Salsa Contest and Guacamole-Making Demonstration

Adams 12 Five Star Schools

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The Salsa Contest and Guacamole-Making Demonstration were developed to celebrate family assets, increase student leadership, and foster a positive school climate. Pathway Future Center School in Adams 12 Five Star Schools serves a diverse, bilingual community. As such, staff prioritize engagement opportunities that honor culture and elevate student voice.

The planning and implementation team included a cross-section of diverse perspectives, including the Family Outreach Liaison, the English Language Development teacher, parents, and students. Parents led cultural and instructional aspects, while students played a key role in preparation, hosting, and execution. Staff supported coordination, communication, and logistics to ensure events were inclusive, organized, and accessible to all families.

For the Salsa Contest, families signed up to submit homemade salsa that they brought in on the day of the event. Student leaders prepared all salsa bottles, created and decorated the voting box, designed the tasting table, and served as hosts during the event. Students managed the sampling table, welcomed families, explained the process, and engaged in conversations about ingredients, spice levels, and their own family recipes.



Parent volunteers, with student support, led the Guacamole-Making Demonstration. Students helped set up and decorate the space and assisted with organizing materials. During and after the demonstration, students helped distribute guacamole throughout the school so that every student and staff member could participate

These practices strengthened student outcomes by fostering leadership, communication skills, and cultural pride. Students saw their identities and family traditions valued, which increased engagement and belonging. The events also enhanced the school climate by bringing together families, students, and staff in joyful collaboration, reinforcing trust, connection, and shared ownership of the school community.

The practice was evaluated through attendance, student participation, and informal feedback from families, students, and staff. Feedback consistently highlighted increased student pride, family connection, and a positive school climate. Challenges included managing space and ensuring equitable student participation. These were addressed through clear roles, advance planning, bilingual communication, and strong collaboration with student leaders and parent volunteers.

For those hoping to replicate this practice, organizers advised centering student leadership and family expertise from the start, emphasizing culture and joy. One parent shared, “I would do it again because preparing a typical dish from our land is a beautiful thing, and teaching today’s youth about our roots and culture, so they don’t lose the tradition of eating guacamole and so future generations can continue to enjoy the food of their country, is wonderful.”