

Family Learning Walk

Arrowhead Elementary School

Aurora, CO



At Arrowhead Elementary, the goal of hosting a Family Learning Walk was to help families understand what happens during the school day so they can best support their child. This was an opportunity for students' parents, grandparents, and guardians to participate in a tour of the school while active learning was taking place. The school staff received great feedback and families were able to observe the instructional strategies used by the school and compare how their children are being taught in 2024 to their own experience as a youth.

The Family Learning Walk consisted of three parts: a tour, classroom observations, and a teacher panel. To make this event a success, the school principal and teachers had to be on board. The principal asked Arrowhead teachers to volunteer to either be a part of a teacher panel, be a tour guide during the walk, or have an open classroom for observation while teaching students. It was very important for the teachers being observed to feel comfortable and prepared during the observations. Participants were asked not to take any photos or videos while in classrooms, maintain a “fly on the wall” behavior to ensure an authentic learning environment, avoid having conversations in classrooms, honor the privacy of students and teachers, and always stay with the tour group.



Each classroom teacher picked two families to personally invite to the event. The day began with caregivers meeting with administration to learn about the work being done at the school and get a snapshot of the school's academic data. Participants then broke into small tour groups led by staff members. Each group visited three different classrooms and the tour guide helped narrate what they were seeing and answer caregivers' questions. After the tours, they debriefed as a group, discussing what they noticed and wondered about from their observations. They then shared out with the whole group. There was also a presentation from the reading interventionist about how to support their child's literacy development at home. At the end, families were able to pose questions to a panel of 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers, as well as the Reading Enrichment teacher. Some of the questions and concerns of the families were about classroom management approaches, how the school addresses bullying, and how teachers meet the needs of a range of students.



For many families, attending a daytime event is a challenge. The Family Learning Walk was scheduled first thing in the morning so that participants could come for the first half and leave if they needed to go to work. To include Arrowhead's multilingual families, interpreters were available if requested. To replicate this event, it is recommended a teacher of each grade level participates on the panel and a classroom observation is available for each grade level. It is also recommended to encourage family members of ethnicities represented in the school community to join by providing interpreters.