

International Night: A Community Celebration

Everitt Middle School

Wheat Ridge, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

The Wheat Ridge area schools are a community that over the years has been strengthened and committed to creating an environment of unity and learning. Students, staff, families, and community partners have worked hard to create unforgettable learning events in Wheat Ridge. Wheat Ridge community schools strive to highlight diversity, equity, and inclusion within the community and be part of the #bettertogether movement advocating for strong and innovative communities. These schools serve a diverse population of families, each with their own strengths and abilities that enhance the community. Therefore, the goal of International Night was to promote inclusivity, diversity, and equity while strengthening relationships among families, students, staff, and the community.



For the third consecutive year, area schools: Kullerstrand, Wilmore-Davis, Stevens, Stober, Prospect Valley, and Wheat Ridge High school collaborated with Everitt Middle School to create a night of learning and celebration of cultures, called International Night: A Community Celebration. A representative from each school and the PTA met monthly to plan what is considered to be the best event in the community.

International Night is an event that represents unity, commitment, and strength. This event is a collaboration of families, school staff, and students from each school. Representing their story in a series of presentation tables, each shared their beautiful culture and traditions with the community. International Night also provides the opportunity to collaborate with area businesses and restaurants that share their rich and diverse food with the community. Service organizations that played a very important role in making this a successful event included the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Optimist Clubs.

Subsequently, this community event started as a Project Based/Problem Based Learning (PBL) created by the Spanish teacher and the Family Engagement Liaison during the 2019-2020 school year at Everitt Middle School. The event was originally led by the Spanish classes and then expanded with the collaboration of community members over the years. The original goal was to connect students with the community and help students understand the importance of being bilingual in today's world. As the event grew it encouraged the community to learn from each other, celebrate everyone's story, and create strong bonds within the community. The success and implementation of the program is evaluated by student, family, and community participation. However, the program will need to look at a larger event space due to the high number of participants.



This is a great practice to bring the community together and create strong relationships among students, families, and staff. It is crucial to create a planning committee that represents all voices in the community. This committee needs to focus on a goal that reflects the diversity, equity, and inclusion of the community. It is essential that the committee starts having these conversations at the beginning of the school year and share common responsibilities. This will allow for changes as needed and the creation of more creative ideas along the way.