

# Partnerships to Support Mental Health

Alameda Jr/Sr High School

Lakewood, CO



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Alameda Jr/St High School, a Jeffco public school, hosts regular meetings with families. During the 2018-19 school year, the two Family Engagement Liaisons asked families about their greatest concerns regarding their children’s success, both academically and behaviorally. Alameda families overwhelmingly identified the need to focus on improving the mental health of both students and families. The two liaisons, along with families, identified a group of professional partners with whom to work. In addition to mental health, Alameda staff also provided information about life after high school. The goal of the monthly meetings was to enrich Alameda families with knowledge so that they can better support their children outside of school.

Multiple staff, families, and community partners lead the meeting discussions. Topics of the meetings included:

**Social Emotional Learning**—guest speaker Jaime Brenner focused on anxiety, depression, bullying, and self-esteem. Parents shared personal information and genuine concern in regards to these real life challenges that students face daily.

**Gear Up**—Craig Pena and Desaire Wheeler discussed student support beyond high school. They provided information about transition to college, including how to apply for college, undocumented college support, FAFSA, trade school information, and existing scholarships and grants. This service helped parents understand the process of college applications and how they can support their college student goals for student success.

**Health**—Rosa Nunez, a parent leader at Alameda, introduced the Family Engagement Liaisons to Gina Millan. Gina comes from the same background and has experienced many of the same issues as Alameda parents. She shared how parents can talk to their children about sex, drugs, and how to approach the topics according to their age.

Families who attend these meetings were consistent and actively participated in the discussions. Their attendance and feedback indicated that these classes made a difference in their lives and the lives of the children.

One participant commented: “Working with our Family Liaisons and several mothers of current Alameda students this year was a special and unforgettable experience. I learned so much from the strength they exhibit daily due to life experiences they, and sometimes their children, endure. It was evident each month that their strength and resilience grew, and with this was the desire to create the best life possible for their family. Together we talked about significant issues impacting their children and how to best support and connect with them. I look forward to talking more with them in the years to come.”