

# FAST Team

## Rocky Mountain Prep Creekside

### Denver, CO



Rocky Mountain Prep (RMP) Creekside is a PK-5 public charter school located in the Southeast area of Denver. The school serves an incredibly diverse community of students and families, representing 26 languages and a broad cross-section of racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. RMP believes that scholars' families are their first and longest-lasting teachers and that they must actively partner with families to ensure scholars are successful at RMP and beyond. Though that partnership historically focused around academics, over the past few years the RMP Creekside team became increasingly aware that experiences and conditions outside of the school building were having a major impact on students' and families' abilities to be physically, emotionally, and mentally present. In order to support families with meeting those basic needs and connecting them to the appropriate resources quickly, the RMP Creekside staff developed and implemented the Family Advocacy Support Team (FAST).

The FAST team was intentionally designed and staffed with individuals who were best positioned to quickly and effectively understand and respond to the needs of students and families. Not all classroom-based staff have a comprehensive understanding of yhr support services available through the school and through community partners, but they did have strong existing relationships and channels of communication with families. The relationships that families have with classroom-based staff combined with the broad knowledge of the support staff made the central feature of quick response times from the FAST teams possible. The FAST team is made up of 7 members: a Family Liaison, Social Worker, Psychologist, Counselor, Nurse, a General Education Teacher, and a Special Education Teacher.

The FAST team's exact process varies from case to case but in general follows the below process:

1. Staff notices a basic student need or a parent states a student need.
2. Staff submit a referral via google survey.
3. FAST team reviews submissions weekly.
4. FAST assigns next steps and tracks until completion.
5. Teachers/Staff are notified when referral was completed or if extended past 14 days.

As with launching any new human-centered strategy, the RMP Creekside team encountered a variety of both logistical and systemic challenges. Starting a program with no funding created its own challenges; staff had to fundraise to meet the immediate needs while they compiled a list of the most relevant community resources. Immigration concerns have also been a pressing issue. Having a partnership with a community organization that can support immigration requests helped the school meet these specific needs.

For those looking to replicate this practice, consider the following:

- Set up a quick reference guide on what your team would be able to support financially.
- Plan for what happens if a family continues to need a large amount of support throughout the year?
- Do you have a compiled resource guide?
- Who is the best group of people to launch this program?