



Helping support students' learning can be an overwhelming task for many parents and families, who are often busy working and maintaining other parts of their families' lives. In order to help parents and families feel better equipped to offer this support, Adams County School Districts (Adams 12, Adams 14, Adams 50, Mapleton and Brighton 27 J) collaborated with the Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition to offer a bilingual conference for parents from grades K-12, titled Parent Academy.

This academy was created in order to provide workshops to help parents learn about a variety of topics that they might encounter with their students. Topics included bullying, helping with homework, navigating the school system, transitioning to high school, youth mental health, and talking to children about sexuality. These topics were also broken down by elementary, middle, and high school level.

Months of planning went into this event. The planning committee included members of the school districts involved and staff from the Statewide Coalition. Adams 12 and Adams 14 school districts also held focus groups to solicit parent feedback for deciding what type of workshops to have at the one-day academy. Over 200 attendances participated in the event. Sessions were offered in both English and Spanish.

In addition to the parental education piece of the conference, parents were also encouraged to bring their children. Younger students engaged in a variety of activities including storytelling and craft making. Students 13-18 were part of a youth institute focused on reaching their goals of higher education.

The academy was very impactful for families for a variety of reasons. Not only did the parents gain important information on topics, but participating in this sort of event helped parents to understand the influence that they have on their students' education and lives. Even more significant was the finale of the academy, which included a personal presentation by the students to their families about how much their support meant to them.

While the parent academy took months of planning and many logistics to figure out, it was a very successful venture, as evidenced by the feedback received from parents. The districts found it to be so successful and beneficial that they are planning to do it again in the coming school year.