

Partners in Education

Laurene Edmondson Elementary School

Loveland, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

PIE NIGHTS

Laurene Edmondson Elementary School designed the Partners in Education (PIE) event in order to increase parent involvement and engage families in the development of the school's Title IA Parent Involvement Policy, as required by federal law. School leaders were looking for new ways to include stakeholders and families that have historically been under-represented in school improvement planning. In 2016, the Edmondson Elementary PIE Night was created for this exact purpose.

Families are invited to join school staff for pizza pie and desert pie during PIE Nights. School leaders create questions designed to gather input on school improvement issues, student learning, policy and practice, and topics raised as areas for exploration by staff, students, and families. Adult participants are invited to transition between stations to provide feedback after dinner is served. Discussion questions in the past have included:

- What are some afterschool activities you might like to see offered at Edmondson?
- What types of information might you like to hear about your child at conferences?
- What are some of your thoughts/feelings about students having homework in elementary school?

Third through fifth grade students are also invited to participate in the discussion rotations, and childcare is provided for students too young to participate.

PIE Nights facilitate more open communication and provide families with a voice and a sense of inclusion within the school. The event establishes and strengthens relationships and partnerships between school staff and families. It ensures that diverse perspectives are included in school improvement planning and activities for the future. Families in return feel more invested in the school as they see that their input is being used to develop activities and policies for the school.

WELCOMING FAMILIES

Making all families feel welcome, facilitating meaningful communication, and fostering family and staff partnerships are key in the success of PIE Nights at Edmondson Elementary School. Parents and students are able to actively participate in policy, practice, and activity development at their school through engaging in direct two-way communication with staff members.

Partners in Education has extended Edmondson's family involvement network through this annual event. This highly effective family engagement strategy requires minimal planning, includes simple facilitation skills, and fosters unique and rich partnerships between families and school staff.