

Newcomer Celebration Lincoln Middle School Fort Collins, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Lincoln Middle School serves over 500 students from 6th-8th grade and has seen an increase in newcomer students in recent years. Wanting to welcome and support all families, Lincoln Middle School created the Newcomer Celebration. The goal of this practice is to welcome the newly arrived families and students to begin to acculturate and get involved in the US school system, and meet the families, teachers, and employees involved in their children's education.

Prior to the celebration, Lincoln's family liaison sends an invitation to all the families of the newly-arrived students. The celebration takes place in the school's cafeteria since there are several presentations. The families have an international dinner and are asked to bring a typical dish of their country of origin. During dinner, families mingle and get to know each other.

After dinner and mingling, Lincoln staff attending the Newcomer Celebration introduce themselves. Following introductions, staff present information to families. Topics of discussion include: school expectations, schedules, school fees, IB rubric for grades, lunch, attendance, transportation, assessments, medications, and immunizations. After dinner, families and students tour the school.

Planning the Newcomer Celebration is a team effort. The principal announces the event to all school staff and encourages participation. Lincoln's newcomer teacher talks to the students about the purpose of the celebration and gets them excited to attend. During the celebration, administrators, teachers, and the family liaison present all the information to the families and also interact with them. Afterwards the principal, newcomer teacher, and family liaison review parent feedback and reflect about how to improve the celebration and support of newcomer families in upcoming years.

Lincoln's family liaison shares the following thoughts about the Newcomer Celebration: "The celebration of the newcomers is for students and their families to feel welcome to this country, and to their new school. It is very important that school administration team is involved as well as newcomer teachers."

