Praying and Fasting Club

Holly Hills/Holly Ridge Elementary School, Cherry Creek School District

Submitted by Najma Hassan, nhassan3@cherrycreekschools.org

Holly Hills is an elementary school that is a melting pot of students from many different backgrounds and cultures. The goal of the Praying and Fasting Club was to create a safe and welcoming space for Muslim students to pray and practice their religion during the school day.

The planning and implementation involved the community liaison, principal, library staff, students, and parents. Collaboration between school staff and administration helped create a comfortable and respectful environment for fasting students.

Discussions with the principal led to the creation of a space in the library for fasting students during Ramadan where students could get away from the temptations and smell of food in the cafeteria. Students used the library space to relax, participate in quiet activities, and learn more about Ramadan together. An activity table provided drawings, crossword puzzles, bracelets, and educational quizzes related to Ramadan and Islamic traditions. Instead of students wandering around during lunch with nothing to do, a structured and respectful environment was available where students felt comfortable and understood.

This practice positively impacted students by helping them feel seen, valued, and included in the school community. The practice also helped build confidence and belonging among Muslim students. Other students and staff became more aware of Ramadan and learned about different cultures and traditions. The practice supported a positive school climate by encouraging respect, inclusion, and cultural understanding among students and staff members.

The practice was evaluated mainly through feedback from students, parents, and staff members. Students shared that greater comfort was experienced during Ramadan because of the availability of a safe and quiet place during lunchtime. Parents expressed appreciation for the school recognizing and supporting religious practices. Staff members noticed that students participating in the program were more engaged and comfortable during the school day. No major challenges occurred during implementation because of the support provided by the principal and staff from the beginning. One small challenge was making sure students had enough activities to stay engaged during lunch, but this was addressed by preparing different educational and creative activities ahead of time.

For schools wanting to replicate this practice, communication with students and families was important to ensure everyone felt respected and included. Support from school leadership was also essential. Creating even a small safe space could make a meaningful difference for students.