



*How to Organize a Schoolwide,  
Local, Regional or Statewide  
Spanish Spelling Bee*





Greetings from New Mexico and from the New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education.

It is with great pleasure that we present you with this simple guide on how to organize a school, regional or state Spanish spelling bee. NMABE has sponsored a statewide Spanish spelling bee since 1994 and we are proud to say that we are the primary organizers of the National Spanish Spelling Bee. The inaugural event was held at the Albuquerque National Hispanic Cultural Center on July 9, 2011.

We hope that this guide will assist you in the organization of a Spanish spelling bee at your school, region or state. Additionally, we hope that your organization will choose to send your winner to any future National Spanish Spelling Bee.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. I can be reached by e-mail at [nmabe@suddenlink.net](mailto:nmabe@suddenlink.net) or by phone at 505-238-6812 (please leave a message if I am unable to answer). I have organized these events at all levels and can provide answers to most of your questions.

David Briseño

NMABE Executive Director and National Spanish Spelling Bee Founder

## Getting Started

Regardless of the level of the competition you are organizing, here are a few things that you need to be aware of if your intent is to send your winner to the national competition.

1. Fourth through Eighth Grade students are eligible to compete at the national level.
2. The National Spanish Spelling Bee Booklet should be used at all levels of the competition. This booklet is available on-line and free of charge at [www.nationalspanishspellingbee.com](http://www.nationalspanishspellingbee.com). Please download the document and make as many copies as you need for your students.
3. Keep in mind that the sponsoring organization will be responsible for paying the:
  - National Spanish Spelling Bee registration fee (\$250) ;
  - Travel and lodging expenses of the winner/participant; and
  - Travel and lodging expenses (if the organization so chooses) for anyone who accompanies the student to the national event.

The host agency will arrange for some great rates at a host hotel(s). Once your representatives and anyone who has accompanied them arrive in the host city, we will take care of meals beginning Friday lunch and Saturday lunch and dinner.

Lastly, the National Spanish Spelling Bee is in its simplest form a competition. The format used in this event is one that has been used in New Mexico since 1994, and one that has served us well. As this event grows, we recognize that it will evolve and most likely see changes that will contribute to the excitement and enjoyment of the participants. With that spirit in mind, we invite you to provide us with constructive ideas towards this end.

Your comments and suggestions can be directed to me at [nssbsa@gmail.com](mailto:nssbsa@gmail.com)

# Organizing a Spanish Spelling Bee at Your School

**This is the simplest event to organize because you only have to get buy in from the principal, teachers and parents at your school. There are basic steps to organizing a Spanish spelling bee regardless of the level. The steps are as follows:**

1. Set a date for the competition.
2. Download the Spanish Spelling Bee Booklet and make as many copies as you need for distribution to your students.
3. Establish a registration procedure to participate in the event. This is especially essential as you begin organizing district, regional and state events.
4. Recruit as many spellers as possible for your event!!!
5. Establish a procedure to determine the order of spelling. In New Mexico, we determine the number of students who have registered and then make up the same number of cards with the numbers printed on them. The cards are placed face down on a table and each student must select a card as they sign in at the registration table. This becomes their “place” in the spelling bee competition. You can also create a list in an Excel document and randomize the list.
6. Recruit volunteers to assist you with:
  - a. **Registration** – This is where your participants sign in for the event. One registration table will be for participants and the other table for the coaches. The coaches will be seated in a reserved section in the audience.
  - b. **Master or Mistress of Ceremonies** – This individual introduces everyone, reviews the rules of the competition with the audience, and at the end of the competition presents the winners to those in attendance.
  - c. **Pronouncer** – This individual should have native fluency, a pleasing voice and superior enunciation skills in Spanish.
  - d. **Judges** – These 3 to 4 individuals will determine whether or not the word is spelled correctly and will make a final ruling on all protests. Their judgment is final.

- e. **Audio Visual Staff** – These individuals will monitor all AV and recording equipment. The contest will be recorded and this recording will be used by the judges should a protest be lodged. The judges will review the recording and will make a ruling as to whether or not the word was spelled correctly or incorrectly.  
**IT IS OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT NO PROTESTS BE ALLOWED AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL.**

After your school holds its competition then your winner(s) should be prepared to move on to the next level. That will either be your district event, your regional or state event or because we are just starting out, to the National Spanish Spelling Bee.

### **ORGANIZING A DISTRICTWIDE EVENT**

**The organization of a districtwide event is basically the same as organizing a schoolwide event. The difference is that you are recruiting schools to participate and each school must commit to holding its own event. Each district must then determine how many participants will be allowed from each school. In the district I worked with, we allowed the top 3 winners from each school to participate in the district competition. Here are the steps:**

1. Set a date for the competition.
2. Download the Spanish Spelling Bee Booklet and make as many copies as you need for distribution to your students.
3. Establish a registration procedure to participate in the event. This is especially essential as you begin organizing district, regional and state events. It is at this level that we recommend that you include a registration process for the coaches. It is the coach who has the sole authority to lodge a protest during the competition should they believe that the judges have ruled incorrectly.
4. Recruit as many schools as you can to participate in your event!!!
7. Establish a procedure to determine the order of spelling. In New Mexico, we determine the number of students who have registered and then make up the same number of cards with the numbers printed on them. The cards are placed face down on a table and each student must select a card as they sign in at the registration table. This becomes their

“place” in the spelling bee competition. You can also create a list in an Excel document and randomize the list.

