

Lift Every Voice

Englewood Middle School

Englewood, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Englewood Middle School (EMS) is participating in the Lift Every Voice (LEV) curriculum as part of a school-wide family and community engagement strategy. With a poverty rate of 66%, EMS is considered a Title I school and serves 330 students, 50% of whom are minorities. Students from low income and minority groups often lack access to and representation in the arts. The main goal of LEV at EMS is to support middle school students in finding their voices and showcasing them through the arts.



The LEV curriculum was developed by the Colorado Symphony's Department of Community Education and adopted by EMS in the spring of 2021. Delivering a message of unity, social justice, and creative self-expression by showcasing diverse backgrounds, students are able to see themselves in the music and begin exploring their own musical identities through the curriculum. This resonated with the principal, Annessa Hart, and the assistant principal, Erin Stovall. Annessa and Erin connected with the Colorado Symphony's Director of Community Education, Jesse Martinez. Together they brainstormed ideas to implement the program at EMS. Staff received professional development to prepare them to implement the curriculum.

In its pilot year, the practice culminated in a unique, socially distanced, and engaging community event where student work was displayed and celebrated. Even with a pandemic looming, the event had a great turnout and was precisely what students, families, and staff needed to bring closure to an unprecedented school year.



To date, EMS staff evaluated the practice anecdotally through student and family engagement. The greatest challenges were in finding safe public ways to celebrate the students amid the pandemic.

EMS's advice to others wanting to replicate the curriculum is to think outside the box when it comes to family and community engagement. A small investment in a practice such as Lift Every Voice will have a lasting impact on the school's relationship with students and their families.