)

##### 8th Grade Transition Night, Monday, April 9, 2018

FCHS Large Gym, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

For additional information contact Mrs. Lae at 970-488-8100

# 12X12 Night-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math/Book Night

## Falcon Elementary

### Peyton, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Third grade students and their families at Falcon Elementary School were the target audience to celebrate, demonstrate, and practice their multiplication facts, receive bookshelves, and eat dinner the school's Math/Book Night. The goal of the event was to support multiplication acquisition in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students and to encourage reading at home with parents by giving away books and bookshelves.

Falcon Elementary school partnered with students in the culinary program at Patriot High School. The high school students prepared, set up, and served the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade families. After dinner, students and their families played math games with [array cards](#) and practiced their multiplication facts. Students who could recite their math fact through 12 were given a "License to Multiply."

After the reception and festivities, each 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student received a handmade bookshelf from vocational high school students. Students also went home with a free book from the *Chet Gecko Mystery Collection* by Bruce Hale. Falcon Elementary hoped that the free book would be the first of many to display on the new bookshelf.

Students were excited to celebrate their success with their families and school staff while learning their math facts. Students and their families were also empowered and motivated to read at home with their new handmade bookshelf and book.



Working with teachers, community volunteers, and High School students made the night a success and motivated students to continue learning in school and at home.

Falcon's principal offers the following advice to those hoping to conduct and evaluate a similar activity: "Communicate early with the partnering school teachers. We evaluated through observation and the number of families and volunteers that attended. In hindsight, we could have offered a formal evaluation to better pinpoint strengths and weakness of the event."

# Astronomy Night

## Rocky Mountain Classical Academy

### Colorado Springs, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

The Rocky Mountain Classical Academy (RMCA) hosts an Astronomy Night as the capstone event within its Core Knowledge Sequence curriculum. Grades first, third, and sixth study Astronomy, each in greater detail. In addition to the academic objectives, school staff sought to involve parents and caregivers in one of the students' favorite events. The event's planning committee aligns its desired outcomes with the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.

Over 500 guests attended this free, annual event that impacts 432 students in grades one, three, and six. RMCA coordinates with staff members who own telescopes, as well as the Colorado Springs Astronomical Society, to provide as many telescopes as possible for nighttime viewing. RMCA also coordinates with the Colorado Springs Challenger Center to provide a portable planetarium.



Teachers and parent volunteers crew multiple astronomy learning stations at which students complete games, scavenger hunts, and projects related to Astronomy. One logistical challenge is ensuring parents understand they need tickets to attend the planetarium shows. To solve this challenge, RMCA advertised advance tickets because the planetarium's capacity is limited.

RMCA evaluated the practice based on attendance and by specific student statements and accomplishments during the evening. For example, students viewing the star Mizar and recognizing it as a double star demonstrate their understanding of basic stellar mechanics. One of RMCA's fourth graders shared her thoughts about Astronomy Night with a reporter from a local media outlet: "I got to look at the stars in Canis Major through the telescope. The big one [Sirius] was cool because it was so sparkly. It's actually two stars--a binary star."

The school's Director of Strategy, Innovation and Development offers the following advice about conducting a successful Astronomy Night: "Ensure you have plenty of mounted telescopes available. Choose an evening with a first quarter moon. Doing so ensures that even with light cloud cover, students will see the Moon telescopically, providing first-hand experience with cosmology and history. In case of poor weather, have a portable planetarium on hand."

Standard 3--Supporting Student Success

# Beating the Summer Slide

## Olander School for Project Based Learning

### Fort Collins, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Over the summer months, students' academic achievement declines by one month's worth of school year learning. Wanting to decrease this learning gap, Olander School for Project Based Learning created the Beating the Summer Slide package. The goal of this practice is to keep students learning during the long summer months, with clear goals based on learning software to maintain the scores that students achieve during the school year.

Olander buys site licenses for blended learning tools, providing each student his or her own accounts to use both at school and at home. At the beginning of the year staff dedicate the first parent meeting to show family members what software the school uses for students to learn. Parents and students congregate in the computer lab for children to demonstrate to their families how the online learning program works.

Because these blended learning tools are customized to each student, Olander staff can create an individualized packet that focuses in on any gaps in learning. The added benefit of blended learning tools is that they provide opportunities to use technology as well as skill builder packets that can be done to supplement the technology or in the absence of technology at home.

The ELD teacher and family liaison work together to create and distribute these packets to students and families. This past summer, they provided over 20 packets to Olander students. Before the students were out for summer, the school held a parent/student meeting and again demonstrated applications in the computer and how the students work with them as well as how to work through any technological issues they might have for accessing these resources at home.

Students who complete the summer packet receive a prize at the start of the following school year. Evaluators of the project have found that students who complete the blended learning packet in the summer are, in fact, more ready for the start of a new school-year than students who do not finish the assignment.

Olander staff do caution about a couple of challenges they encountered: "Some logistical challenges include access to school staff and support over the summer, the follow up on the materials when students return to school, and working to increase the participation rate and successful completion over the summer."

# ELL Parent Engagement Night

## Dunn Elementary School

### Fort Collins, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Standardized testing is a time of year when teachers, students, and parents begin to have a lot of anxiety and questions about the format and testing techniques. At Dunn Elementary School, the family liaisons, ELL teachers, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, school administrators, and a district interpreter were involved in creating an English Language Learner (ELL) Parent Engagement Night.

The goal of the event was to build relationships, inform the parents about upcoming standardized testing, and meet with other families from around the world. The parents gain knowledge and information about state tests, feel comfortable, learn, meet with people of different cultures, and learn how to support their students at home.

At the Parent Engagement night, families received dinner and child care. The evening began with introductions of all ELD teachers liaisons. After introductions, families participated in an icebreaker to get to know each other. The presenters shared a PowerPoint with information about the standardized testing. They provided the families with information about how they can practice with their students at home and prepare them to be successful during testing.

Parents became aware and involved in their child's educational experience while learning about the tests and how to help their children prepare at home. Many of the parents were comfortable and formed a community over the same questions and concerns. Dunn teachers reported that students also seemed very comfortable during the exams because parents were able to have conversations at home that helped ease their child's minds.

Dunn Elementary distributed an exit survey to evaluate the event. Staff received feedback via email after the event. Participants shared positive feedback with staff and emailed saying they enjoyed it. They also let the school know how much they enjoyed meeting with multiple parents from all over the world and talking with the teachers. They said the ice breaker helped them to build relationships with the school staff.

The school's family liaison offers the following advice for schools interested in replicating the event: "Food and icebreakers are a great incentive to get people together and great way to bond with others. Send parents the PowerPoint afterwards so they have time to read through it at home at their own pace and ask questions."

# Family Learning Night Thompson Elementary School Arvada, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

During the 2017-18 school year, staff at Thompson Elementary School hosted its 6<sup>th</sup> annual Family Learning Night. The event, entitled “Learning is an Adventure--Take Risks!” focused on encouraging students to adopt a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset.

The planning process for Family Learning Night began at the beginning of the school year and was led by a volunteer committee of staff and faculty. This committee was responsible for planning, organization, determining workshops topics, budgeting, and the solicitation of donations. The committee gathered 38 additional volunteers to assist in the event execution. The committee specifically chose to solicit staff volunteers so that families could focus on supporting student success and engagement by participating alongside their children.

Family Learning Night was open to all Thomson families at no cost and was promoted in multiple languages to ensure an open and welcoming environment. To encourage equal access and support for the diverse community, the committee was sure to provide three dual-language interpreters and a mental health professional on-site.

Each workshop was specifically designed to support family engagement and learning. The workshop activities supported problem solving, math skills, critical thinking, and social-emotional learning. Additionally, parents learned how to support student learning through do-at-home activities, and strategies for implementing changes at home to support student success and independent learning.



Thomson’s planning committee used an exhaustive list of communication methods to promote the learning night, including: Messenger, email, Friday folders, the school calendar, Facebook, the school website, Remind App, Classroom Dojo, and the community marquee. During the event, each student and family had access to the principal, vice-principal, teachers, support staff, and community members.

After the event, parents communicated their feedback via digital survey and face-to-face communication with teachers and staff. The survey results revealed that families enjoyed the workshops, but would have preferred that the event lasted a bit longer to allow for deeper engagement.

# Family Math Night—100 Days Smarter Fitzmorris Elementary School Arvada, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Fitzmorris Elementary School teachers and staff created a family math night called 100 Days Smarter. The goal of the math night was to encourage students and their families to enjoy math games together. Teachers provided engaging math activities around the number 100 using money, prediction, skip counting, algebra, geometry, or anything else related to their grade level content.



100 Days Smarter started with a free dinner and raffle ticket entry. Students and their families then moved to the gym through various math stations and games. Parents learned what their children learn in math each day through participating in activities alongside the students. Teachers shared how they could continue learning at home and what resources are available. Community organizations also provided resource tables for parents to sign their child up for free or low-cost programs that focus on STEM learning, community activities, and the public library.