8. Recruit volunteers to assist you with:
  - a. **Registration** – This is where your participants sign in for the event. One registration table will be for participants and the other table for the coaches. The coaches will be seated in a reserved section in the audience.
  - b. **Master or Mistress of Ceremonies** – This individual introduces everyone, reviews the rules of the competition with the audience, and at the end of the competition presents the winners to those in attendance.
  - c. **Pronouncer** – This individual should have native fluency, a pleasing voice and superior enunciation skills in Spanish.
  - d. **Judges** – These 3 to 4 individuals will determine whether or not the word is spelled correctly and will make a final ruling on all protests. Their judgment is final.
  - e. **Audio Visual Staff** – These individuals will monitor all AV and recording equipment. The contest will be recorded and this recording will be used by the judges should a protest be lodged. The judges will review the recording and will make a ruling as to whether or not the word was spelled correctly or incorrectly.
  - f. **Protest Monitors** – These one to two individuals will monitor the coach section and will alert the judges, AV staff and spelling bee staff that a protest has been lodged. This is extremely important because the protest must be lodged before the next contestant is given a word to spell.
  - g. **Crowd Monitors** – These volunteers need to have great people skills. There are certain rules of etiquette (no cell phones, no flash cameras or video equipment, excess noise i.e. crying babies, stay seated during the competition, etc.) required of the audience and these individuals help to monitor and enforce this.

After your district holds its competition then your winner(s) should be prepared to move on to the next level. That will either be your regional or state event or because we are just starting out, to the National Spanish Spelling Bee.

## **ORGANIZING A REGIONAL OR STATEWIDE EVENT**

**The organization of a regional or statewide event is very similar to organizing a district event. Instead of schools, you will have multiple charter schools and districts involved. In New Mexico, we allow charter schools to send their winner directly to the NMABE State Spanish Spelling Bee. The difference is that you are recruiting charter schools and school districts to participate and each charter school and school district must commit to holding its own event. Each region/state must then determine how many participants will be allowed from each school. In New Mexico, we only allow the winner from each district or charter school to participate in the competition. Here are the steps:**

1. Set a date for the competition.
2. Download the Spanish Spelling Bee Booklet and make as many copies as you need for distribution to your students.
3. Establish a registration procedure to participate in the event. This is especially essential as you begin organizing district, regional and state events. Set a date for the competition.
4. Establish a registration procedure to participate in the event. This is especially essential as you begin organizing district, regional and state events. It is at this level that we recommend that you include a coach registration. It is the coach who has the sole authority to lodge a protest during the competition should they believe that the judges have ruled incorrectly.
5. Recruit as many charter schools and districts as you can to participate in your event!!!
6. Establish a procedure to determine the order of spelling. In New Mexico, we determine the number of students who have registered and then make up the same number of cards with the numbers printed on them. The cards are placed face down on a table and each student must select a card as they sign in at the registration table. This becomes their “place” in the spelling bee competition. You can also create a list in an Excel document and randomize the list.
7. Recruit volunteers to assist you with:

- a. **Registration** – This is where your participants sign in for the event. One registration table will be for participants and the other table for the sponsors. The sponsors will be seated in a reserved section in the audience.
- b. **Master or Mistress of Ceremonies** – This individual introduces everyone, reviews the rules of the competition with the audience, and at the end of the competition presents the winners to those in attendance.
- c. **Pronouncer** – This individual should have native fluency, a pleasing voice and superior enunciation skills in Spanish.
- d. **Judges** – These 3 to 4 individuals will determine whether or not the word is spelled correctly and will make a final ruling on all protests. Their judgment is final.
- e. **Audio Visual Staff** – These individuals will monitor all AV and recording equipment. The contest will be recorded and this recording will be used by the judges should a protest be lodged. The judges will review the recording and will make a ruling as to whether or not the word was spelled correctly or incorrectly.
- f. **Protest Monitors** – These one to two individuals will monitor the coach section and will alert the judges, AV staff and spelling bee staff that a protest has been lodged. This is extremely important because the protest must be lodged before the next contestant is given a word to spell.
- g. **Crowd Monitors** – These volunteers need to have great people skills. There are certain rules of etiquette (no cell phones, no flash cameras or video equipment, excess noise i.e. crying babies, stay seated during the competition, etc.) required of the audience and these individuals help to monitor and enforce this.

After you hold your regional or state competition, then your next step should be to prepare your winner for the national competition. Next step will be to set up a budget and a fundraising plan. To assist you with that, I've put together a budget for you to build on.



## National Spanish Spelling Bee Sponsor Budget

Travel Expenses (airfare, mileage, some meal money. Please note that the National Spanish Spelling Bee Host will provide meals for the contestants and their families beginning with the lunch on Friday (Friday dinner is on your own) and lunch and dinner on Saturday. The host organization will do what they can to identify a host hotel that provides breakfast.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount Budgeted</b>
Air Fare (this will vary)	
Lodging	
Meals (for travel days and dinner on Friday)	