

Expedicion Comunitaria

Glenwood Springs Elementary School

Glenwood Springs, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Glenwood Springs Elementary School (GSES) developed its Expedicion Comunitaria to encourage trusting relationships between staff and families. This partnership will also model for all that the school staff value character development, leadership and an ethic of service. Students will see that GSES truly models its motto of, “We are crew, not passengers.” They are all in this together and everyone is valued.

This project is supported and led by the Manus Fund (Valley Settlement Project) as a way to get parents of under-represented populations integrated into the school community. In December 2014, all staff members embarked on an effort to also reach local businesses. Teachers visited all local businesses and made connections that help provide the school with local experts, guest speakers, and general supporters of the school.

Each year GSES conducts an Expeditionary Learning Implementation Review. This is a comprehensive tool with 26 rubrics that measure all aspects of school operations. One of these rubrics involves partnerships with families and communities. Over the past two years, this indicator has consistently scored below the proficient mark (a 2 out of 5). This data coupled with annual school perception data (administered by Roaring Fork School District) indicated that there is a need to increase partnerships with families. The data showed a need to address concerns in the following areas:

- Families need to be invited, and consistently supported, to participate in school events through multiple (3 or more) strategies (e.g. scheduling events outside of school day, assisting with transportation, providing translators).
- The school needs to provide multiple (3 or more) ways that families can participate in the school community (e.g., governance, tutoring, classroom experts, portfolio panelists), and most efforts are successful.
- School leaders and teachers need to learn about and respect the cultures, backgrounds, and values of their students' families.
- School communications need to consistently and effectively welcome and accommodate linguistic and cultural differences.

Glenwood Springs Elementary addressed the survey results by building staff understanding of equality vs. equity. This staff learning expedition focused on better understanding their own cultural backgrounds as well as the culture in which GSES is nestled. Neighborhood walks and “Dinner with Friends” were some of the activities that helped school staff and families build trusting relationships, which will ultimately support student learning.