At the end of the event parents and students were asked to place an emoji sticker in the areas of: 1) really enjoyed math, 2) math was okay, and 3) did not enjoy math. Over 40% of students and parents really enjoyed math night. Through this fast and easy evaluation, event organizers learned that a majority of those who attended the math night really enjoyed the evening. One participant gave the evening a very enthusiastic “two thumbs up!”



Planners of 100 Days Smarter recognize that not only were new partnerships formed because of the event, but it was also a catalyst to its success. Fitzmorris’ family liaison explains: “I feel that this practice will help begin a process by which families can learn together. I would encourage parents and staff to come together with ideas that they feel will work for their school community.”

Standard 3--Supporting Student Success

# Financial Aid and FAFSA Night

## Dunn Elementary School

### Fort Collins, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Students who want to pursue college after high school have a lot of questions surrounding financial aid, scholarships, and how to navigate the FAFSA. The family liaison at Dunn Elementary School saw this need and created and Parent and Student Engagement Night to focus on financial aid and FAFSA process. While Dunn Elementary was the host site, Arabic speaking families from across Poudre School District were the target audience.

The goal of Parent and Student Engagement Night was to provide parents and high school students with information about the FAFSA, financial aid in general, and how to apply for college scholarships. Three representatives from the financial aid office and admissions at Colorado State University (CSU) were in attendance to provide additional information to participants.

The meeting began with dinner, introductions, and icebreakers. The students and families shared their interest in attending the event, what their future college plans were, and what their grade was in high school. Seniors talked about their college plans and what degree they wanted to pursue. Younger students in attendance were given advice on how to keep up their GPA, steps they needed to take to pursue a college path, and support throughout the process. The CSU team brought a lot of brochures for the students and families. Current CSU students also attended to share their experience with receiving scholarships.

Fifteen families, twenty five students, and two family liaisons were in attendance. Parents commented about how excited they were about the information they received. Many families commented that they felt less intimidated about the financial aid process and the FAFSA to support their students in pursuing college after high school.

Dunn's family liaison has the following advice for other schools or districts planning to conduct a similar event: "Keeping this activity open to parents and younger high school students was a really important aspect of this event. The presence of the parents made sure that the information was being retained and having the younger students there was beneficial to them because it was encouraging and it helped prepare them for what to expect when applying to college. Introductions and icebreakers were also a great part of this event. It allowed for the speakers to have a better understanding of the populations, and allowed for the students and families present to know each other a little more."

# Math and Literacy Game Night

## Timnath Elementary School

### Timnath, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

In order to encourage students and families see the fun in learning, Timnath Elementary School conducted a Math and Literacy Game Night. More specifically, the goal of the event was to provide parents with ideas about how to reinforce math and literacy skills at home, primarily through playing games.

Timnath staff invited all students K-5 to attend the evening with their families. Math and Literacy Game Night begins with attendees visiting the Timnath Book Fair. After dinner and an overview of the evening, families spent an hour visiting different classrooms in the school to play a variety of math and literacy games.

Each grade level team provided games to play:

#### Kindergarten

**Math Game-** Play a game to practice finding the ways to make 10.

**Literacy Game-** Practice reading cvc words with a fun customizable game you can take home.

#### First Grade

**Squish-** A fun card game to practice short vowel words or sight words.

**Rekenrek-** A visual model for students to practice their mathematical skill to 20.

#### Second Grade

**Literacy-**Families can get creative with storytelling.

**Math-** Race to 100, a fun dice game that can be adapted to any age. Make My Number, strengthen math facts.

#### Third Grade

**Pictionary-**Students use the classic game of Pictionary to strengthen vocabulary development. This game can also be played as charades!

**Top It-** Practice multiplication fact fluency using a deck of cards and a partner.

#### Fourth Grade

**Math Game-**"Write the Equations" Multiplication Game- use playing cards to create and solve math facts.

**Literacy Game-**Stories can be made with many authors in this fun oral story game.

#### Fifth Grade

**Math Game-**Dice Multiplication War, Dominos as decimals, Fact Slap w/ Flash Cards.

**Literacy Game-**ABC Story/Sentence, Scategories, Balderdash.



Standard 3--Supporting Student Success

# Math and Muffins Event Lumberg Elementary School Edgewater, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Lumberg Elementary wanted to implement a program for students and their families to understand additional ways to promote learning at home, particularly during “everyday life.” The Family Engagement Committee, teachers, parent representatives, and the Family Engagement Liaison worked together to create the Math and Muffins event.

During the Math and Muffins event, families enjoyed playing math games and learning how to promote continued learning outside of the school walls. Lumberg is a dual language school and the programs, promotions, materials, and activities were carried out in both English and Spanish. Teachers differentiated games and activities based on ability, grade level, and developmental stages of the students.



Lumberg’s family liaison explains: “The ideas for the program were based on fairly easy to find resources and games that are popular and often well known, but highlighting them as educational opportunities was a key aspect of the program. It created a real aha-moment for many families that now will be encouraging these type of activities, even over watching an educational TV show, which is more static and less interactive than a game with family at home.”



The event’s planning committee offers the following advice for anyone wanting to conduct a similar activity: “Keep it simple and doable for the program to be carried out easily and in a fun way. If it is possible to provide inexpensive materials and items for the families to take with them, that would be helpful as well. Making it fun, easy and simple will ultimately be the reason why anyone would love to bring the activities home!”

# Parenting Partner Poudre School District Larimer County, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Poudre School District serves 30,000 students in the Larimer County area, and has seen an increase in the number of students enrolled in dual language and multicultural programs. With the growing number of international families, the district has recognized the challenges that they may face when navigating a new language, district, and education system. In order to meet this challenge, the Department of Language, Culture and Equity, the family engagement specialist, family liaison, parents, and community members developed and implemented the Parenting Partner class.

The goal of this practice is to collaborate with international families to provide tools and strategies for parents to promote better understanding of their kids' growth changes, the new challenges their children will face in a new culture, and the experience of dual language students in a new education system. Parenting Partners also teach families the importance of being engaged and involved in their children's school life, as well as how to start healthy parenting as early as birth.

The Parenting Partner class meets once a week for an eight-week period for four hours at a time. Within this class, instructors focused on topics from the book, *Practical Tools for Positive Parenting*. Specific topics included:

- Positive Parenting-Success Starts at Home.
- Creating Confident Kids.
- Communication that Works.
- Creating Structure for Achievement.
- Discipline- Practice for Success.
- What Children and Teens Need to Succeed.
- Parent Engagement for Academic Success.

The demographic of the class targeted Arabic speaking parents with children in Kindergarten to twelfth grade. The meetings were held on the weekends as to not interrupt the parent and families work schedules.

The parenting partners facilitator offers the following advice to anyone interested in implementing the practice: "Arrange individual follow up meetings with each parent after a few months, and then have a group discussion meeting. Also, allow more group discussion. It has been really very valuable to all parents throughout to be able to share their experiences."

Standard 3--Supporting Student Success

# Read to Succeed Allendale Elementary School Arvada, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Allendale Elementary School's Read to Succeed Night provides parents with an opportunity to learn how to both pick age-appropriate books for their children and how to foster a love of reading at home. The event aligns with the school's Unified Improvement Plan, which focuses on improving reading performance for all students Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Read to Succeed Night also encourages students and family members to read at home, particularly during school breaks.

Allendale Elementary School partners with the Arvada West High School track team, honors society students, and a local business. These community partners raise money for the school so they can provide books for students to take home and enjoy with their families. Once the books are selected by the reading interventionist, teachers, and family liaison, a brief reference guide is made for parents to use at home to help determine whether a book is appropriate for their child's reading ability.



Resource sheets are also provided on the school's website for additional help and questions.



Read to Succeed Night begins with a free dinner for families. After dinner, families head to the gym where they are able to select several books to take home. Students then join one of their favorite teachers in a reading nook and listen to them read stories. Students can stay with one teacher or move from teacher to teacher. Volunteers dress up like book characters, such as the Cat and the Hat, and wander around taking pictures with students as they are reading or playing games.

Students are also encouraged to dress up as their favorite book character. All families go home with several new books and the tools to be successful readers at home.

# The Backpack Program

## Delta County School District 50J

### Delta, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

The Backpack Program was founded in 1992 through a collaboration between the administration of Delta County School District and Early Childhood professionals to forge a new concept around bringing the Delta County parents of children ages 3-5 additional resources for their learners. The result was a unique home-based preschool program that supports families as the first and most important teacher in their children's lives.

Each item in the Backpack box was specifically chosen to build and broaden strong literacy skills centered on phonemic awareness, vocabulary, letter naming, and active engagement. Each box also includes appropriate materials to develop the child's fine and gross motor skills, their problem solving skills, and their creativity. The backpack boxes provide play with a purpose and encourage active parental involvement in their child's early development.

