

Spanish Classes for Students

Mesa Elementary School

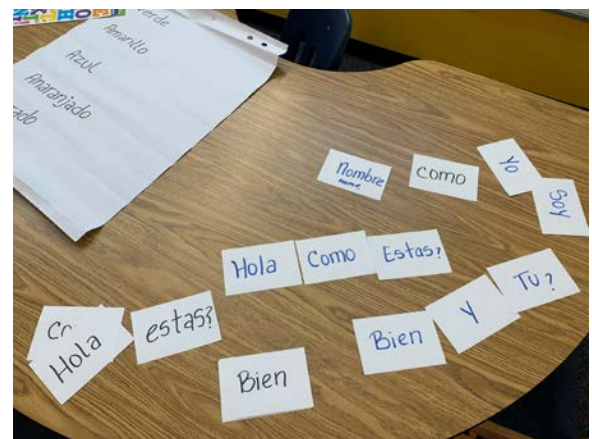
Boulder, CO



Mesa Elementary School started the year with big ideas! One of those ideas was born out of the recognition that language acquisition is an incredibly valuable skill that enhances cognitive development, improving problem-solving skills, memory, and creativity. It also enables better communication and understanding of different cultures, fostering empathy and social integration, to name just a few. The Families and Educators Together (FET) Team was moved by the question, “How can we bring Spanish to our school now?”

Even though the idea of Spanish classes was initiated by FET families, they surveyed the rest of the school to gauge interest. A total of 50 families out of 241 responded positively. One family referred Mesa Principal Josh Baldner to local language school Boulder Spanish, and a program was designed with them to implement in the second semester. This planning took about one month.

The 2023-2024 Spanish offering at Mesa was composed of six classes over 12 weeks, divided by day, time, grade, and language level. The contract with Boulder Spanish outlined that they would use Mesa’s facilities and manage all communication with families. One of the FET leaders supervised how the program was running, observed the classes, and kept a close dialogue with the Spanish teachers. This ongoing dialogue was crucial in making sure teachers understood the dynamics and needs of elementary level students, as well as solving real concerns around neurodiverse students in their classroom and how to better support them. The result was a productive partnership that allowed Mesa to adjust strategy, materials, and content along the way, designing a program that was engaging and successful for the Introductory level of Spanish, as well as reinforcing and deepening skills at the Intermediate level. After each class, teachers communicated directly with parents describing what was covered as well as offering electronic options for homework. After observing most of the classes, the FET team was able to determine that, in general, the students found the content exciting, were able to interact with vocabulary many times, and overall had a great time.



Throughout the program, the FET team kept a close eye on how the program was running. For example, they spoke directly with some of the parents about how their children were feeling about Spanish, if they were using the materials at home, and how they felt going to the classes. At the end of the program, families completed a short survey for Boulder Spanish. The results of the survey were very positive, with most families sharing they would like to continue in the next school year, some wishing there were more printed options for homework, and overall observing their children had shown progress after the completion of the program.

Mesa Elementary considered this first implementation a success. Looking ahead to 2024-2025, Mesa expects to offer Spanish classes again, ideally working again with Boulder Spanish, though refining content and focusing on conversation and more cultural exposure to the language.