

Parents in Action

Crawford Elementary School

Aurora, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Parents in Action was created to authentically engage families in academics and extracurricular activities at Crawford Elementary School in a way that accurately represents the diversity of the school. Crawford Elementary is made up of diverse families, the majority of whom are from Nepali-, Burmese-, Somali-, and Spanish-speaking backgrounds.

To authentically engage those communities in our school, the school identified parent leaders in each group. With the support of school staff and Colorado African Organizations, Crawford Elementary held meetings with these group leaders. To begin, the parent leaders created surveys for their communities to assess what changes they wanted to make at the school, gauge their levels of interests in topics to explore and how they wanted to be involved in the school. After the survey information was collected, the parent groups picked a project that they wanted to do and topics that they wanted to learn about. Surveying families helped the initiative be successful because the learning and projects were identified by the family groups as things they needed and wanted to do.

Parents in Action activities for the year included:

- Burmese Community: Homework Club and meetings to learn about the student report card and communicating with teachers at conferences.
- Nepali Community: Homework Club and meetings to learn about the student report card, discipline and who is who at the school.
- Somali Community: Colorado Muslim Society Presentations to 3rd-5th grade to promote unity and diversity; Meetings to learn about the report card, reporting problems to school, importance of attendance; Sponsored a lunch for teachers and Somali community; Created a phone tree to get school messages to all Somali families.
- Spanish Community: Initiated a plan to support attendance through a monitoring and reward system; hosted an event to showcase Hispanic cultures throughout central and South America.

Crawford Elementary's principal, Jennifer Passchier, believes that "if our families are more invested in our school, their children will see the value their families put on education." School staff reported an increase in attendance and in family support of student learning. For example, the Parents in Action groups donated over 700 hours of their time during the 2016-2017 school year. Additionally, a more diverse population was present at Parents in Action meetings; specifically, the school's refugee population.