

Title I Family Engagement Program

Jefferson County Public Schools
Golden, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

In order to establish and maintain true and lasting partnerships between schools, families, and communities, a substantial amount of time and effort is needed. This often requires dedicated family-school partnering staff so that partnering efforts can be the main focus. In the Jefferson County School District, a Title I Family Engagement program has been created that maintains a network of professionals trained specifically on the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and who are dedicated solely to this work.

The Title I Family Engagement program involves implementing systemic, research-based practices in the school district with the goal of engaging families who are living in poverty, in order to increase student success. This is the first year of the program, and the district has already hired 26 Family Liaisons – one per Title I school – and a Family Engagement Coordinator to support the full team. The first three months of the program were dedicated to surveying family members and staff in the schools in order to identify areas of need. Now, three days per month the team meets for professional development, collaboration, and to develop components of the program.

During these ongoing meetings, Liaisons are able to discuss the events and activities that they are working on, and the team together discusses how they link to student outcomes. The team has identified certain areas that they are focusing on in this inaugural year – creating a welcoming environment and establishing effective two-way communication. In year two, the team will focus on student success and advocacy. This strategic plan was created in order to build a strong partnering foundation and gain understanding of the standards and how to implement them.

The team has also worked with outside partners in order to evaluate their work. Data showed improvements in welcoming environments and two-way communication, and highlighted practices that were really effective – such as Principal Coffee events where families can meet with the Principal regularly. The data also revealed areas where additional work can be done on these topics, and on other partnering standards in the future.

While only in practice for a year, the results from this team are very encouraging. The school district hopes to continue these practices to support partnerships, and in the future plan to look at long term partnering data related to student achievement.