

Family Outreach Collaboration

Jefferson Junior/Senior High School

Edgewater, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Helping families feel connected and supported can be challenging once children leave elementary school. Yet, it is more important than ever to create a network of support once they enter Junior/Senior High School. Jefferson Junior/Senior High School's Family Engagement Liaison (FEL) and Community Family Connection Liaison (CFC) saw an opportunity to do just that. Each Liaison plays a specific role, but their common ground is building partnerships and outreach to families that often feel disconnected or overlooked. Ultimately, student success is the end goal of this collaborative work.



The original idea seemed simple: contact families and help them get connected to healthcare coverage (including Medicaid, since the Community Family Connection team member is CASS Certified). But the team quickly saw a valuable opportunity in front of them. By entering into a conversation with a family, they could listen to and value the family and assess their needs. Then, attend to those needs by connecting the family to relevant community resources.

To do this well, the team sought support from administrators, teachers, counselors, and the school nurse. Setting a consistent time to make the personal outreach phone calls ensured that families were reached. Enlisting help from district interpreters respected families' spoken language. The Registration/Counseling Secretary created a digital format to capture data, allowing for efficiency and eliminating duplication of effort. Team coordinators provided direction with the implementation of the program, but the energy of the FEL/CFC team is what propelled the program forward.

Evaluation of the program is ongoing. The team can easily measure which families have been contacted and what needs are being met. The challenge of the program is a good one to have: the outreach isn't about just *one thing* - it has opened a dialog and opportunity to build trust, awareness, and connectedness.

The best advice to starting a program like this is to be willing to begin a conversation with families - be ready to listen and then act. Create an organized way to keep track of your outreach and make sure that you can follow through with families' needs.