Destination Graduation

Jeffco Public Schools

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Motivated by the district's aim to close opportunity gaps, Jeffco Public Schools' Destination Graduation initiative was designed to strengthen authentic academic partnerships. This opportunity prioritized helping all families understand grade-level expectations, curriculum standards, and how educators and families could partner together to improve academic outcomes and strengthen belonging for every student.

Planning and implementing this comprehensive initiative was centered on family voice first. Before mapping out the program, the district hosted a series of listening sessions to learn directly from families about which they truly wanted to learn more. With those crucial insights guiding the way, bringing the initiative to life required dedicated collaboration across multiple district departments. Key contributors involved in the planning included the Department of Federal Programs/Family and Community Partnerships Division, district educators, and subject matter experts.

Destination Graduation operated as a comprehensive series of milestone transition events specifically designed for families of students entering Kindergarten, Middle School, and High School. During these targeted sessions, educators provided families with practical toolkits, travel guides, and actionable guidance to support their child's developmental and academic journey. Families were familiarized with platforms like the Infinite Campus Parent Portal and Student Insights to successfully monitor academic progress. Families also learned about critical milestones, such as early literacy foundations in kindergarten and the importance of credit accumulation and time management beginning in ninth grade.



The initiative placed a heavy emphasis on emotional well-being and a positive school climate, teaching families that belonging was the necessary foundation that had to come before academic achievement. By giving families the resources to build learning habits and maintain communication with school counselors, the practice successfully integrated parents into the school improvement process, shifting their roles from simple problem solvers to collaborative academic coaches as their children grew.

The practice was evaluated following each transition event using a specific "Destination Graduation Feedback 2026" survey, accessed via a QR code provided at the end of the presentation. Feedback from families was positive. One attendee shared that they appreciated the resources and specific scripts provided to talk with their student about self-advocacy, as well as the general guidance on transitioning their role as a parent. During implementation, planners had to navigate several logistical challenges, including coordinating subject matter expert walkthroughs, managing RSVPs, organizing childcare, and ensuring that families received translated materials.

For any districts looking to replicate this model, the strategy was simple: it began with listening. Instead of guessing what families needed, planners invited them to the table first and allowed their feedback to guide the blueprint. The true value was realized when a program like this was treated as a launchpad for ongoing, long-term academic partnerships that kept families connected and supported all year round.