

Family-School Partnership

Team

Jefferson County Public Schools
Golden, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

In Jefferson County Public School district, the Title I Family School Partnership (FSP) team work side-by-side with families and school staff to identify and implement ways to improve their Title I schools. The goals of the FSP team is to refine the family engagement policy in a way that is relevant and meaningful to both families and staff; to solicit input from families regarding the Title I budget; to build trusting relationships between families, school staff, and district staff; to have families and staff build partnerships and collaborate on specific family engagement areas; and to build the leadership skills of families and staff.

Monthly FSP Team meetings are scheduled for two hours in the evening at various schools throughout the district. Child care, dinner, and interpretation services are provided, and all documents are offered in both English and Spanish. Participants are comprised of Family Engagement Liaisons, parent representatives, and school and district staff. Parent representatives were provided with a folder that included the yearly plan, a FSP brochure with a description of the representative role, and paper for note taking.

The first hour of the meeting is designated for eating dinner together, casual conversation, and families checking students into the childcare area. The second hour is a more formal meeting, with a short welcome, overview of previous meetings, and a review of the evening's agenda. Participants then break up into small groups to discuss and plan specific family engagement plans based on the agenda items. One group member facilitates the discussion, while another records the conversation and themes.

Facilitators, typically Family Engagement Liaisons and a few parents, were trained on facilitation skills such as active listening, staying objective, and paraphrasing prior to the meetings. All recorded notes were given to the research and assessment team to identify themes and provide support in interpreting the information. In the 2015-2016 school year, seven meetings took place.

Each group created and began implementation of an action based on a particular area's needs. These action plans included afterschool homework clubs at each school, improving nutrition in school food services, increasing family engagement, and academically-based afterschool programs. Formal budget recommendations were submitted that will be included in the 2016-2017 Consolidated Application. Additionally, formal policy recommendations were used to create a new draft policy to be submitted to the JeffCo Board of Education for final approval. Based on the ongoing assessment of the FSP team meetings by the Research and Assessment Team, refinements will be made prior to the new school year.

The JeffCo staff have found that the success of this model relies on including the following components: a small group discussion format; the preparation and training of facilitators; families must be able to see changes related to their feedback; provision of childcare, dinner, interpretation services, and translated documents; and leadership development for both staff and parents.