

Escuela para Padres

Durango School District 9-R

Durango, CO



Escuela para Padres was launched in Durango 9-R to support Spanish-speaking families in better understanding school resources, programs, and practices and to increase their engagement. The goal of Escuela para Padres is to positively transform the future of children and youth, improving their present through intelligent, informed and conscious family education.

Escuela para Padres was organized and implemented as a joint effort between the Parent Liaison and Principals of both Park Elementary and Escalante Middle School. Together, they were responsible for planning monthly meetings, personally inviting families, and arranging guest speakers from the school district, community organizations, and the local college.

Staff survey parents about topics they would like to learn more about and issues they are having with their children or in their own lives. Sessions were chosen based on parents' concerns and interests as well as addressing topics that help demystify the U.S. school system. The intent is always to provide parents with



information and practical tools to be proactive participants in their children's academic success and personal growth. Based on these planning inputs, ninety-minute Escuela para Padres sessions were held each month, with the host location alternating between the two schools.

Each session started with a presentation. Parents had the opportunity to ask related questions, share ideas, and actively participate. School principals have used these gatherings to host problem solving sessions with Spanish-speaking families. To increase access and welcome families, interpretation, childcare, and

dinner were provided at every session. Topics have included understanding the school system, leadership, English language acquisition, Special Education, bullying and cyberbullying, drugs, emotional regulation and health, positive parenting, school safety, chronic absences, college scholarship workshops, and how to monitor your child's grades and attendance.

The program was evaluated by gathering regular parent feedback through surveys and parent interviews as well as tracking parent participation levels. Qualitative data demonstrated that parents were deeply satisfied with this program. Additionally, parent participation has continued to remain strong. While the results were positive, there have been challenges. At times it was difficult to locate a guest speaker for certain topics suggested by parents. Also, holding sessions in the evening, while helpful for parents, meant that families attended after a hard day's work.

To implement an Escuela para Padres program, Durango 9-R advises districts to learn about their families' various cultures and educational systems of the different countries. This enables the district to share information tailored to their families. Critical to success was also actively involving families in choosing topics so that their needs were met and they felt heard and valued. Personal outreach to families was also key to success.

Speaking to the success of the program, Escalante Middle School principal Emily Moreland shared that, "The addition of Escuela Para Padres in our school has dramatically increased the number of our multilingual families participating in conferences and school events. It helps to break down walls and build a sense of community with traditionally underserved populations."