Lew's Clues

Ryan Elementary School, Boulder Valley School District

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In a school that values strong partnerships between home and classroom, Lew's Clues was created to strengthen family engagement and support meaningful conversations about student learning. In Ryan Elementary's kindergarten classroom, families received one short daily "clue" that hinted at something their child learned or experienced during the school day.

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Planning and implementation of Lew's Clues were led within the kindergarten classroom. Each day, families received one short "clue" by email or through the TalkingPoints app that hinted at something about their child's school day. The clues were intentionally brief, playful, and specific to encourage curiosity and conversation. Examples included prompts such as, "Ask your child to show you how they used their bodies to measure the classroom," or "Have your child tell you about a character who solved a problem by sharing." Each clue was translated into the family's native language.

The practice supported student outcomes by encouraging children to recall, explain, and reflect on their learning experiences at home. These conversations strengthened oral language development, built vocabulary, and supported comprehension skills as students practiced retelling events and explaining their thinking. The routine also increased student confidence because children became the "expert" when sharing their learning with family members. In addition, Lew's Clues created consistent, low-pressure communication between home and school. Families gained a meaningful window into classroom learning, which helped build stronger relationships with the teacher.

The impact of Lew's Clues was evaluated informally through family feedback, student engagement, and the consistency of home-school communication throughout the year. Families frequently responded to clues, shared stories about conversations at home, and expressed appreciation for having a meaningful way to connect with their child's learning. Increased student enthusiasm and confidence when discussing classroom experiences also demonstrated the practice's positive effect. One challenge during implementation was maintaining consistency during especially busy school weeks while ensuring each clue remained thoughtful and connected to learning. Another challenge involved making communication accessible for all families, which was addressed through translation features in the TalkingPoints app. In the future, the practice could be evaluated more formally through family surveys, communication participation data, and reflection on student language and engagement growth over time.

Educators interested in replicating Lew's Clues should begin with simple, consistent communication that feels manageable and authentic. Short, specific prompts were often the most effective in sparking meaningful conversations at home. Prioritizing accessibility through translation tools, such as the TalkingPoints app, also helped ensure all families could participate.