

Newcomer Resource Fair

Adams 12 Five Star Schools

Thornton, CO

In Adams 12 Five Star Schools, the goal of the Newcomer Resource Fair was to connect recently arrived families with direct access to many of the organizations and resources that they most often request. This event was inspired by the influx of newcomer students and families the district welcomed over the course of the school year. Many of the district's school-based family liaisons were being asked questions that they didn't know the answers to or were unsure where to refer their families to. By hosting a Newcomer Resource Fair, families recognized that their needs were being heard and responded to in a meaningful way.

A small team was formed that included district staff from various departments, including MTSS, Mental Health, Post-Secondary, Counseling, Student Engagement Initiatives, and Communications. Far more people and community partners were involved with the implementation of this practice, including district Safety & Security, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education, A Precious Child, Thornton Community Connections, and more.



The planning team contacted various partner organizations from around the state that newly arrived families could benefit from being connected to. This ranged from post-secondary specialists to help with FAFSA/CAFSA applications, a family engagement specialist from USCIS, Casa de Paz, to after school programming options and access to medical and dental care. Ultimately, Adams 12 had 38+ organizations in attendance and over 350 attendees.

Adams 12 collected feedback from partner organizations, event attendees, and event staff. The feedback from all stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive, with most of the corrective feedback being related to the need for access to even more resources and to host events like this more often.

Events of this scale include many challenges along the way. Some of the challenges included the allowability of using golf carts to transport families to remove transportation barriers, the intensive communication plan necessary for district events, providing materials and interpreters in multiple languages, and coordinating that support with attendees during the fair.

The best advice to replicate this event is to just do it. Taking a leap of faith in the name of creating inclusive and welcoming environments for families will always be worth it.