

Open House Game Nights

Las Animas Junior High & High School, Las Animas School District

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The goal for Las Animas Junior High and High School hosting open house game nights was to increase engagement from families & students at the beginning and the end of the year. The main goal of Game Nights was to get students and families interacting positively with school staff to build trusting relationships. The game nights provided an opportunity for informal conversations over a meal and game.

Because of a smaller percentage of engagement with the general “open house” night, the school principal brainstormed other ideas to drive engagement. One idea was for a Bingo Night in replacement of the traditional open house. The Building Leadership Team (BLT) discussed this idea and immediately started planning Bingo Night with dinner. The success of the Bingo Night in the Fall led to the BLT implementing another Open House Game Night in the Spring with La Loteria Night for Cinco De Mayo.



Both Open House Game Nights (Bingo Night & La Loteria Night) included all Junior High and High School staff. The night began with dinner for families and staff and the games running for over two hours. Staff shifted throughout the night from table to table to drive engagement with a variety of families. With the increase of engagement from students and their families, staff were able to have many informal and formal conversations. These events also provided an informal setting for relationships between staff and students to be seen by families.

This year, staff evaluated the Game Nights through attendance. However, the planning committee is already discussing how families can provide more intentional feedback in the future. The main challenge of Game Nights was finding an open date early and later in the year at the Junior High and High School to ensure all students and families had the opportunity to attend.

Advice to those looking to implement the practice would be to begin the planning stage early and break up responsibilities to ensure tasks are completed, but also to minimize stress levels. Using a game that people are familiar with was very important for Las Animas Junior and High School, and a large amount of prizes were donated by community partnerships which all helped to drive not only engagement, but also excitement around the events.