

Communicating through Seesaw

Gunnison Lake School

Gunnison, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Jessica McNary, a Kindergarten teacher at Gunnison Lake School knows how schedules and geography can impact how teachers and parents partner for the success of students, particularly inside the school building. Between work schedules and living in a rural community, many families cannot attend school-based functions. Utilizing alternative platforms of communication, such as Twitter and Seesaw, have allowed Ms. McNary to regularly communicate with families.

When Jessica first started using social media to communicate, only a few parents followed her. She would encourage families to follow the class and even tried giving students the job of “Twitter person,” where they would create a daily post about an activity of the day. Jessica felt good about Twitter, but was searching for something more to involve students and parents.



Enter Seesaw, a student driven digital portfolio and a way to communicate with parents. Jessica learned that a colleague, 2nd grade teacher Mandy Harris, was a Seesaw Ambassador and she took a few professional development classes from her. Jessica created portfolios for her students, taught them how to make posts, and connected their portfolios with their parents. Currently Jessica’s Kindergarten class has made 649 posts during the 2018-19 school year, and 14 out of 17 families were connected digitally.

During special speakers, performances, and field trips, Jessica frequently takes video or photos and post to all students’ journals. This way, parents can see their children if they are not able to attend the event in person. As soon as students post to Seesaw, parents are notified on their phone through the family Seesaw app and are able to view, like, and even comment on their students work. Jessica projects Seesaw on the Smartboard and reads likes and comments from parents. Those students just beam with pride.



Seesaw allows for easy two-way communication. Parents send simple messages like changes in pickup, or to check a backpack for a certain note. Also, parents often share photos or videos of their kids on the weekend and evenings so Jessica able to see a glimpse into their lives outside of school.

Jessica states: “My advice to others wanting to replicate the family engagement practice is to select a platform so

easy a kindergartener can do it! Seesaw is such a user friendly app that my kindergarten students even taught 5th graders how to login and make a post. Seesaw can be done with as little as one device in a classroom.”

Because of the success in Jessica’s class, Gunnison Lake School has decided implement Seesaw schoolwide next year. Every student will have a digital portfolio!