



Family Liaisons Build Trusting Relationships

Preston Middle School, Poudre School District

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At Preston Middle School in Poudre School District, building trusting relationships is a top priority. Staff have created a welcoming and inclusive environment where every student and family—regardless of ethnicity or background—is respected and supported by hiring a Family Liaison.

The Family Liaison served as a bridge between the school and families, especially those who speak a language other than English or who were unfamiliar with the educational system. By ensuring that all communication was translated accurately and delivered in a timely manner, the Family Liaison helped break down language and cultural barriers. Moreover, the Family Liaison helped promote culturally responsive practices and encouraged parent participation in school activities, decision-making processes, and student support initiatives.

Poudre School District's Language, Culture, and Equity Department played a critical role in ensuring that all families can communicate directly with school staff. By providing Preston with an Integrated Language Assistant (ILA) device for reliable translation, and with the dedicated support of the Family Liaison, language was never a barrier to connection. When the Family Liaison was unavailable, the school used the ILA to ensure effective communication in any language. The Principal held the front office to a high standard, requiring staff to be fully trained on the device and to coordinate closely with the Family Liaison. Spanish-speaking families, in particular, could count on consistent, clear communication and full engagement at every step. At Preston Middle School, staff training on these tools is a requirement.

When families understand school policies, events, and academic expectations, they are more likely to engage meaningfully in their child's education. Similarly, when teachers and administrators understand the needs and perspectives of families, they can provide more responsive and equitable support. At Preston Middle School, families were empowered to communicate with teachers, staff, and administrators using tools like emails, voice messages, and written notes in their native language. The Family Liaison ensured all messages were translated, keeping communication clear and accessible.