The program has over 600 boxes each with one of fifty eight themes that are of high interest to the target population of children ages 3-5 years old. The boxes are checked out to each family using a similar system to any library checkout procedure. Families are instructed to use and care for the box. Upon return of the box, the Backpack staff cleans, inventories, and restocks each individual box taking care with each item to ensure safe, usable items for the next family checking out the box. Checklists and suggestion sheets are included with each box to guide each family with ideas that support child development, academic, and social success. Each theme is aligned with the Colorado Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education.

Through a partnership with Delta County Schools, the Backpack Program has been able to track and link student success of Backpack participants through state standardized testing at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade since 1997. These yearly assessments have consistently shown that a higher percentage of children who was involved in the Backpack Program at ages 3-5 scores fall in Advanced/Proficient than students who did not participate in the Backpack Program. These longitudinal outcomes support that family-school-community partnerships do impact student academic success!

In addition to these studies, the Backpack Program has begun looking at juniors in high school and ACT/SAT scores in relationship to involvement in the Backpack Program as a 3-5 year old. These reports also indicate that students who were a part of the program as a preschooler scored higher on these standardized tests than students who did not participate.

# The Book Zone

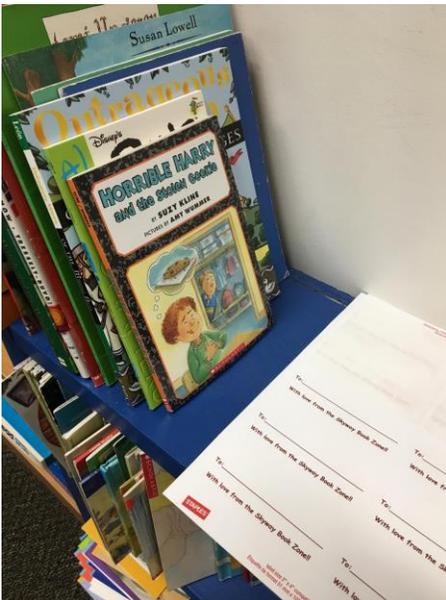
## Skyway Elementary School

### Colorado Springs, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Skyway Elementary School is the only Title I school in the Cheyenne Mountain School District. Teachers and staff collaborate daily to strategically plan interventions that aim to close the achievement gap and ignite the powerful love of literacy. In response to these interventions, school staff created the “Book Zone” to further support student interest in reading both at school and at home.



The Book Zone launched during the 2017-18 school year to further support student interest in reading, both at school and at home. A neighboring school donated books for students to borrow--five at a time and upon return, exchange them for new ones. Unlike a library, fines are not issued if a book is lost or damaged, but students are encouraged to swap out their books, unless it is one they cannot part with and will reread. Teachers call these “forever books” and often gift additional books for students’ home libraries. Students are encouraged to visit the Book Zone as often as possible, and they take pride in enjoying their own library, set-aside only for Title I students.

In an effort to support student opportunities to listen to fluent reading, two teachers have also collected several CD and cassette players with headphones that students can borrow. While teachers always have to explain what a CD or cassette player is, students feel like they have something special to show their families when they take them home. Although students are more used to sharing smartphones with their family members, they are excited to show them something “from when you were little” that they can use to listen to stories that accompany their books.

Family partnerships at Skyway Elementary School involves many facets of purposefully connecting school to home, and literacy has grown to be the perfect bridge. Students and parents can engage as much or as little as works for them because of other home and work commitments. The Book Zone is just a small piece of a bigger puzzle that connects our school home to their “real” home and students are reaping the benefits of how we are all fitting together!

# Wild West Saddle-Up and Learn Night Kullerstrand Elementary School Wheat Ridge, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

On November 16, 2017 the entire Kullerstrand Elementary staff hosted an evening of fun and learning called Wild West Saddle-Up and Learn. This western themed night featured four different centers of learning that taught family members of Kullerstrand students games and skills to be used at home to enhance academic success in the subject areas of math, reading, and writing.

In addition to parents in attendance, many grandparents, aunts and uncles, and sibling participated in the event. Kullstrand's family liaison explains: "The diverse mix in ages, from one to 85, made for a night that was a challenge to find the appropriate learning tools to satisfy each group in this demographic. That being said, the combination of families and Kullerstrand staff worked together to find solutions (such as adapting games and learning materials) that are being used in the home today!"

The Kullerstrand planning committee, comprised of staff, families, and administration, intentionally aligned the activity with Standard 3 of the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. Staff notice the biggest impact around student reading. Since the event, students and families report reading together more extensively at home.



As active participants in the event, the entire Kullerstrand staff observed families engaging in the evening's activities and chatted with them about subject-specific curricula. Subsequent and ongoing conversations with families and students have given Kullerstrand staff insight about the effectiveness of the learning achieved that night. From this evaluation, staff have learned about the need and desire for continued workshops to enhance the skill level of adults as they continue to encourage learning at home.

Kullerstrand's family liaison offers the following advice to others wanting to host a similar activity: "Get as many people as possible involved from the beginning. The multitude of ideas, experiences and resources makes for a more effective evening of learning for the families."

# Bilingual Parent-Teacher Organization Monroe Elementary School Loveland, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Monroe Elementary School created a Bilingual Parent-Teacher Organization (Bilingual PTO) in order to increase communication, encourage the participation of its bilingual families in school events and activities, and to foster a more inclusive community environment. This group of family members works closely with the Non-bilingual PTO and both mirror their agendas, school activity, and event communication.

Monroe's Bilingual PTO started three years ago, but really took off during the 2017-18 school year. The group is comprised of mostly mothers, aged 25-45. About 40% are Spanish and English bilingual and about 60% are Spanish speaking only. Each meeting brings in an average of nine members, which may seem small, however there has been a big increase in participation this year of bilingual family members volunteering at school events and activities.

The Bilingual PTO meets once a month in the morning, right after school starts. The Non-bilingual PTO meets once a month in the evening. The meetings were purposefully scheduled this way to accommodate both groups with attendance options and provide an overlap of communication. Each Bilingual PTO meeting agenda is coordinated with the Non-bilingual PTO agenda, and vice-versa, so that a seamless track of communication is given to all families about school events and activities. The meeting also gives time to parents for questions on school-based topics such as testing, grading, and any other topic where a communication barrier may exist.

A big part of creating this collaboration and effective organization is the fact that Monroe has an onsite bilingual Family Engagement Specialist. As school districts look for solutions in bridging the gap between bilingual families and non-bilingual families, Monroe Elementary sees the importance of having an onsite bilingual support staff person that is not only experienced in supporting our English language learners, but who is also supporting the whole family engagement structure of the school for all families.

Monroe is definitely reaping the rewards of the Bilingual PTO. Teachers have reported that their English learning family members are asking more questions related to their child's educational progress. English learning families are not afraid to ask questions, because they know they can go to the Bilingual PTO and get answers through a warm and welcoming avenue. Staff has also seen a big increase in volunteerism within their Spanish speaking families.

# Family Engagement Committee Alameda Jr. / Sr. High School Lakewood, CO

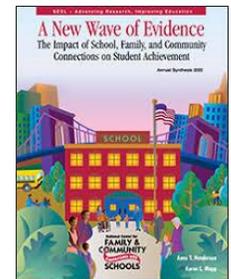


**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Alameda Jr./Sr. High School’s Family Engagement Committee (FEC) exists to create a space for parents where they can voice their opinions and learn to be the best advocates for their children in an open environment through coffee chats and brunches.

The goal of the committee was to create a welcoming environment where parents and school staff can work together to discuss the challenges they face when helping students succeed academically.

The principal and family liaisons used the article, [A New Wave of Evidence](#), to focus on the impact of school, family and community connections on student achievement to guide their work in the Committee. The Committee then began working with parents, students, and the community to break down the challenges that they face when helping their students achieve positive outcomes.



Throughout the year, many of the challenges were addressed and led to the school hosting a parent academy. During the academy, professionals and guest speakers shared resources and strategies to help parents, students, administration, and the community work together to learn and grow.

Consistent parent attendance at the coffee chats and brunches was key in evaluating and growing

the FEC. School staff report that the committee helped parents gain information and create a more involved family unit to help the academic success of their children.



# GET Togethers—"Guaranteed Education Team"

## Laurene Edmondson Elementary School

### Loveland, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Edmondson Elementary School leadership strives to partner with families in every aspect of students' educational journey. This year, school staff piloted GET (Guaranteed Education Team) Togethers. The goal of GET Togethers is to create home and school partnerships that support student success and empowers families to see themselves as a part of the schooling of their child/children.

