

Parent Liaison

Lewis Palmer School District
Monument, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Establishing communication and relationships with families whose students receive Special Education services can often be a challenge for schools. To improve the outcomes of students in Special Education and increase home-school communication, the Lewis Palmer School District created the Parent Liaison program. A liaison from the school district is provided to support families of students with disabilities and some families of students in general education who need additional support; these may include families of students who are going through the Response to Intervention process.

The goal of the liaison is to work with families who are experiencing challenges in communicating with their children's education teams, and provide families with additional information they may need. The liaison attends IEP meetings, team meetings, and teacher-family meetings and can provide mediation, facilitate meetings, and work to bring stakeholders together to support students. Additionally, the liaison works with staff to provide guidance about how to communicate effectively with families.

In addition to the individualized support that the liaison provides the families, the program also includes parent support network coffees and Special Education Advisory Committee meetings. The parent support network coffees are monthly events in which family members are invited to share their concerns, find support, and meet other family members. The parent liaison facilitates discussion and provides answers to any specific questions. The Special Education Advisory Committee holds monthly meetings that families are invited to attend in order to learn about initiatives and policies that affect Special Education.

The Parent Liaison helps to support student outcomes through partnering in a variety of ways. The position helps to increase family involvement in education, and also works to increase and improve communication between families and schools. It helps to build capacity within families to work together and with school teams in order to support student behavior and academic outcomes. Additionally, as relationships improve through the liaison's work, better attendance and academic performance can be seen from students. Finally, Special Education meetings and processes become less confusing to families, helping to increase their ability to participate.

In Lewis Palmer, the Parent Liaison is a position that is evolving – what started as a 10-hour per week position is now full-time. As stakeholders provide feedback, the district is able to shift or change the type of support families and educators need.