

Parent University

Edgewater Elementary School

Edgewater, CO



Edgewater Elementary School is a wonderful Title I school that serves more than 400 students from pre-school to sixth grade in Jefferson County. Approximately 50% of our students participate in the 1-Way Dual Language Program, while the others are instructed in English. The school selected 'Welcoming All Families' from the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships for the school year 2018-2019.

One of the structures Edgewater has in place to welcome all families in the Jefferson Articulation Area is a monthly Parent University. The purpose of this is to build community while offering parent education around varied and important topics. Parent University has been in place for four years and we continue to bring in new families. The goal of this program is to build capacity in our families to increase student achievement and wellbeing.



Parent University starts with families selecting topics of interest. This school year, our families engaged in learning about social emotional topics, such as depression and suicide ideation. Experts also presented on social networking, cell phone safety, and the dangers and consequences of sexting. School staff also included fun activities that connected families with the community at large, such as the Denver Art Museum. While eating dinner, families and school staff gather to socialize and build connections with one another. After dinner, based on the selected topics, various experts in the field present interactive learning opportunities in which families can collaborate and ask questions. This structure has created bridges between our families who speak different languages and have different cultures, contributing to the culturally responsive climate that we are always striving to reach.



Even though over 30 families consistently participate in Parent University, a challenge continues to be the inclusion of more families from the Jefferson Articulation Area. To increase involvement, the school provides interpreters as well as childcare. Monthly meetings are scheduled on the last Tuesday of every month to provide consistency, and staff are thoughtful about communicating in a variety of ways to promote the program throughout the year.

For those wishing to begin an initiative such as this, the most important thing is to designate a person to plan and organize the program. They must be given ample time to plan, communicate with families, arrange for expert speakers and interpreters, and order and

pick up dinners. Edgewater staff also highly recommend that the schools' administration and staff are involved in the Parent University sessions. And most importantly, have fun, fun, fun! Si se puede!

Standard 1—Welcoming All Families