

GET Togethers—"Guaranteed Education Team" Laurene Edmondson Elementary School Loveland, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Edmondson Elementary School leadership strives to partner with families in every aspect of students' educational journey. This year, school staff piloted GET (Guaranteed Education Team) Togethers. The goal of GET Togethers is to create home and school partnerships that support student success and empowers families to see themselves as a part of the schooling of their child/children.

GET Togethers consist of four meetings throughout the year (September, October, January, March). The September and January meetings were each 75 minutes with families of all students (parents and students attended together). After welcoming and team building activities for participants, teachers taught families a targeted foundational grade level skill (i.e., 1st grade = high frequency words, 3rd grade = multiplication facts) and emphasized the importance of learning that skill in that particular grade level. Whole class data for that skill was shared in an anonymous format so families and students could see where their student performed compared to the norm and the class. Teachers modeled practice activities that they could use at home to reinforce the focus skill. Families were given resources and made games to play at home. Parents and students practiced the activities together. Finally, parents and students set a SMART goal to be obtained by the next GET Together meeting.

The October GET Together was structured like traditional 30 minute parent/teacher conferences with an emphasis on moving toward student led conferences. The 45 minute March meeting was a combination of student led conferences and families continuing to learn home activities to support their student's learning. At each meeting, families revisited their student's data to see the progress they were making and reflected on how they might continue to support their student at home and then set a new SMART goal.

Information about the GET Togethers was sent to parents explaining the new format for parent/teacher conferences. The principal made a video explaining the change in format. Teachers made personal phone calls to every family to invite them to the GET Togethers and they sent out reminders using the Remind app. We advertised on our website, Facebook, with flyers, and sent multiple Parent Link phone calls detailing information about the events. For the March event, families signed up for a time slot that worked best for them on Sign Up Genius. A local church provided meals for the families at these events.

Edmondson's principal offers the following advice prior to implementing GET Togethers: "Creating the vision and having teachers feel supported in the preparation is paramount. Build time into your schedule (staff meetings, Title I time, etc). Be flexible and willing to make adjustments based on the parent and teacher feedback. The biggest challenge is making this process doable for families with multiple children."

Standard 4--Speaking Up for Every Child