GET Togethers consist of four meetings throughout the year (September, October, January, March). The September and January meetings were each 75 minutes with families of all students (parents and students attended together). After welcoming and team building activities for participants, teachers taught families a targeted foundational grade level skill (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> grade = high frequency words, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade = multiplication facts) and emphasized the importance of learning that skill in that particular grade level. Whole class data for that skill was shared in an anonymous format so families and students could see where their student performed compared to the norm and the class. Teachers modeled practice activities that they could use at home to reinforce the focus skill. Families were given resources and made games to play at home. Parents and students practiced the activities together. Finally, parents and students set a SMART goal to be obtained by the next GET Together meeting.

The October GET Together was structured like traditional 30 minute parent/teacher conferences with an emphasis on moving toward student led conferences. The 45 minute March meeting was a combination of student led conferences and families continuing to learn home activities to support their student's learning. At each meeting, families revisited their student's data to see the progress they were making and reflected on how they might continue to support their student at home and then set a new SMART goal.

Information about the GET Togethers was sent to parents explaining the new format for parent/teacher conferences. The principal made a video explaining the change in format. Teachers made personal phone calls to every family to invite them to the GET Togethers and they sent out reminders using the Remind app. We advertised on our website, Facebook, with flyers, and sent multiple Parent Link phone calls detailing information about the events. For the March event, families signed up for a time slot that worked best for them on Sign Up Genius. A local church provided meals for the families at these events.

Edmondson's principal offers the following advice prior to implementing GET Togethers: "Creating the vision and having teachers feel supported in the preparation is paramount. Build time into your schedule (staff meetings, Title I time, etc). Be flexible and willing to make adjustments based on the parent and teacher feedback. The biggest challenge is making this process doable for families with multiple children."

Standard 4--Speaking Up for Every Child

# Grassroots Greeley-Evans Summit

## Greeley-Evans School District 6

### Greeley, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

In August 2017, the Greeley-Evans School District held its inaugural Grassroots Greeley-Evans Summit. The goal of the summit was to create a space for parents, family members, educators, and the community to engage in authentic dialogue and cultural enrichment via interactive activities associated with access, equity, and opportunity. A district staff member explains: “It is our belief that families’ stories, their passion, and their knowledge help us create an environment in which all children and families access a quality education.”

A 14-member committee met monthly for eight months to plan the summit. The extensive planning ensured that summit breakout sessions and content matched students’ and families’ needs. Greeley partnered with two community organizations, the Colorado Statewide Parent Coalitions (CSPC) and Lift One Life All (LOLA), to conduct focus groups at family engagement nights and parent-teacher conferences. Focus group prompts were universal, and data were collected and discussed among committee members.

Nearly 150 parents, family members, guardians, educators, school board members, and community members attended the grassroots summit. In their welcome packet, family members received premade personalized business cards to help level the playing field between families and staff. After breakfast, attendees rotated through four breakout sessions. Breakout topics were:

- Creating a space for culture
- College in your backyard
- El Movimiento
- What Parents Need to Know to be More Effectively Involved in their Children’s Education



**COLORADO STATEWIDE PARENT COALITION**  
PARTNERS IN EDUCATION  
Parent Information and Resource Center

During lunch, former Lt. Governor Joe Garcia shared personal experience about the impact of family engagement in his own life.

The Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition evaluated the breakout sessions via a perception survey. All participants received survey results in a follow-up (bilingual) document. The greatest takeaway from the evaluation was the evolving dynamics and complexities that exist when engaging parents and families with cultures other than your own and the importance of a courageous conversation.

Standard 4--Speaking Up for Every Child



# Language Development Council Englewood School District Englewood, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Englewood School District's Coordinator of Learning Services for English Language (EL) and Gifted/Talented (GT) families partnered with EL teachers to institute the Language Development Council (LDC). The goal of the LDC is to provide a welcoming, engaging, and safe environment for all participants that teaches families how to become advocates for themselves and their children within Englewood schools.

The LDC meets monthly with families at various schools within the Englewood School District. Meetings occur in the evening and childcare is provided during the parent information session or when it is not a "family event." Families and staff collaboratively develop the agenda. Direct input by family members is given through emails, text messages and also through contact with individual school EL teachers.

The agendas focus on parent wants and needs, as well as current events that are happening within the district and the community. Agenda topics include: conference FAQ's, student testing and assessment information, community resources, school programs, and upcoming events.

The location changes based on what programs are being showcased at the various schools. For example, students and directors from programs at the High School of Choice (Cosmetology, Digital Audio Recording, SAGE-Sustainable and Green Energy) present directly to the council. The district also invites community partners to help families with resources such as the Englewood Library, summer camps, and food banks.

During every meeting there is time for interaction with families across schools and grade levels. This provides families a way to feel connected to others. This time is also an opportunity for the families to get to know and form a relationship with school and district staff.

Through the year, parents became the driving force behind the monthly meetings, with the district overseeing logistics. Families are no longer waiting, but rather initiating conversations at the schools if they have concerns or questions. Englewood School District has learned that making sure every family feels welcomed and involved is the key to student success.

# Newcomer Celebration Lincoln Middle School Fort Collins, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

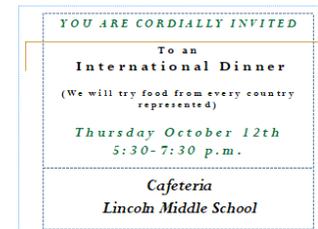
Lincoln Middle School serves over 500 students from 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade and has seen an increase in newcomer students in recent years. Wanting to welcome and support all families, Lincoln Middle School created the Newcomer Celebration. The goal of this practice is to welcome the newly arrived families and students to begin to acculturate and get involved in the US school system, and meet the families, teachers, and employees involved in their children's education.

Prior to the celebration, Lincoln's family liaison sends an invitation to all the families of the newly-arrived students. The celebration takes place in the school's cafeteria since there are several presentations. The families have an international dinner and are asked to bring a typical dish of their country of origin. During dinner, families mingle and get to know each other.

After dinner and mingling, Lincoln staff attending the Newcomer Celebration introduce themselves. Following introductions, staff present information to families. Topics of discussion include: school expectations, schedules, school fees, IB rubric for grades, lunch, attendance, transportation, assessments, medications, and immunizations. After dinner, families and students tour the school.

Planning the Newcomer Celebration is a team effort. The principal announces the event to all school staff and encourages participation. Lincoln's newcomer teacher talks to the students about the purpose of the celebration and gets them excited to attend. During the celebration, administrators, teachers, and the family liaison present all the information to the families and also interact with them. Afterwards the principal, newcomer teacher, and family liaison review parent feedback and reflect about how to improve the celebration and support of newcomer families in upcoming years.

Lincoln's family liaison shares the following thoughts about the Newcomer Celebration: "The celebration of the newcomers is for students and their families to feel welcome to this country, and to their new school. It is very important that school administration team is involved as well as newcomer teachers."



# Parent Academy

## Poudre School District

### Fort Collins, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

The Language, Culture, and Equity Department within Poudre School District (PSD) hosts an annual Parent Academy to provide learning opportunities for parents to support their student's success. The academy has become a staple and beloved event within the district.

District staff invited all Title I and Linguistically Diverse families to participate in the one-day conference, held at the Hilton in Fort Collins. Most participants were native Spanish and Arabic speakers. Upon checking-in, parents enjoyed a continental breakfast and browsed community resource tables. After a general presentation, participants attended three breakout sessions, with six workshops to choose from in each session.

Parents who attend this event learned about topics such as: healthy communication, setting boundaries, wellness and learning, transition to high school, undocumented student college support, financial aid information, family and community partnering and marijuana in Colorado and its impact on youth. In total, over 200 parents, 14 presenters, 16 community partners and 33 staff attended the Parent Academy. Poudre School District's superintendent gave the opening address and an assistant superintendent was the lunchtime presenter.

While planning and conducting the Parent Academy is a huge undertaking, many partners were available to lighten the load. One PSD district staff member explains: "Family Liaisons are vital to the success of Parent Academy due to the relationships they hold with families and students. Family Liaisons were the ones informing, inviting and registering parents for the Parent Academy, which is key to assure attendance to the event. We also partnered within PSD: Early Childhood, MTSS, Integrated Services, Wellness, Partnership Center and the Communications Department. The programs were available in Spanish and English, interpretation was provided in workshops, and some workshops were presented in Spanish only."

Poudre also maintains strong relationships with community organizations that supported the event, including Colorado State University Access Center, El Centro, Family Leadership Training Institute and the Admissions office, Poudre River Public Library, The Community Life Center, La Familia (The Family Center), Centennial BOCES, Vida Sana, Turning Point, and the Larimer County Workforce Center.

