Power of Community Partnerships

Englewood Schools

Submitted by Clarice Fortunato, clarice_fortunato@engschools.net

The primary objective of the "Power of Community" initiative was to integrate local community partners directly into the Englewood Schools Family Resource Center (FRC) during its monthly open houses. Englewood serves a substantial number of highly mobile and economically vulnerable families. With the FRC's monthly basic-needs distributions already highly attended, there was a natural opportunity to meet parents exactly where they were.

Planning was led by the FRC team: the District Family, School, Community Partnership/McKinney-Vento Coordinator, the dedicated McKinney-Vento Specialist, and the district CLDE Family Liaison. Externally, a coalition of agency partners committed staff resources; this included the Colorado Economic Defense Project to administer immediate emergency housing aid, Doctors Care to resolve Medicaid questions, representatives from local holiday gift programs, the Colorado State University Extension to sign up families for nutrition and health workshops, the local public library to coordinate summer literacy opportunities, and many more.

During the monthly open houses, the FRC was arranged to blend direct basic-needs shopping with low-barrier intake tables staffed by community partners and non-profit organizations. As families selected clothing, food, and essential items, they could engage with different representatives who provided on-the-spot information and assistance. When a family secured rental assistance or health insurance, student chronic absenteeism dropped significantly because underlying structural disruptions were mitigated before they impacted the classroom. The practice cultivated a profound sense of district trust and communal belonging, reassuring families that their schools were safe, holistic centers of comprehensive care.



The initiative was evaluated using a mixed-methods approach that paired internal data tracking systems with qualitative community metrics. By cross-referencing FRC attendance logs with the district's student information database, the data analyst tracked long-term impacts on student attendance and stability. This analysis revealed that a record 823 families utilized the resource center during that school year alone, with 34% identifying as active McKinney-Vento participants. Despite these attendance successes, tracking the final outcomes of families referred to external community partners proved challenging; while it was confirmed that families initially reached out to these agencies, the results of those external support services could not be verified.

For districts looking to replicate this practice, organizers recommend establishing baseline data and clear partner agreements early in the school year. The focus was placed on building sustainable, relationship-driven partnerships rather than simple, one-time item distributions. Bringing multiple community resources together under one roof created an impact that single agencies could not match alone.

A school secretary closely involved in the process reflected on this success: "The true power of this practice was seeing a father come into the resource center planning to relocate due to housing instability, and leave with rental assistance, a summer reading plan for his boys, and a renewed determination to keep his children enrolled in the district's schools."