

Partnership Badges

Jeffco Public Schools

Golden, CO



In the true spirit of *families leading family engagement*, a focus group of Family School Partnership (FSP) members met at the end of the 2017-18 school year to help vision Jeffco Public Schools' family engagement journey for the 2018-2019 school year. At that meeting, families made the connection between the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and the number of meetings set for the upcoming year. This led to ideas and conversation about how to elevate the importance of each standard and even more importantly, how to implement the standards on a deeper level in their schools.

One participant posed the question: *"What would it look like if schools 'earned their badge' in one or more of the 6 National Standards?"* Focus group members all felt like they were onto something that gave enough voice and choice to schools, but also allowed for cross-district collaboration. Group members also knew that the year's work would accentuate the reality that meaningful family engagement is a *process* not a single event.

With a plan taking shape, staff launched the idea to a district group in October 2018 using a cycle graphic to illustrate the year ahead. Families could see there was a plan, and soon they would be drafting similar plans with their school team! At this first meeting, the group re-grounded themselves in the 'why' and had families revisit the National Standards with an opportunity to weigh in on what it looks like, feels like, and sounds like in their buildings.

As the year progressed, FSP teams used district family survey, on-site self-assessments, and anecdotal data to help decipher which of the National Standards they could improve and take to a deeper level. Once schools made an informed decision, they got to work creating action steps. Teams also decided how their journey would be measured and archived; what body of evidence would they collect to show their process, progress, and success. Schools clustered in groups based on which 'badge' they were earning, to share ideas and work through struggles.

Mid-year, the district FSP team knew it would be important to shift thinking from a 'finished product' to instead 'celebrating the journey.' Staff wanted to be sure that schools avoided the 'one and done' mentality. Staff also want to be sure that any school that eventually 'earns a badge' has the work to show for it. This level of implementation can only truly happen when all stakeholders - staff, families, students, leadership - work together toward a shared goal.

At Jeffco's year-end celebration, families presented their school's roadmap to earning their badge, which they will launch in the 2019-2020 school year. Jeffco's family engagement journey continues, and they anticipate that by the end of the 2019-20 school year, many schools will be awarded badges in one of the National Standards! With dedication over several years, staff anticipate that schools who have earned all six National Standard badges will earn the privilege to be deemed a Partnership School.