Building Family-Educator Partnerships

New Vista High School, Boulder Valley School District

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This year, the Family and Educators Together (FET) team at New Vista High School in Boulder Valley School District focused on deepening trust, especially with new and Latino families. By aligning efforts around relationships first and information second, there was stronger participation, better coordination across parent groups, and more consistent engagement in learning.

To accomplish this, the FET Team centered weekly positive outreach. During weekly staff meetings, staff completed positive phone calls or emails to families. These strengths-based touch points reframed home–school communication around student growth and connection. The FET Team also reimagined New Families Welcome Night by replacing a presentation-heavy agenda with community-building circles and relational activities. Families met key staff and one another, shared hopes for the year, and left with clear next steps for staying involved. School information was streamlined into take-home resources and follow-up messages. To reach and reflect Latino families, the FET Team produced a short, bilingual promotional video featuring families. The video highlighted the school's values, how to get involved, and where to find help.

FET parents personally called other parents to invite them to meetings. This peer-to-peer outreach increased trust and turnout, especially for families who were newer to the school or preferred personal connections. For the first time, representatives from the School Accountability Committee (SAC), Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and FET met together to learn each group's role, coordinate calendars, and identify shared priorities. This created a unified family engagement ecosystem. Coordinating SAC, PTO, and FET clarified pathways for involvement and reduced mixed messages.

Through these relational practices, New Vista saw increased participation at FET meetings, with more first-time attendees and more families returning. Additionally, there was stronger representation of Latino families in meetings and feedback loops. Staff also logged more positive touch points with families.

To replicate these efforts, the school staff recommend building positive outreach into existing structures (e.g., 10 minutes in weekly staff meetings); flipping the script on welcome events by using circles and storytelling, and sending dense information as follow-ups; recruiting a small parent-calling team and providing simple scripts in families' home languages; evaluating progress by monitoring attendance, languages reached, and positive contacts; and celebrating small wins.

New Vista High School staff plan to sustain weekly positive outreach, host joint SAC/PTO/FET forums on priority topics families choose, and expand bilingual media. Together, families and educators built a school culture where relationships drove learning—and every voice helped lead the way.