

LEADING THE WAY: P-3 EDUCATION IN COLORADO

WHO:

JULIE FAHEY, Principal of Queen Palmer Elementary School

WHERE: Colorado Springs, District 11

This is one of the oldest school districts in Colorado Springs. It provides education to the greatest number of students in the region. Today, they have more than 60 schools and alternative education opportunities to provide each student with a unique and exceptional educational experience.



JULIE FAHEY
Principal

Queen Palmer Elementary School's vision is driven by high expectations for teachers and students. Education at Queen Palmer is personalized and aligned with the state standards in order to build critical thinkers.

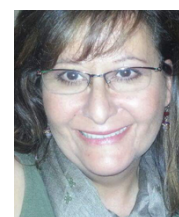
GOALS:

Increase Family Involvement.

The team at Queen Palmer is focused on increasing family involvement in Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms. In Spring, 2017 families signed up for a ½ day visit to their child's classroom. This is an idea that came from participating in the P-3 Leadership Cadre. During these visits, teachers model early literacy skills, helping families to understand how to support their children at home. To increase participation, the school is partnering with the Rotary Club and offering gift cards as incentives.



NATALIE MILLER
Teaching /
Learning Coach



RENEE JOHNSTON
Kindergarten
Teacher



SYVENA FAIRBAIRN
First Grade
Teacher

Use Data.

Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers at Queen Palmer Elementary are implementing the use of a shared assessment system, Teaching Strategies GOLD™. A common assessment system creates shared language across two potentially disconnected early learning experiences, which promotes understanding and communication around students' strengths and progress. Queen Palmer makes data analysis a priority for teachers by giving them time to review data. Once a month, teachers have at least a ½ day to look at data and make instructional decisions, grouping decisions, and interventions. Teachers dig deep into the data presented in Teaching Strategies GOLD™ to guide their planning. They are seeing great gains in children, who are now being met exactly where they are. They are also able to track this growth in a way that they were never able to before. Because of this, fewer children are struggling in Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms.

LESSONS LEARNED:

As someone who was never an early childhood person, Julie has learned a lot about the importance of early literacy. She has also learned a lot about the documentation of learning. It has humbled her to learn more about what goes on at the younger grade levels, and she realizes the importance of this foundation to be able to build upon in the older years.

Julie also has learned that to get buy-in, you need to have results. Once teachers see that what they are doing makes a difference, and they see changes within students, buy-in increases.

“Everybody at my school is on board. It's the work we've got to do. It's the expectation... We are looking at the whole child, not just a reading score.”

NEXT STEPS:

Julie's team is going slow, in order to go fast. They've pushed a lot of comfort zones this year. They are going to do the family school visits in Spring, 2017 and then evaluate them and decide how they want to continue them moving forward.

