

Family Partnership Network

Boulder Valley School District

Boulder, CO



The Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) Family Partnership Network is centered on cultivating family partnership champions at every school, and providing a forum for them to learn about effective practices from other participants and receive meaningful professional development in the areas of family partnerships and equity.

The Office of Family Partnerships designs the agendas for these two and a half hour sessions that take place quarterly and consist of one or two representatives from each school, who are typically school counselors or community liaisons.

In these sessions, BVSD staff hosts panels, share new research on family partnership best practices, create meaningful ways for participants to collaborate with others in their feeder system, lead representatives to set goals, and reflect on their successes and challenges. They learn a lot from each other and from presenters, and they develop clear action plans for their school's Family Partnership efforts.

Attendees also complete a family partnerships self-assessment that BVSD created in partnership with CU-Boulder that guides their awareness of strengths and areas for growth. At the end of each gathering, participants have time to email their principals to summarize their learning, share their progress, and inquire about setting up a short meeting to discuss next steps.

At the conclusion of each Family Partnership Network meeting, participants provide feedback, which helps to guide future meetings. The greatest challenge district staff have faced is around how to follow up with the representatives/schools that are consistently absent. One other challenge is figuring how to differentiate some of the content so that it is relevant to both community liaisons and school counselors.

For other districts interested in developing something similar to the FPN, BVSD's Director of Parent and Family Partnerships offers: "it will help if you develop a compelling message that increased the likelihood of strong principal buy-in. Make sure that the representatives are individuals that have a passion for strengthening partnerships with families and were not simply assigned by their principal to attend. It helped us last year to give representatives a menu of potential areas of focus based on high leverage partnership practices. It is also an effective strategy to share resources and communicate with representatives between meetings via email or a platform such as Schoology. This network is steadily helping us to spread best practices system wide."