

Financial Aid and FAFSA Night

Dunn Elementary School

Fort Collins, CO



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."