

Family Centered Meetings Professional Development

Adams County School District 14

Commerce City, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Adams 14 school district serves 6,951 students. Over half of the student population are multilingual learners, with Spanish being their home language. During the 20-21 school year, a transdisciplinary team of professionals, serving in a variety of roles in the Adams 14 School District, participated in a year-long Family, School, and Community Partnering (FSCP) professional development (PD) program to improve relationships and supports for parents and their children. The PD included coursework, coaching with experts, team goal setting and action planning on improving assessment, preschool services, and supports for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The team shared the learning from this professional development program with Adams 14 staff by creating an asynchronous professional development opportunity on Family Centered Meeting Practices. There were three learning objectives for the PD: 1) to help participants gain an understanding of why family-centered and culturally sustaining meeting practices are important; 2) to reflect on their own meeting practices; and 3) to review strategies they can use to make their meetings more family-centered and culturally sustaining.

The asynchronous PD was offered as a choice option during a district-wide professional development day. Thirty-nine staff members chose to participate. Participants served in a variety of roles in preschool, elementary, high school, and district-level settings. The team chose to utilize an asynchronous format using Pear Deck because they wanted the session to be interactive and self-paced. This format allowed for the presentation to be available on the district learning website for use by staff members at any time.

The presentation content focused on defining and describing family-centered meetings and why they are important. The presenters described culturally sustaining meeting practices including working with interpreters and cultural mediators, family-centered strategies, and strategies to manage conflict. The team also highlighted family-centered evaluation practices for practitioners.

The PD team received positive feedback about the learning opportunity, not only the format and content, but also more importantly the changes in practices that participants wanted to make as a result of their learning. Participants were asked to share what strategies they planned to use to make their meetings more family centered. Examples of responses include: “Involving the family in all areas of assessment,” “Let families talk more,” “Use sentence stems to diminish conflict,” and “Ask families what their students do at home, and how they interact as a family.” Over 90% of the respondents felt that the session was useful and practical, and that the session advanced the development of their knowledge. Every respondent said that the activities increased their capacity to improve their practice.

One challenge the team encountered when implementing an asynchronous professional development was that it is difficult to create opportunities to collaborate on shared activities. In the future the team would like to provide follow-up synchronous discussions continued staff collaboration.

Adams 14 plans to use this work as a foundation for practice expectations in the early childhood program for home visiting practices Staff also hope that this PD will be replicated across the district to allow all interactions with families to be family-centered and culturally sustaining.

Essential Element 3—Design Capacity-Building Opportunities

Standard 3—Support Student Success