

Positive Postcards

Fairview High School

Boulder, CO



Fairview High School 's mission is to create a culture of belonging that supports all students. The Positive Postcards practice emphasized Fairview's commitment to see all students through a positive lens. The goal was that all students receive a personalized handwritten note from school staff. The Positive Postcards communicated the noteworthy things staff noticed, appreciated, and valued about each student. These were one of the concrete ways Fairview staff deliberately messaged their appreciation for students and who they are as individuals. This intentional practice contributed to the goal of creating a culture of belonging.

The MTSS team at Fairview is composed of school administrators, counselors, and specialists (including the attendance dean, engagement specialist, study hall teacher, special education staff, gifted and talented advisor, and community liaison). The team meets weekly to review student progress and implement support. This year, they also met monthly with all teachers and staff to hold student support meetings. They utilized some of the time in the professional development calendar to write positive postcards home.



The school community liaison, Rupali Hofmann, spearheaded the integration of writing positive postcards into a school wide practice as a way to personalize connection to all students. This sometimes felt like a daunting task at a large, comprehensive high school, and staff found that taking time to write postcards is one way to show care and connection to all students and families across the system. Fairview High School was intentional with messaging home as they did not wish to always communicate about a deficit, problem, or concern. Instead, they deliberately acknowledged positives about all students. The goal was to write 1,840 postcards so each student would receive one from a teacher or staff member. This directly impacted the culture of belonging as staff heard back from students once they received them. One student said, "It made my day," and another, "I felt like I was valued at Fairview".

During professional development and staff meetings, a table was set up for staff to write notes. Staff were also encouraged to take additional notecards to write to more students outside of the professional development time. After the cards were written, the Community Liaison addressed them and mailed them out. The challenges were ensuring 1,840 students receive a card. Next year they may wish to start with the incoming 9th graders to ensure all freshmen receive a Positive Postcard by the end of the year.

For schools looking to replicate this practice, Fairview staff recommend starting the practice by presenting it at the beginning of the year to the whole staff and having them be a part of the vision to help each student know they belong. Fairview leaders provided pre-printed address labels and offered to mail the postcards, which made it easier for staff who wrote the Positive Postcards. Finally, as students provide feedback, consider highlighting the feedback in a newsletter for all staff to see the full circle of appreciation.