

Community Resource Rooms

Adams 12 Five Star Schools

Thornton, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Adams 12 Five Star Schools is the sixth largest school district in Colorado, serving students across five municipalities and two counties. Approximately 45% of students receive free or reduced meals and 4% of the overall student population is identified as “highly mobile.” The recent pandemic worsened already persistent challenges of poverty and housing insecurity for Adams 12 families, and in the 20-21 school year, referrals to the Student and Family Outreach Program (SFOP) increased over 500%.



The Five Star Education Foundation received a \$175,000 grant from Adams County to install resource rooms in 27 schools. A team of district staff, including the Federal Programs Coordinator, the SFOP team, and the Parent Engagement Coordinator, worked with the administrative teams, social-emotional learning specialists, and community liaison at each school to quickly identify space, personnel, and the most needed resources (many schools surveyed their communities to identify this information). The team purchased and installed shelving, organized inventory, and developed communication and distribution plans. Additional grant funding obtained once again by the Foundation enabled schools to continue making food purchases. The local non-profit Food for Hope supported several of the resource rooms as well.

Each school’s resource room is completely unique to the needs of their community, but in general, the rooms are stocked with shelf-stable food, hygiene items, diapers, socks, underwear, cleaning supplies, school supplies, and winter wear. Some schools also added shoes, linens, water bottles, air mattresses, and earbuds. Immediately following the winter break, SFOP saw a dramatic decrease in referrals for basic needs, allowing the SFOP team to focus on acute referrals for health insurance, access to medical and dental care, and housing, rental, and utility assistance. School teams and resource room managers reported an increase in positive school climate and culture as well as positive interactions with families.

Challenges to the program have included the increased workload for resource room managers), problem solving with families who have become overly reliant on the room, marketing to communities that are reluctant to use the room, and finding funds to continue stocking non-food items. Starting the resource rooms in a short window and at such a large scale also created a lot of pressure. The team’s advice to others wanting to replicate the rooms would be to take more time to look at existing models for school resource rooms and speak with others about the lessons they have learned.

