

Safe Summer Event Overland High School Aurora, CO



The goal of this practice was to provide Overland High School (OHS) students, families, and community members with resources and opportunities during the summer to keep busy and stay safe. The event helped build Family-School-Community Partnerships (FSCP). This practice follows Cherry Creek School District's (CCSD) goal of inclusive excellence and student well-being.

The individuals involved in planning and implementing the practice were Principal Sybil Booker, Community Liaison Sara Khatib, OHS Leadership Team, Councilman Juan Marcano, NAACP President Omar Montgomery, Sergeant Poole from APD, Aurora Gang Unit, and Arapahoe County Sheriff Tyler Brown. These individuals served as guest speakers at the event in addition to CCSD Security Coordinator Kevin Childs and building SRO's.

This practice entailed bringing various city of Aurora representatives and stakeholders to the same setting to discuss strategies to keep Overland and feeder schools' youth safe during the summer. Food and giveaways were provided to attendees. The guest speakers were purposefully selected to represent and reflect the diverse student body at Overland. OHS parents, students, and community members were invited to attend and participate. It was very important to include students to ask questions and lead discussions during the Q&A part of the event. The resources provided at the event included job and volunteer opportunities, mental health supports, city activities, and a safe place for parents to connect with both the school and community to share concerns and learn of school and city-wide initiatives to keep students safe. The organizations that attended the event were Arapahoe Parks/Recs, Arapahoe County, Aurora Library, Aurora Mental Health, Colorado Young Leaders (CYL), Compound of Compassion, and the Aurora City Youth Violence Prevention Program. Interpretation services were provided to all non-English speaking families.

The foremost challenge experienced during implementation was receiving feedback from both parents and students about what resources to provide at the event and what organizations to invite. Overland's liaison shared: "We were very cognizant to address Family-School-Community (FSC) needs by involving students and families while planning this event to ensure its effectiveness and success."

The advice that we would give someone wanting to replicate this practice is to understand that the needs of every family, school, and community are different. The most important aspect to integrate within FSCP is to treat all members with dignity and respect. FSCP is not only about the school extending support, but also receiving support from both families and the community. A fully functional FSCP is the oil of a properly functioning engine. One of the best quotes we relate our community navigation practices to is by Desmond Tutu, "we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."