

Family Survey and Programing

Evans International Elementary School

Colorado Springs, CO



A necessary starting point for any partnership is to make sure that all individuals are on the same page. This year, Evans International Elementary School sought to strengthen family partnerships by comparing perceived family needs to actual recorded family needs, before then rolling out a new plan to engage families.

Prior to attending parent-teacher conferences, school personnel asked families to fill out a survey in exchange for a raffle ticket. Over 100 families completed the survey. School staff collected and calculated the survey results, with a twist. Prior to the release of the results, school teachers and administration were asked to guess what they believed the top three reported family wants/needs that the survey showed.

Evans' Family Engagement Liaison shared the results at a monthly staff meeting, including the gaps in perceived versus actual family answers. Based on research and the information gathered in the survey, a ten-week program was then rolled out to begin meeting the desires of families prior to the end of the school year.

Each Monday of the ten-week program, teachers were provided information about a task and asked to make minor changes to something they were already doing to better engage with families. Weekly raffles for various prizes from community partners were held for teachers who participated. An example of a weekly roll out is below:

"Can you participate in the past?"

This was a question Dr. Steve Constantino posed at a recent Title I family engagement conference.

"Then are we engaging families when we simply inform them about what has already occurred in our classrooms?"

Dr. Constantino went on to offer this simple suggestion to increase family engagement, 'Adjust something you are already doing to focus on the future instead of the past.'

To be entered in the raffle, send something present/future oriented home in your student folders or via DOJO. Give parents a way to engage in the coming week with their kids rather than having the focus be on the past. Examples are attached."

At the end of the school year, students brought home learning games to play over the summer. Over 77% of parents who completed the survey requested this resource. During the final weeks of school, each teacher made games with their students in class that the students then took home to continue practicing and playing over the summer. This program engaged families in a targeted way while getting teachers talking about and excited for new ways of partnering with families. Most importantly, this ongoing partnering initiative originated directly from the wants and needs of Evans' families.