# Quarterly Celebrations and New Family Orientations

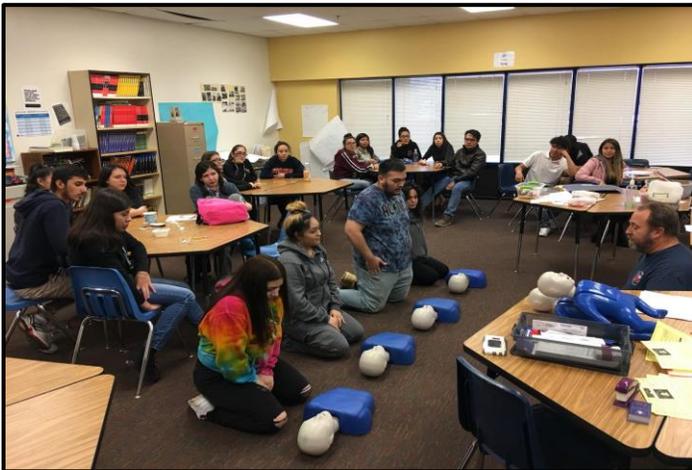
## The New America School

### Lakewood, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

The New America School serves over 300 students from all over the world including, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern European nations who want to learn or perfect English and earn a high school diploma. The school hosts quarterly celebrations and new family orientations every nine weeks with a goal to welcome families into the school, celebrate student achievement, and encourage families to have conversations with staff members to learn about the school policies and procedures.



Families are invited every nine weeks to the quarterly award assemblies to celebrate student achievement. Next to the parent-teacher conferences, this event has the second highest family participation.

New family orientation also occurs quarterly, during new student enrollment. This is a time for new students and families to get to know the school and voice any ideas, questions, or concerns. Families have access to the staff and principal during these events, where they learn

about school policies and expectations.

In this welcoming environment, students, families and staff have the opportunity to have informal and open dialogue around student achievement. After these events, more families and students come into the office wanting to talk to the staff or principal. This indicates that families feel at-ease and welcomed at New America School.

New America's family engagement liaison states: "We believe that by creating these pathways, we are building relationships through celebrations and orientation, thus ensuring a partnership to have positive student outcomes. We also believe that it facilitates family-student re-engagement, which will lead a rise in attendance rates and student achievement and a decrease in dropout and truancy."



# Two Hours by Me Volunteer Program Foster Elementary School Arvada, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

For the past four years, Foster Elementary School has created, implemented, and improved an interactive volunteer program called Two Hours by Me. The goal of the program is to promote and encourage family volunteers to work shoulder to shoulder to increase student success. The simple formula is two hours of volunteer time for the students = student success.

Two Hours by Me is an interactive program coordinated and organized by all stakeholders who seek to impact students' success (teachers, school staff, and family members). Under the guidance of a volunteer coordinator and using a creative and self-sustaining approach to school support, Foster families can actively involve themselves in the education of their children on their own time. Through interacting with school staff, families gain the opportunity to get to know, support, and learn more about our educational system.

Inside the school is a volunteer tree. At the tree, school staff share their needs and the volunteers complete the requests according to time and availability. Another way Foster engages families is from home. School staff have created craft kits where the teachers leave a sample of what needs to be done and all of the materials to help develop activities for different classroom themes. The family volunteers can pick up the bag, complete the work at home, and return it all ready to be used in class. A fundamental aspect of this tool is communication. Using the Remind application, Foster staff have been bringing all volunteers into a consistent web of two-way communication. Volunteers stay informed of various



opportunities to help at school from home or during school events.



Families who participate in Two Hours by Me have expressed that they feel valued at the school and motivated to be leaders with new ideas and projects at school. Foster's family liaison encourages other schools to try this approach to increasing volunteering and advocacy. However, she adds: "This project takes time to get rolling, but the persistence is worth it."

# Community P Networking Meetings

## Aurora Public Schools

### Aurora, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Aurora Public Schools (APS) is divided into several Communities; each Community has Pre-K, elementary, middle, and high schools. Community P has nine schools including, Hinkley High School, East Middle School, Vaughn, Laredo, Elkhart, Sable, Altura, Sixth Avenue Elementary and the Laredo Child Development Center. Many of the students enrolled in Aurora Public Schools transition from the child development center and finish their education in other feeder schools within the Community. The family liaisons in Community P saw a need to network within each feeder school to reach more families by providing parent meetings.

Family liaisons from schools within Community P created networking meetings with a goal to engage families, both to help them in supporting the academic success of their children and in navigating the public school system. The community meetings were held at the primary level and at the secondary level to differentiate topics based on age level. Each parent event had childcare, food, interpretation, and many school supplies to give away.

Schools within APS' Community P took turns hosting the parent meetings. Families from each school within the community were invited to attend all of the events, regardless of which school hosted.

Community P meetings held at Altura Elementary school focused on attendance and the challenges parents face getting their children to school on time. Parents had the opportunity to share thoughts and strategies and support each other in the process. Incentives were set in place for parents during and after the meetings.



Community P meetings held at Hinkley High school focused on marijuana prevention. Tips and tools were provided from the Colorado Department of Health and Environment to prevent their child from using marijuana and strategies to talk to their child about the drug.

# Fall Festival Edgewater Elementary Edgewater, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Edgewater Elementary School, located in Jeffco Public Schools, identified a goal on their Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) to improve mathematical skills for the 400 students they serve, preschool through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The school's family committee, made up of Parent Teacher Organization and School Accountability Committee members, collaborated to plan activities and events to reach that goal. The Fall Festival, one of the activities on the UIP action plan, kicked off the goal and encouraged students and their families to participate in STEM activities.



Teachers partnered with the Think Science (a STEM organization) team to create stations that helped students with their math skills. The stations focused on games and puzzles that families and their students can complete at home. More than 230 families attended the event!

Volunteers from the community and Edgewater parents helped make the night a success. Together they created activities, set and cleaned up the event, and sold food to help the school in their fundraising goals to provide more STEM activities.

The Fall Festival paved the way for additional Math Nights held in December and in March. Parents left each event with many new skills about math and a new knowledge about the programs that are offered to help students demonstrate their best work at school. Students were motivated throughout the school year and turned to their parents for help in their mathematical practice.



# Family Mathers Emory Elementary Lakewood, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Emory Elementary School's Family Engagement Team (FET), School Accountability Committee (SAC), principal, and broader community analyzed data that demonstrated Emory students needed extra support in their mathematical practice. The FET and SAC wanted to create an opportunity that would support student's math learning while developing families' ability to strengthen learning at home. Together, they created the Family Mathers program for students in Kindergarten through sixth grade. The goal of Family Mathers is cultivate math learning at home.



The responsibility of planning, conducting, and evaluating Family Mathers truly took a village. Emory's Family Engagement team, composed of 7 classroom teachers (one per grade level), 4 staff members, 1 administrator, 1 family engagement liaison, 5 community partners and 7 parents, met at different times to plan for the event. The Boys & Girls club of Metro Denver were crucial in the implementation of the practice as they helped recruit volunteers, hosted math stations and created game stations for the night. The same planning group got together one final time to evaluate and debrief the event.

The staff researched math games using the Bridges curriculum that were geared towards children ages 5-13. The games were connected to the math unit students learned in their classrooms. By teaching families and students different ways to practice math through games, Emory Elementary Family Mathers night encouraged families to support learning at home.



Families and students received many incentives for participation, including raffles, classroom pizza parties, and take-home bags with games and materials in English and Spanish. As a result, over 300 adults and children attended Family Mathers. Event organizers recognized the attendance as a big win, since academic-related events are generally not as highly-attended. Emory commemorated Family Mathers with a [brief video](#).

# Family One-on-Ones

## Jamaica Child Development Center and RISE Colorado

### Aurora, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Jamaica Child Development Center (CDC) is a preschool in Aurora that serves 240 students from low income families, students of color, students from refugee and immigrant families, and a high proportion of students receiving special education services. In order to best serve their student and family population, Jamaica CDC partnered with RISE Colorado to develop the Family One-on-One program. The goal of this program is help school staff better understand families' strengths, struggles, hopes and dreams related to supporting students' academic and behavioral success.

Jamaica CDC and RISE Colorado have been partners for five years, focusing on increased access to high-quality education for all families, as well as community organizing. The cornerstone of community organizing is the one-on-one relationship building meeting.

To plan and prepare for the initial one-on-one meetings with families, Jamaica CDC and RISE staff co-designed and practiced how to invite a family to a one-on-one meeting, as well as how to host a one-on-one meeting. During the school year, about 35 families participated in the one-on-one meetings. In these meetings, families and school staff shared about themselves, discussed hopes and dreams, and built a relationship focusing on supporting the child.

Families who participated in one-on-ones were more likely to participate and engage in the school and events during the year as well as express concerns and advocate for their children. Families who attended one-on-ones also participated in a parent group that decided to address a school need of access to books in preschool. This group partnered with school staff, the district's Learning Resources Department, and a local foundation to design, build, and secure funding for two mobile libraries that are now operational in the school community.



