

Professional Learning Opportunities Video Transcript

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Krista Mecham: I teach a professionalism and family engagement course for teachers in my district in collaboration with Southern Utah University. Recognizing that family engagement is a critical factor in student success, this course is designed to share culturally and linguistically responsive tools that support educators as they strengthen their partnerships with families and encourage families to engage with both the school and the broader community. Offering this course helps break down barriers to professional learning and advancement for educators seeking an ESL endorsement, with a special focus on supporting multilingual learners and their families. By addressing effective communication strategies, proper use of interpreters, ways to involve families from diverse communities, and ensuring families can access vital school information such as procedures and events, this course empowers educators to create more inclusive and supportive school communities. Topics we have in this course to ensure that teachers are serving all multilingual families and have a culturally and linguistically responsive approach include, one, neighborhood walks and asset mapping in the communities where multilingual families live. Two, a review of what's already on their school website for families with a specific lens of responsiveness for the multilingual families. And three, creating a family guidebook focused on multilingual learner families. Participation in this course has led to meaningful changes in how teachers and schools engage with their communities. Teachers have created more inclusive community nights to ensure information is accessible to all families, and schools have taken steps such as hiring interpreters to support multilingual communication. There has also been an increase in creativity around utilizing volunteers and organizing parent-teacher conferences, making these events more welcoming, effective, and accommodating. Additionally, educators have become more intentional about inviting multilingual learner families to participate in the PTA and school community councils, fostering a more inclusive and collaborative school environment.