

Castle View High School in Douglas County, Colorado created a program called ¡Échale Ganas! aimed at educating students and parents on school processes and post-secondary readiness. Staff at the school noticed that migrant students showed low to no motivation to complete high school due to their migratory status. These students expressed that they would like to go to college or pursue post-secondary options but didn't know how to pay for it or if they could even attend. To meet these needs, ¡Échale Ganas! was born.

¡Échale Ganas! was created by the cultural liaison and the Spanish teacher, with collaboration from administrators and counselors at Castle View High School. The cultural liaison conducted research on existing programs and the Spanish teacher focused on approaching academics from a parental lens. The ¡Échale Ganas! program is conducted entirely in Spanish, with interpretation when needed. The goal is to create a welcoming environment where parents and students feel they can ask questions.

Each session is divided into various topics that will help educate families. Guest speakers are brought in to discuss school processes, such as what it means to take an AP class, what the requirements are for high school graduation, and the beginning steps of college payment options. Research was conducted in all these areas to ensure that the information provided to families and students is current and correct.

Each topic is paired with an activity parents are encouraged to complete with their students, as well as an opportunity to ask the speakers questions. There is also a moment called "consejos" when parents can either give advice to other parents and students or students can give advice to their parents or other students. In one of the meetings of ¡Échale Ganas! a panel of Castle View alumni were invited to share their post-secondary experiences. At another meeting, participants heard from a college admissions counselor who had experience working with DACA and undocumented students.



As a result of this work, parents are willing to ask questions and seek guidance on available resources. Session topics have also included the [Colorado ASCENT program](#) and the benefits of the [ASSET legislation](#). Students have been able to access these resources, and several have been accepted into these different programs.

Since the practice is new, there were several logistical challenges, such as what times would be most beneficial for families, if dinner could be provided, and how to locate resources. The team decided to offer a pizza dinner with gluten free options for families as well as scheduling meetings from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm as this is after work for many of the families. No formal evaluation has been conducted; however, attendance as well as returning participants indicated success.

There are some considerations that should be thought through when replicating this practice. The needs of the audience must be considered. What does the work week look like for families? Is dinner going to be provided? If so, what culturally responsive dinners can be provided? Tap into the parent leaders at the school. Consider who would be appropriate guest speakers and elevate the parent voice through "consejos." In that same vein of thought, choose topics based on feedback from the participants.