To evaluate the practice, Jamaica CDC staff took notes during one-on-one meetings and observed engagement practices of families who participated in one-on-ones. Jamaica CDC and RISE staff reflected on the notes and observations and learned that one-on-ones were an effective tool for building relationships that led to increased family engagement. To expand the one-on-one practice, the Jamaica CDC is operationalizing one-on-ones as part of the registration and re-registration process.

Standard 5--Sharing Power

# Firebird Families

## Secrest Elementary School

### Arvada, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Secrest Elementary decided to implement Firebird Families with a goal to drive parent engagement, foster community development, and empower families to become advocates for their children. Firebird Families was designed not to replace, but to supplement, other parent engagement strategies. To become equal partners, Secrest staff found it necessary to foster partnerships.

Firebird Families is a school-wide collaboration. Each classroom had at least two families, recommended by teachers or self-volunteered, who would stand-in as “classroom parents” for that particular room. Their primary role was to serve as information nodes through which other families and the teacher could interact. Questions about homework, field trips, classroom activities, policies, or procedures could be pushed from teacher to families and vice versa. The Firebird Families could also help network the families in the classroom, giving all families a voice and an advocate for their individual room.



To launch this program, the school hosted an event in January to introduce families to their Firebird Family representative. Donations were solicited for coffee and donuts, while stations were set up outside the different classrooms in the morning. Representatives distributed the treats to families as they dropped their children off at school, affording them the chance to personally greet and interact with other families in their classroom.

Firebird Families is a program that evolved based on school data. Secrest’s family engagement liaison explains: “We were determined to implement this program after analyzing the results of parent survey data and reviewing qualitative information about the struggles our families encountered. Parents expressed that they had difficulties assisting their children with homework. Was there a way to foster the growth of community while alleviating these concerns?”

The program’s success is evaluated with both qualitative and quantitative data. The school’s family liaison reviews beginning and end of year surveys and conducts intermittent listening sessions and check-ins.

Standard 5--Sharing Power

# Jeffco Family School Partnership Promising Practice Project

## Jefferson County Public School-Title I

### Golden, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Jeffco's Family-School Partnership Group is comprised of family representatives from the district's Title I schools (elementary through Jr./Sr. High), Title I Family Engagement Liaisons, and Title I department staff. The group meets six times throughout the school year in a central location. Jeffco hosts the meetings centrally (and strategically) at the District Education Center in the Boardroom. Besides being large enough and relatively convenient for families, it is an empowering moment for families to feel comfortable navigating the district locale and seeing themselves work and collaborate in the same room where district decisions are made. To remove challenges for families, Title I provides food and childcare for each meeting. This year, hosts 'upped our game' by offering a Chess Club to interested students. Family feedback is clear - *they want and appreciate meaningful activities for their children during this meeting time!*

During the 2017-18 school year, district staff encouraged the group to shine the spotlight on events and activities in their individual schools. The intent was to elevate the six National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, with an emphasis on 'links to learning' that support student success. This endeavor began with a 'world cafe' activity so the Title I team could share the standards with families and describe what they might 'look like' in a school. This also gave families an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on what they notice about family engagement efforts in their school and district. Now, with a better understanding of the National Standards, families worked together and with their school's Family Engagement Liaison to identify a 'promising practice' in their school that they wanted to highlight.

Each consecutive meeting gave families time to plan, collaborate, ask questions and work on presentations that would best 'tell the story' of their promising practice. This included submitting a written description, creating a slideshow and tri-fold poster display. The Title I department also partnered with Warren Tech (Jeffco Schools option school) Video Production students to produce a group slide presentation as well as a video featuring family interviews which captured families thoughts and insights on family engagement.

The culminating event was a 'red carpet' celebration which featured families sharing their poster presentations, a slideshow, and ending with a screening of the video. Many tears were shed as attendees listened to parents, speaking both English and Spanish, share the impact of family-school partnerships in their lives. This was a meaningful and memorable moment for Title I families to shine!

Standard 5--Sharing Power

# PBIS School Store Slater Elementary School Lakewood, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Slater Elementary School implements a prevention-based framework by organizing evidence based behavioral supports to enhance academic and social outcomes for all students. Using the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, Slater staff have organized a PBIS School Store. The goal of the store aligns with the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and Colorado's 8 Practices of PBIS.

Slater students earn GATOR stickers based on the GATOR matrix of expectations, which includes Goals, Attitude, Teamwork, On-time, and Respect. Students who exemplify one or more of these attributes can potentially earn a GATOR sticker to put on their GATOR card. Each card holds 10 stickers and students can then choose to save up their stickers to "purchase" items at the School Store. The last Friday of each month classroom teachers sign up to bring their students to the store.

The Slater PTA partnered with the school to support the store. The PTA helps provide funding for items and arranges for donations. Parent volunteers (both PTA and non-PTA members) set-up and close-up the store, as well as run the store throughout the day. Volunteers assist anywhere from one hour to half a day. They label and display the merchandise and interact with teachers, staff, and students in selecting items and celebrating student success. Volunteers also have the



opportunity to give input on how the store operates, what type of merchandise is available, and how to talk with students about what they earn. Teachers, staff, and parents regularly interact at the store, and this facilitates the welcoming environment, demonstrates the volunteer's value, and connects parents to the school community (and vice versa).

While the PBIS Store is only in its second year of existence, Slater staff have already seen positive results. The school's family engagement liaison explains: "when children receive GATOR stickers for various behaviors demonstrated throughout the school day, such as helping another student carry a lunch tray or supporting another student in making good decisions at recess, students develop social-emotional skills that are critical for future success both personally and professionally."

# School-Level Leadership Development in Family and Community Engagement

## Thompson School District

### Loveland, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

In January 2018, Thompson School District (TSD) worked with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to provide building administrators with a professional development opportunity. The purpose of the three-hour presentation was to build the capacity of district principals and assistant principals to integrate and elevate family, school, and community partnering (FSCP) practices in schools, and to collect baseline data across the system to drive district improvement planning in the area of FSCP.

This training was mandatory for elementary administrators and optional for middle and high school administrators. Attendance included 31 site-based administrators representing 28/33 TSD buildings. Activities included:

- Site-based self-assessments using CDE's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Practice Profile for FSCP.
- Sharing specific FSCP challenges occurring in their schools, and using a Mailbox protocol, collaboratively shared ideas and possible solutions.
- Reviewing federal, state and local guidance for FSCP.
- Reviewing changes to requirements under ESSA.
- Reviewing and unpacking of the 6 National PTA Standards, TSD FSCP Policy, and CDE guidance.
- Reviewing the research and evidence base for FSCP that leads to student growth and school improvement.
- Participating in a World Cafe for sharing knowledge, surfacing needs, leading collaborative dialogue, and creating paths of action for FSCP practices in TSD.
- Showcasing Promising FSCP Practices in TSD Schools.
- Identifying and sharing resources and training to support partnering efforts in TSD.

After the session, TSD staff recognize that many promising practices are in place within schools and a lot of potential still exists. The World Cafe model surfaced common misconceptions, challenges, and needs in schools across the district, and drives the action planning, professional development planning, and communications planning for the coming year. It also identified schools in need of targeted supports, as well as schools with promising practices that can be replicated at other sites.

# Share Power, Get a Playground!

## Shawsheen Elementary

### Greeley, CO

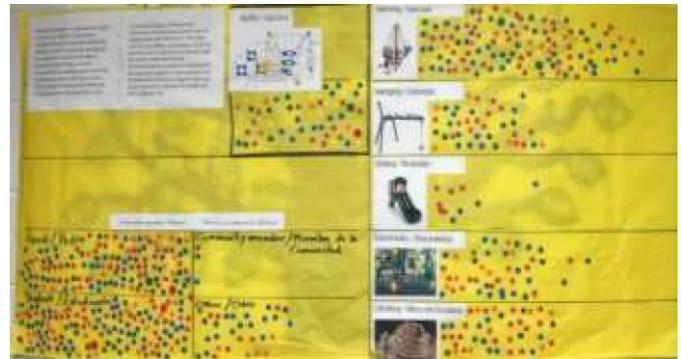


**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Shawsheen Elementary School serves low-income students with over 75% eligible for free or reduced price school meals. Quite often, parents face overwhelming barriers to participating in their child's education or school programs because they have several jobs or do not have easy access to transportation. Having a variety of outreach methods in place increased parent participation in Shawsheen's efforts to design a new school yard.

The Great Outdoors Colorado School Yard Initiative aims to revitalize school playgrounds and outdoor learning environments. The most competitive projects are those that reflect a participatory design process led by the students and include parent participation. Shawsheen Elementary was fortunate to receive funding for a new playground because of the methods they used to elicit feedback from all families.

