

Special Education Parent & Community Newsletter

Boulder Valley School District

Boulder, CO



Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) acquired a new website platform which allowed the Special Education department to access a newsletter template. This newsletter transformed their email communication to parents into a full newsletter that was fully accessible.

The Parent, School, and Community Liaison had sent monthly emails to an opt-in parent/community email list, however the emails only included links to BVSD events and classes and was not able to be dynamic with pictures, other resources, or other languages. Therefore, the Special Education department developed a more accessible, readable, and valuable newsletter. Each issue is created by the Parent, School, and Community Liaison, is approved by the executive director, and archived on the Parent News tab under Special Education.

BVSD offers a variety of events including Common Sense Parenting classes, Parent Network groups, and workshops and webinars for parents throughout the year. The district provides all parents access to these programs, in order to allow schools to focus on school-based events and provide equitable opportunities to all families at the district level. The newsletter is a way to share these resources more effectively.

To ensure all families received the newsletter, the team pulled all parent emails associated with a student with an Individual Education Program (IEP) and merged them into a mail list. This is done each fall to include new parents. There is an unsubscribe link at the bottom of the newsletter for any families that do not wish to receive the newsletter. Challenges in the beginning included getting the newsletter translated, readable, and workable. Figuring out how to handle links to community resources that are not in Spanish or other languages continues to be a challenge and the team is still working on ways to translate the newsletter into other languages. The newsletter continues to be refined and streamlined. The May 2022 issue was the most successful yet as reported by a leader from a Spanish speaking parent organization "Just wanted to let you know that the ELPASO Voz-Lafayette Community Leaders sincerely appreciated receiving this month's newsletter in Spanish. We have heard from other parents in the community that they are happy to have received it as well."

Producing the newsletter can be time-intensive and requires being aware of new and existing opportunities and resources in the community. The team found that they produced a better newsletter by offering it every other month. Advice to others would include keeping detailed notes about possible content and having regular sections to include in each issue. The team also found that each issue can have a disability focus with a variety of resources. This year they provided newsletters focused on autism, learning disabilities and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Next year they are working on a logo and hope to align with the district calendar and promote a variety of Disability Awareness Days as well as offer resources that all schools can use at their school events.