Family Engagement Team

Chappelow K-8 Arts Magnet School, Greeley-Evans School District 6

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Guided by the Greeley-Evans School District 6 I-2030 Plan, staff at Chappelow K-8 Arts Magnet School aimed to strengthen relationships with families by establishing a Family Engagement Team. Rather than assuming the needs of families, the team prioritized active listening and open communication to build genuine partnerships that informed and created high-impact opportunities for student success.

CHAPPELOW K-8
ARTS MAGNET SCHOOL

To ensure this initiative was both inclusive and effective, the team was intentionally composed of diverse voices and professional roles. The team consisted of the parent and family advocate, one administrator, two teachers (elementary & middle school), two members of the mental health team, one classroom support staff member, and one office staff member.

Forming the Family Engagement Team began with the Parent and Family Advocate taking the initiative to present a formal vision to both the school administration and the entire staff. Building buy-in was a critical step, as it required recruiting members who were genuinely committed to the extra work of partnership. With the support of the District's Assistant Director of the Family Center & Cultural Excellence, the advocate utilized Professional Development (PD) presentations to recruit and align the team.

To model the "Listening First" approach, the team conducted empathy interviews across all grade levels to identify specific academic, social-emotional, and logistical needs. Families shared what they felt was most important for the school to do to help them support their children. These insights revealed that student success was tied to personalized communication and family confidence in navigating school technology, leading to the implementation of three strategies: Positive Contacts Home to build trust and celebrate student strengths; "Plug-In" Parent Support Sessions to provide hands-on tutorials for Infinite Campus and Schoology; and "Books with Dudes" literacy night to engage male role models in student learning. Together, these strategies transformed feedback into actionable partnership efforts.

Regarding implementation, the primary challenges centered on the foundational work required to establish the Family Engagement Team. Coordinating meeting times for a diverse group of eight staff members remained a logistical hurdle, but the team was solid and active. Moving forward, the next challenge lay in recruiting dedicated family members to join the core team and maintaining their long-term commitment to the ongoing planning and coordination of high-impact strategies.

For those looking to replicate this work, it is essential to create a space that represents and gives a voice to all families. Building a team like this requires patience and a genuine desire to understand the community's unique needs before jumping into planning.