Family Literacy Night

O'Dea Elementary School, Poudre School District

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To connect families with library staff and to give parents ideas and information on how to keep students reading during the summer, O'Dea Elementary School hosted Family Literacy Night at the local library. In addition to supporting literacy once school was out, this event was an opportunity for school staff to meet and get to know families outside of the school building.

The family liaison worked with the principal, counselors, and English Language Development (ELD) teachers to invite library staff from the community to present on the resources available to help kids continue reading throughout the summertime. A library expert helped the families discover hidden gems in local branches, shared easy ways to make reading a part of their summer routine, and introduced them to the best family-friendly events happening in the community.

The night started off with an introduction of the school and library staff in attendance. Families were provided with a list of summer resources on mental health support, food resources, and contacts in the district that families could reach out to during the summer months. The library staff then provided numerous handouts informing families of all the summer programs they offered to help keep children reading when school was out. They also helped families get library cards on the spot. Attendees also received a meal to help make the event accessible and helpful to the whole family. Every family left with a set of literacy activities, as well as small take-home gifts to help promote literacy over the summer.

One way Family Literacy Night was evaluated was by library card sign-ups; every family that attended walked away with a card they could immediately use. A challenge was getting families to see the importance of attending an event like Family Literacy Night, and the benefits that it had for their child's education and learning.

Personal invitations were found to be a key to the event's success. Providing families with tangible resources to take home, such as library cards, was also highly important. Additionally, offering a meal for the attendees proved to be an excellent strategy.