



# Relationship Building Calls

## Montrose County School District

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Montrose School District is partnering with the Rocky Mountain Family Engagement Collective (RMFEC) for a two-year cohort experience with the hopes to strengthen family engagement across the district. Montrose District trained 200 teachers over six sessions to build the capacity of the teaching staff. To set the tone for the new year, participating school principals set expectations for staff to conduct Relationship Building Calls.

School leaders worked with RMFEC to determine the capacity of their staff and how they would set expectations for relationship-based conversations. School leaders set schoolwide goals, planned collective learning sessions, and designed tracking systems for their building. This created alignment to leadership goals and embedded the work into annual staff learning plans.

Montrose educators completed the first professional learning session named “Building Trusting Relationships with Families,” which provided the framework for calls home. Using an [RMFEC resource](#) to help guide conversations, teachers connected with families in a new way. Instead of leaning on traditional connections focused on academic performance, grade level expectations, or their unique expertise as an educator, teachers took a new approach of centering the relationship and expressing a desire for partnership with the family. The ultimate goal was for the teacher to demonstrate their ability and willingness to listen to the family and learn what each family views as an asset in the coming year of learning.

Each school set goals for teachers and created a shared spreadsheet to track the calls and learning for each teacher. This allowed for principals to focus on specific areas they would like to improve. Principals then took the data to create check-ins and feedback loops from the learning to center the positive relationship from the beginning. Principals who led staff reflections noted, “staff has said calls were eye opening” and once teachers made a few calls, they continually wanted to do more. At Pomona Elementary School, 60% of teachers exceeded their goal of calls, indicating a shown value in the practice.

By having the calls embedded into the entire system, from district-school-teacher-family, the practice was adhered to and completed, rather than allowing champions to define and implement ad hoc. By setting clear goals, tracking, and effective ways to reflect on the learning, teachers really took to the practice and made it their own. Additionally, setting goals based on capacity and aligning to overall school goals made it feel obtainable and not ‘one more thing for teachers to do.’