

# Folkloric Ballet Program

## Chappelow Arts Magnet School, Greeley-Evans School District 6

*Submitted by Julia Madera, [jmadera3@greeleyschools.org](mailto:jmadera3@greeleyschools.org)*

Chappelow K-8 in Evans, CO recognizes the value of programs that promote diversity and inclusivity, encouraging students to appreciate and respect cultural differences. The goal of the after-school Folkloric Ballet program was to celebrate and preserve Mexican cultural heritage while cultivating a sense of community and pride among students. Through the art of folkloric Mexican ballet, students not only learned to dance but also gained insight into the history and significance of these dances. The program provided a platform for students to showcase their talent and build confidence.

The Folkloric Ballet after-school program was brought to life with the dedication and teamwork of key individuals who worked together to make it a success. Two staff members took the lead in creating and implementing the program. The SE Assistant coordinated the choreographies, selected the music, and managed the attires, ensuring each performance was culturally authentic and visually stunning. The Parent and Family Advocate handled the logistics, planning, and coordination of events, managing all backstage activities.

The first Folkloric Ballet performance took place during the Day of the Dead celebration, followed by another presentation at the holiday Posada in December. Both performances were met with overwhelming praise, with the school community providing fantastic feedback. The performances attracted over 150 family members. Since these events, the program has grown significantly, with more students eager to join. What began with just 10 participants has evolved into 80 dancers, making it one of the most beloved programs in the school. The program has not only increased student outcomes by encouraging cultural awareness, discipline, and teamwork but has also created a sense of belonging and pride within the school community.



Creating this program comes with challenges, particularly in planning, funding, and securing rehearsal space. One of the biggest obstacles was having enough money to purchase traditional attire, accessories and clothes, which were essential for the performances. Staff worked hard to find creative solutions, including reaching out to the school community for support and repurposing and crafting costumes. Additionally, scheduling conflicts made it difficult to reserve rehearsal space and required a lot of coordination from the school staff.

Advice for anyone wanting to replicate this program is to step out of your comfort zone and not let fear of failure stop you from pursuing something you're passionate about. As one of the planners said, "Create something you believe in, and always remember the people you are doing it for."