Building Family Partnerships Through Connection

Discovery High School, Widefield School District 3

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As part of its commitment to welcoming all families, Discovery High School (DHS) in Widefield School District 3 established a practice of personally interviewing every prospective student and family interested in attending the school. The goal of this practice was not to determine admission eligibility, but rather to help students and families determine whether Discovery was the best educational fit for their needs and goals.

The principal led the planning and implementation by conducting individual interviews with every prospective student and family. This provided families with a direct connection to school leadership, allowing them to ask questions, share concerns, and learn about the school's programs and expectations. Once students chose to enroll, teachers and support staff became actively involved through a student-parent-teacher orientation process.

During each interview, the principal took time to learn about the student's academic history, interests, goals, and challenges, as well as to provide families with information about the school's unique structure, flexible scheduling options, graduation pathways, and support systems. Families were encouraged to discuss their expectations and ask questions about the school experience. This approach allowed both the family and the school to determine whether DHS was the right fit. Following enrollment, students and families participated in a student-parent-teacher orientation where they met staff members, reviewed expectations, discussed academic goals, and learned about available resources.



This practice had a positive impact on student outcomes and school climate. Students began their DHS experience feeling known and supported, while families developed confidence in the school's commitment to their child's success. The strong relationships established through the interview and orientation process contributed to improved communication, increased family participation, stronger attendance, and greater student engagement.

Staff evaluated the effectiveness of this practice through family feedback, enrollment conversations, participation rates in orientation activities, and ongoing communication between families and school staff. Families consistently expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with the principal in person and learn about the school before making an enrollment decision. One challenge was accommodating the schedules of working families and students who enrolled throughout the school year. DHS addressed this challenge by offering flexibility in scheduling interviews and orientations. Moving forward, the school planned to incorporate more formal feedback surveys to better measure family satisfaction and the practice's long-term impact on student success.

For schools interested in replicating this practice, the key was for administrators to prioritize relationships before paperwork. As one family shared, "Before our student even started classes, we knew Discovery cared about us and wanted our child to succeed." A welcoming culture began with a genuine conversation, and that conversation could set the stage for lasting student success.