

News Release

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SHAHELI DE SILVA FROM EPISD TRIUMPHS IN THE 2026 ESC19 REGIONAL SPANISH SPELLING BEE

El Paso, Texas (February 7, 2026) – In a spellbinding showcase of linguistic skill, Shaheli De Silva from Young Women's STEAM Research Preparatory Academy emerged victorious after 15 rounds at the ESC19 Regional Spanish Spelling Bee on February 7. Not far behind, Emiliano Ferran Martínez Caloca from Wiggs Middle School secured second place, both shining representatives of the El Paso Independent School District.

Twenty-five students, spanning from 4th to 8th grade and hailing from various school districts and charter schools across the region, converged at the Education Service Center Region 19 for this exhilarating competition. The top 5 competitors secured their spots to vie for glory at the Texas State Spanish Spelling Bee on June 4, 2026, at the Starlight Event Center, 6650 Continental Drive.

Dr. José A. Velázquez, Director of ESC19 Academic Instruction and School Support, expressed the deeper significance of such events, stating, "Participating in the Spanish spelling bees is more than just a competition; it's an enriching experience that fosters self-confidence and cultural exchange. This journey is not just for students but extends to teachers and families, creating a shared adventure that celebrates language, learning, and community. Students walk away with valuable skills and lasting memories, having met peers from diverse backgrounds."

Silvia Zacarias, ESC19 Professional Development Consultant and SSB organizer, commended the participants, remarking, "Today's regional Spanish spelling bee showcased an exceptional display of high academic rigor and professionalism from our students. Their remarkable command of Spanish and dedication to excellence exemplify true champions. We are immensely proud of each participant for their outstanding performance. ¡Todos son campeones de deletreo!"

The accolades were richly deserved. Every participant was recognized for their efforts with medals, certificates and gift cards from Barnes & Noble.

1st Place: Shaheli De Silva, El Paso ISD
2nd Place: Ferran Martínez Caloca, El Paso ISD
3rd Place: Constanza Garcia, Canutillo ISD
4th Place: Ivanna Scarlett Galvan Gonzalez, La Fe Preparatory
5th Place: Rebeka Cuevas, Vista Del Futuro

For those interested in sponsorship opportunities or participation in the 2026 Texas State Spanish Spelling Bee, event contacts are as follows: Silvia Zacarias, ESC19 Spanish Spelling Bee Event Organizer, sazacarias@esc19.net.