

# FSCP Partnership with RISE Village East Elementary School Aurora, CO



During the 2019-20 school year, Village East Elementary embarked upon a year-long Family Engagement Partnership with RISE Colorado. The partnership was titled RISE Colorado's Family-Engagement Program & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) PD Series. The RISE Partnership served two purposes:

- Invite families into a phased approach to *Educate, Engage, and Empower* in an effort to encourage parents to be change agents in their child's education.
- Engage educators and staff members in professional learning experiences to extend their racial consciousness and awareness around societal issues impacting families.

Village East serves a diverse bi-cultural and bi-literate community with over 32 different languages spoken. Village East is an urban community with many rich assets. However, it also presents a challenge to parents who need to support their children in an educational system that may be different from their home country.

This work began with two English Language Support (ELS) Specialists who wanted to build better partnerships with families. They created a Parent Engagement Action Team that consisted of 12 teachers that had the passion and drive to improve experiences and outcomes for families. Throughout the year they brainstormed ways to improve family engagement and oversaw those big rocks regularly. RISE Colorado was an organization that they were familiar with because of its proven track record of community organization and racial consciousness methods. The team fully engaged in the RISE partnership and met twice a month.



RISE Colorado provided a school partner that worked with the Parent Engagement Team twice a month. During these meetings, the RISE School Partner trained the team on effective parent engagement strategies. Week one consisted of the school partner leading a preview of the racial consciousness experiences and materials with the smaller Parent Engagement Team. Week two consisted of the RISE partner supporting the team to replicate the learning from week one for the whole staff. The structure was predictable and consistent. The teachers experienced activities like Asset Mapping to explore businesses and places of worship/support in our community. They also crafted Stories of Self and Stories of Us to connect/share with families.

Village East staff also engaged in Family Learning Night planning. These nights were designed to offer academic topics that families could use at home and a more intimate version of parent-teacher conferences. As a result, more parents attended school-based events and commented on the welcoming school climate.