Shawsheen Elementary is a neighborhood school and a majority of the children walk to school. Therefore, it made sense to give parents an opportunity to identify the kind of equipment their children would like on the playground through a "sticky dot" activity that was posted at the school for one week. Parents learned about



the sticky dot activity through a message sent from the DOJO family communication tool and it was a quick and easy activity to take part in as they dropped off or picked up their children. Presentations were conducted at Parent Teacher Organization and School Accountability Committee meetings with time for feedback throughout the design process.

Shawsheen's principal offers the following advice when schools share power with families: "Keep in mind that parents often have large hurdles to overcome to have a presence in a school. Offering a variety of ways to provide feedback during a shared decision making process is essential. For those who are already involved in their children's education, utilizing school events like parent teacher conferences and science fairs are innovative ways to engage parents. Giving parents options to participate remotely and anonymously is helpful for those working multiple jobs and is inclusive of families whose immigration status might keep them away from public places even though they want to play an active role in their child's education."

# Sharing Power with Families

## Madison Elementary School

### Greeley, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Madison Elementary School serves low-income students with over 75% eligible for free or reduced price school meals. Quite often, parents face overwhelming barriers to participating in their child's education or school programs because they have several jobs or do not have easy access to transportation. Having a variety of outreach methods in place increased parent participation in Madison's efforts to design a new school yard.

The Great Outdoors Colorado School Yard Initiative aims to revitalize school playgrounds and outdoor learning environments. The most competitive projects are those that reflect a participatory design process led by the students and include parent participation. Great Outdoors Colorado emphasizes student leadership as a critical component of a successful grant application and requests that parents and community members are engaged as well to ensure there is buy-in from the entire school community. In many of the proposals, students make presentations to parent groups such as PTAs, however Madison Elementary, located in Weld County District 6, took exceptional steps to ensure that parent voices significantly contributed to the decision-making process.

Madison gave parents a variety of ways to participate both at the school and using online and social media tools. At the beginning of the school year during Parent Teacher Conferences, families were asked about the kinds of play structures they wanted to have on the playground resulting in feedback from 485 individuals. At the same time, parents could submit a vote using Facebook or provide input on charts hung in hallways at the school.

After the students compiled the input provided by parents, staff, students, and community members, they created a few playground plans that were then presented to Madison's Parent Group. After more feedback was collected, a group of playground design consultants prepared formal design plans to present to the school. Knowing that Science Night would draw a large portion of the school community, the design plans were posted for another voting process. Voting also took place through an online survey and the plans were posted at the school entrance following the Science Night.

As a result of the intricate yet accessible way to partner with families, Madison received the grant funding to have a new playground built.

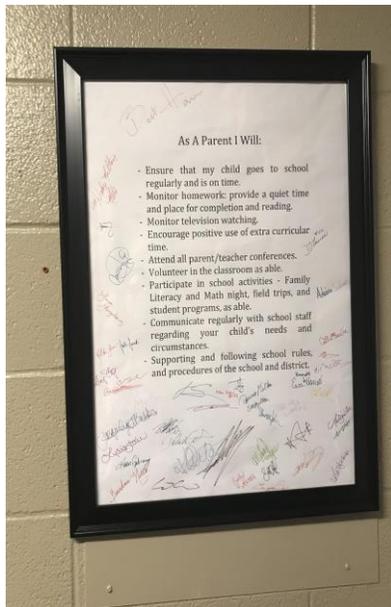
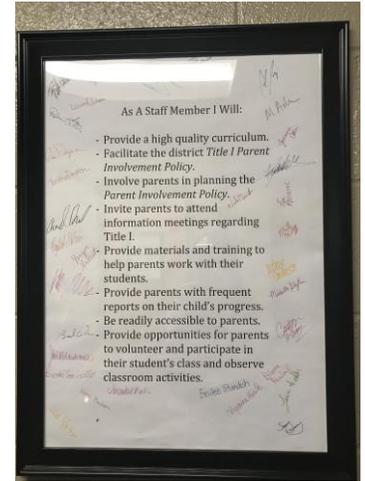
# Title I School and Family Compact Posters Evans International Elementary School Colorado Springs, CO



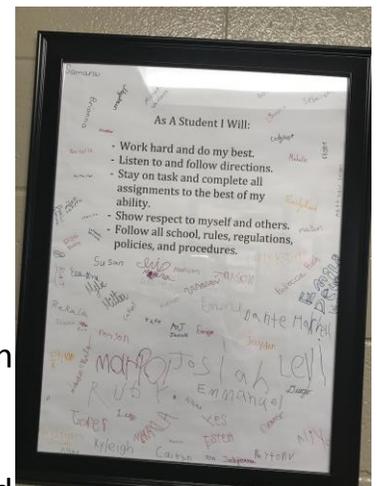
COLORADO  
Department of Education

The Evans International Elementary School (EIES) community believes that the academic achievement of each student is a responsibility shared by families, school and the broader community. The school staff wanted to make sure that all stakeholders (school district, school administration, staff members, students, families, and community members) supported this belief. As a result, they took the required Title I Family-School Compact from compliance to commitment.

The goal of the School-Family Compact is to celebrate and display the team effort between parents, students, and teachers to increase student growth. At Back to School Night, the principal designated a table for posters with the School Family Compact for students, parents, and staff members to sign. There were also brochures of the compact available for parents to take home and review. The compact is something that the parents, students, and teachers pledge to do throughout the school year to increase academic achievement for every child.



When you walk into Evans International Elementary School, the Family Compact Posters are displayed as you walk in and throughout the hallways. Teachers also have the Compact Posters in their classrooms and review what is on them to remind students that the community, staff, and themselves that they are working as a team to increase their academic achievement.



The district's family engagement point-person offers the following advice to those wanting to replicate the practice: "In addition to having the posters out to sign on Back to School Night, it would also be a good idea to move the posters from classroom to classroom on the first day of school so each teacher could explain the compact and every student could sign it."

# Bring Your Parent to School/Career and College Day

## Altura Elementary

### Aurora, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

One beloved tradition at Altura Elementary School, located in Aurora Public Schools, is the annual Bring Your Parent to School/Career and College Day. This event brings together the entire school and broader community to share careers and gain access to postsecondary pathways.

The event is always held on National Bring Your Child to Work Day. The purpose for this is to keep students in school while inviting their parents to learn about and engage with different careers, college booths, classroom workshops, art displays, and other performing arts rotations.

The annual event is broken into two parts. The first half of the day consists of rotations through our various booths in the gym where students and families can see, touch, and play with the equipment pertaining to a certain career as they ask the presenter questions. Families also receive “swag” at the various college booths.



After the career/college rotations, classes will then attend a workshop conducted by various Performing Arts instructors. This has consisted of poets, dance instructors, STEM presenters, African drummers, music artists and composers, and more. Teachers also sign up for times to do an “Art Walk” in between rotating through everything that’s happening during the day. The school is turned into an art museum with the students’ entire year of art displayed throughout.

The day’s second part, after lunch and recess, consists of a College Café, where families see all of the college pennants from the various schools that staff attended. The afternoon culminates with a school-wide Talent Show where students are the main entertainment. This brings in additional families that couldn’t make the whole day.

Altura’s community liaison recommends to start planning early: “Incorporate fun activities that keep the students engaged all day, but still allow for them have down time in class to do some reflective activities.”

# Club House

## Linton Elementary School

### Fort Collins, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Linton Elementary School, located in Fort Collins, recognizes that students achieve more positive outcomes when staff and families work together. Eleven years ago, about 80 Spanish-speaking parents approached school staff about the difficulty of helping their children with homework. Immediately, staff began brainstorming ways to support families through its afterschool programs and by working in partnership with community organizations. As a result, the school created Club House.

For the first two years of implementation, Club House consisted of counselors and tutors from a local middle school to provide homework and tutoring support to students for two hours, three days a week.

As the program evolved, so did the school's community support. Generation Now started to provide support with their volunteers and equipped the basement of the Club House with books, desks, computers, and transformed it into "La Escuelita" (The Little School). This community organization did a great job extending programming into the summer with the Get Ahead Club. For the past two years, the Boys and Girls Club facilitates La Escuelita.

Over the years, other community partners have contributed to the Club House's success:

- Matthews House: Homework Helpers (one hour, twice a week, year-round and Parent Café (two hours, once a week for five weeks).
- Fort Collins Read Aloud Early Start: provides families with books, conversation in Spanish about children's stages of language development and literacy (twice a year).
- Vida Sana with UC Community Health: Provides families free cholesterol screening.
- The Family Center/La Familia in conjunction with Vida Sana: Once a year brings families a six-week healthy cooking class where parents can learn, practice, and cook with their children.
- Neighborhood Connections, City of Fort Collins: Provides information about their Services programs and listening to families about what is important to them in their neighborhood.

Linton's evolution of partnering with the community stemmed from the feedback of 80 Spanish-speaking parents. This practice demonstrates the importance of providing an avenue for parents to partner with the school and to implement parent feedback when possible.

