

Inclusivity in DAC

Englewood Public Schools

Englewood, CO



Englewood Schools had a very impactful and engaged District Accountability Committee (DAC). The goal of the DAC is to provide a forum for parents and community members to make recommendations, provide input and work collaboratively with the Board of Education and the school district which helps the district in achieving its mission and vision. When looking at the makeup of Englewood’s DAC, the district realized it was lacking representation of key stakeholders that make up the school community. All schools and School Accountability Committee (SAC) representatives were present, but not all populations of students and families were represented.

The DAC recognized that they needed the insight and voice of the Language Development Council (LDC), Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC), as well as the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC). The Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, and District Family, School and Community Liaison decided to reach out to these committees to see if a parent representative from each council would like to join DAC. Fortunately a parent from each council agreed and joined the DAC this year.

The District Advisory Council (DAC) now represents stakeholders that were not participating on district level committees. The idea behind this was to hear voices and seek input from many different populations in the district. Englewood Schools’ DAC meets five times per year. At the conclusion of each DAC meeting, the DAC Executive Assistant sends out talking points to each representative to report back to their respective committee. The talking points help bridge communication between families and the district. It allows for the families to hear, understand, and ask questions regarding what is happening at the district level as well as having a voice on recommendations that are brought forth to the Board of Education. The dialogue between the DAC, SACs, and sub committees has proven to be very beneficial.

Up to this point the inclusivity practice has been evaluated anecdotally. At the end of each meeting, the DAC Chair leads a plus/delta round table to evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting. This allows the Chair and district leaders to see what worked well and where changes may need to be made. One of the challenges that came about had to do with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last DAC meeting was held virtually, which did not allow staff the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall DAC this year. In the future, district leaders will continue to convene the DAC for special meetings in which input is needed from a variety of stakeholder groups.

When looking at replicating this practice, one may want to look at the populations served and then ask the questions: Are all voices at the table when making district level decisions? Are all stakeholders represented? Once you understand and engage the stakeholders you serve, you can then have complete representation, well rounded recommendations, and input that considers the needs of all stakeholders.