

Parent Leadership Training

Denver Public Schools

Denver, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

While creating relationships and open communication are very important in family-school partnering, it is equally as important to help families gain knowledge and leadership skills so that they can feel equipped to partner. This is the goal of Parent Leadership Training in Denver Public Schools – to develop strong parent leaders who are prepared with information, knowledge, and skills to serve on decision-making committees.

Leadership in participating schools identifies 10-15 parents who they believe are ready to become active leaders and partners. The training is six weeks long and involves six different topics. The workshops include: Parent Leadership, Understanding the School System, Understanding Data and Assessments, Effective Communication, Public Speaking, and Personal Empowerment. Workshops last between 75 and 90 minutes, with childcare and food provided. Training is done by highly trained staff, with support from the district engagement staff. Interpreters are utilized as necessary.

This training program was developed in response to families expressing frustration at their lack of knowledge about school processes, and hesitation towards being a part of decision-making committees. Once they have taken the leadership training, each parent develops a goal for how they will individually or collectively use their new leadership. The district developed a pre and post tool to assess behavior change and growth in participants. Parents also fill out an overall evaluation of the training upon completion.

The Parent Leadership Training is powerful because it helps parents to become strong advocates for increasing student achievement. Parents acquire knowledge, skills, and strategies to strengthen their role as academic partners to ensure that their children graduate prepared for college and career. Their increased knowledge leads to participants being more active participants in school and community activities, and become strong candidates to represent their schools at district-wide forums, meetings, committees, and focus groups.