

School-Family-Student Compact

Stein (Emory) Elementary School
Lakewood, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

At Stein (Emory) Elementary in Lakewood, school staff, family members, and students partnered to create the School-Family-Student Compact, a document that outlines the responsibilities of all stakeholders in supporting the academic achievement and positive behavior of the students. The School-Family-Student Compact demonstrates the commitment to student success by having everyone involved in the education of students.

The need for the School-Family-Student Compact was recognized by the Family Engagement Team, comprised of six family members, who met regularly and discussed different ways that families could be more engaged with the school and feel more welcomed as active participants of the school community. The Family Engagement Team invited a variety of people to collaborate on the compact. The final working group included: two teachers, one from Kindergarten and one from sixth grade; one community partner, Metro Community Provider Network; one school counselor; one family liaison; one school clinic aid; five school family members, two of whom were English speaking only, two of whom were bilingual, and one of whom spoke only Spanish; two administrators; and seven students, one student per K-6 grade level.

Over the course of three initial meetings, the team (minus the students) studied the previous year's family compact, a high school's family compact, and a mock compact called 'Nutmeg.' During these meetings, the team discovered that the previous compact had little family or student input. The team decided that for the compact to be used as a tool for student learning, more collaboration from all parties, including the students, was needed. They also discussed what was critical to include, what could be excluded, using family-friendly language, and having it translated to Spanish and Vietnamese. Following these three initial meetings, the families and the Family Engagement Liaison continued to meet weekly to complete the compact. The families then presented a draft of the compact to the whole group to obtain feedback, particularly from teachers and students. This process allowed the families to feel ownership over and responsibility for the School-Family-Student Compact and the students' education, while providing everyone involved an experience of coordination, collaboration, power-sharing, and successful partnering.

The Family Engagement Team learned that it is important to clearly define the roles of each person, such as who is a decision maker, who is a facilitator, who is a provider of input, and who is an editor. They recommend 9 steps in creating a document such as the School-Family-Student Compact: (1) Identify families, teachers, staff, and community members willing to work together and ask for teachers to nominate students with an interest in working on the compact; (2) provide the necessary amenities for the group to work (childcare, translation, water, etc.); (3) find times that work for everyone to meet; (4) research other schools' family compacts; (5) have an open mind, be respectful of other's opinions and work together to find an agreeable point; (6) understand that there is no wrong idea, and everyone brings something to the table; (7) read and edit continuously; (8) present it to a community based team for feedback; and (9) translate to any necessary languages and send to the printing department.