# Family Science Night

## Gold Camp Elementary School

### Colorado Springs, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Three years ago, a group of staff and families at Gold Camp Elementary School wanted a new and engaging way to increase STEM interest within their school. The result was Family Science Night, now a beloved Gold Camp tradition. The goal of Family Science Night is to generate interest in STEM and build community and home relationships through a wide variety of learning formats for students, parents, and patrons of the district.

Family Science Night provides an opportunity for parents, community members, teachers, students, and anyone interested in science to share their knowledge with others and increase their own learning. Gold Camp gears the activities for the whole family, from preschool to adult. With a variety of learning formats, presentations, make and take stations, hands-on engagement stations, and take home investigations to continue learning, Family Science Night touches on numerous science standards and concepts. The activities include a balance of earth, physical, and life sciences.

Teachers at Gold Camp evaluate Family Science Night through presenter feedback, participant comments, and attendance. After the event, the planning committee meets to review all feedback and use that information to change or modify future events. With this being a “come-and-go” type of event, attendance is not exact, but the committee estimates about 500 students and parents participate each year!

One positive and somewhat unexpected benefit of this night was the number of fathers that attended. One Gold Camp teacher states: “It was a great opportunity for fathers to share their knowledge and excitement of science with the students.”

Another member of the planning committee offers this advice for replicating an engaging science event: “Someone looking to start a Science Family Night should start early and create as many contacts as possible. We start planning in September for our spring event, and we have bi-monthly meetings at first, and then weekly meetings as the day draws closer. By starting early and having several small meetings, we were able to keep everything in manageable portions and organized. In our desire to have a variety of activities, we create a contact list that includes past presenters and possible future presenters. We talk to anyone that will listen and are always open to suggestions and in making connections for years to come.”

# Caminos Partnership Latino Business Luncheon

## Fort Collins High School

### Fort Collins, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Fort Collins High School (FCHS), in partnership with El Centro at Colorado State University (CSU), implemented an innovative program to address some of the issues facing our Hispanic population, 23% of school's student body. Named *Caminos*, this partnership sought to increase the academic achievement of bilingual and predominantly native Spanish speaking students, grades 9-12.

The culminating activity of *Caminos*, at the end of the spring semester, was a Latino Business Luncheon. Successful Latino professionals from the community were contacted either through personal phone calls or email to gauge interest and were subsequently formally invited to participate in an informal business luncheon at Fort Collins High School. Guests included veterinarians, engineers, computer programmers, directors of nonprofits, detectives, lawyers, healthcare providers, and business owners, among others. District administration, CSU partners, and FCHS's graduating Latinos accepted to CSU were also invited.

Each participant received a name tag as they arrived at the luncheon. Students were seated with a professional who held a career that was of interest to them. This also facilitated interaction between students and adults and ensured that youth sat with different peer groups. Students in FCHS' culinary arts classes prepared the luncheon meal. While eating, students asked the professionals questions about high school preparation, post-secondary options, and other career related topics.

The keynote speaker motivated students to "never give up their dreams" and to work to achieve them. One student was inspired to "never forget who you are and that you are the only person that knows your dream and to work to make it happen".

Event organizers offer the following advice about hosting a similar event: "It is very important that a student participate in a career interest survey before inviting community members in. This is to ensure the school invites a sufficient number of guests to seat the students with a professional that matches their career choice. Additionally, don't be afraid to contact community members. Each invited professional was more than willing to take advantage of this opportunity to support young Latino students and, in a way, give back to their community."

# Markey Day Craft Fair

## Rocky Mountain Classical Academy

### Colorado Springs, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Once a year, the Rocky Mountain Classical Academy (RMCA) hosts a Market Day Craft Fair to celebrate family, community, and holiday traditions. The goal of the event is to have families participate and enjoy fellowship, with the potential to complete holiday shopping, win prizes, compete in a baking competition and enjoy holiday celebrations with the school community.

In 2017, over 750 attendees and 50 vendors participated in the Market Day Craft Fair. This year's proceeds, \$2,500, went to RMCA athletics. One teacher (and craftsman) sold handmade pens, letter openers, seam pullers, magnifying glasses, and ice cream scoops made from exotic woods, acrylics, brass, pewter, and steel. The event also included a silent auction. Auction donors included U.S. Taekwondo, Kneaders, The Awtrey Family, The Rhodes Family, The Werner Family, as well as fifteen vendors who provided donations.



An exciting aspect of the Market Day Craft Fair is that RMCA students oversee the planning and implementation. Student groups (Student Council and athletic teams) provide labor in exchange for earning funding for their teams and activities. The practice links directly to RMCA's character education outcomes, including initiative, generosity, trustworthiness, and self-awareness. The school's event coordinator shares: "Over 200 person-hours went into organizing and preparing this year's event. Student, staff, and parent volunteers helped us. Over a dozen of our student-athletes arrived early to help vendors set up their booths. It's an opportunity for us to show our community who and what we are."

The key to success is how one treats the vendors and attendees. RMCA students personally deliver lunch to each of the vendors (it is part of the vendor fee). Vendors appreciate the kindness shown to them. Additionally, the supreme organization accomplished before the event ensured vendors arrived and set up on time, as well as minimizing site tear-down and post-event cleaning.

Standard 6--Collaborating with the Community

# Noche de Ciencias Lesher Middle School Fort Collins, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

In February 2018, Lesher Middle School hosted its second annual Science STEM Night--Noche de Ciencias. The event is for students and families to learn exciting scientific exploration, engage in hands on STEM activities, connect with engineering college students, and learn about college options, tuition assistance programs, and financial aid information for minority students in the community.

Lesher staff partnered with Colorado State University's (CSU) Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. The society is comprised of minority students that are currently earning Degrees in Engineering; a field where minorities have lower percentages of involvement than non-minorities.

Noche de Ciencias started with a quick pizza dinner and an opportunity for the 85 attendees to enter a raffle. After dinner, students and families spoke with community partners and teachers about financial aid options for STEM-related university degrees. Focusing on postsecondary options in middle school sparked excitement for participants to study hard in high school and fulfill their dreams of going to university.



Publicity is an integral part of the evening's success.

Spanish, math, and science classroom teachers encouraged their students to attend Noche de Ciencias. Lesher's family liaison sent flyers home and posted them around the school. School administration recorded three robocalls: one inviting families, one reminding families, and one confirming the event. In some cases, families received a personalized phone call home to encourage attendance.



After the science night, Lesher's family liaison received substantial encouragement to continue the event: "Parents and students appreciated the hard work to make this happen and congratulated us for hosting a great Noche de Ciencias event. CSU's Hispanic Engineers were great with their presentations, provided valuable information and were well organized."



# PEN PALS

## Boulder Valley School District and Parent Engagement Network Boulder, CO



COLORADO  
Department of Education

Since 2001, Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) and school level administrators and staff have partnered with the Parent Engagement Network-Parent as Leaders in Schools (PEN PALS) volunteers to bring resources to their schools that engage, educate, and empower parents and other supportive adults in a child's life.

The PEN PALS program is aligned with BVSD's Family-School Partnership Initiative that "builds collaborative relationships between schools, families, and the community to support the achievement, success and well-being of every child. BVSD recognizes that every family desires and has an essential role in their children's success."

In the 2017-18 school year, volunteers from multiple schools hosted parent initiated engagement opportunities and educational presentations in their individual schools. This context allowed parents of students of all ages across the district to network, engage in panel discussions, and participate in workshops.

Examples of PEN PALS parent led initiatives in the past year include:

- School hosted screenings of the documentaries 'Angst', and 'Screenagers', with Q & A panels including school counselors and community mental health professionals.
- Opioid Awareness Presentations, in collaboration with The Boulder County Department of Public Health and a discussion panel of youth in recovery.
- An author series, including presentations from nationally known authors like Rachel Simmons who recently released *Enough as She Is*, and Rosalind Wiseman from *Cultures of Dignity, Queen Bees & Wannabees* and *Masterminds & Wingmen*.
- Several presentations of "Smart Parenting in a World of Sexting" - A Collaborative workshop with Zonta Foothills – Advancing the status of women worldwide, Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN), Movement to End Sexual Assault (MESA) and the Boulder District Attorney's office.

Perhaps the greatest strength to the BVSD and PEN PALS partnership is its customization. The school based parent engagement model of PEN is not a one-size-fits-all model. It is an expansive, responsive model that can meet the varying needs of districts, schools, and individuals.

For more information and  
partnering materials:

**SACPIE**

[www.cde.state.co.us/sacpie](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sacpie)

**CDE**

[www.cde.state.co.us/resourcesforparents](http://www.cde.state.co.us/resourcesforparents)

**Questions**

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**SACPIE**

State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education



**COLORADO**

Department of Education