

# Roseville



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## Habla Espanol from the Eureka Schools Foundation

Kristin Withrow, Special to The Press-Tribune



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Spanish teacher Laura Aalseth leads the Spanish II class at Maidu Elementary School. The Eureka Schools Foundation provides enrichment programs to students throughout the school year.

The ESF supports the Eureka district by providing enrichment programs to students to fill the gap between those programs desired by parents and educators and the reduced state funds to develop those programs.

Utilizing donations from parents and local businesses, primarily through its yearly Annual Giving Campaign, ESF develops programs to enhance the educational experience of students throughout the district. Funds raised are utilized at each campus in the district equally for music, art, technology and sciences.

The Eureka Schools Foundation's newest contribution to the district is its Spanish Language program, called "Viva El Espanol."

Working in conjunction with the school district, the Eureka Schools Foundation has created and implemented the Spanish language class that is currently offered to all first through sixth grade students in the district.

The district to able to offer this new Spanish education class at an annual cost to parents of

There has been a lot of discussion lately about the changes taking place in the Eureka Union School district.

The school district is undergoing reduced enrollment and a decline in state revenue contributions. The enrollment reduction is due to fewer families with elementary-age children moving to the area.

At the same time, the effects of the budget crisis are being felt throughout the state. Granite Bay is no exception.

However, there are few advantages that will help the district work through the transition. One such advantage is the Eureka Schools Foundation.

\$195 per student. Classes are 40 minutes, two days per week and are added to students' regular school schedule.

Heidi Biermann, program coordinator for Viva El Espanol, first operated two pilot programs after a 2005 parent survey showed a desire to begin offering foreign language to younger grades.

As a result of the survey, Maidu and Excelsior schools offered a program under Biermann's direction.

Greenhills and Oakhills schools offered different programs during the pilot phase. The programs were monitored and rated for their success last year. The Maidu program was adopted for use at each campus this year.

"The goal of the program is to offer a cost effective, robust basic introductory program with broad access and opportunity for all students," said Greg Sazima, Eureka Schools Foundation 2008 vice president and incoming 2009/10 president said. "The program has about 1/5 of the students in the district, or 500 kids, enrolled this year."

Eureka Union School District Superintendent Dr. Tim McCarty said he understands the importance of children learning more than one language.

"Studies prove that younger children are able to learn a second language easier than adults," McCarty said. "When they reach the university level, they will be ready to begin learning a third language. Kids from this district will be entering the workforce with two solid languages plus possibly some proficiency in a third. Additionally, learning a foreign language includes learning about a second culture, allowing students to broaden their horizons."

Granite Bay resident Janice Craig has a son, William, who entered the Spanish program in its pilot year at Maidu. William is a return student this year in Spanish II.

"He wanted to do Spanish again this year," Janice said. "He really enjoyed it. Even though it extends his day 45 minutes, they make it fun for the kids."

Sherilynn Petterson has two children in the district that went through the pilot program last year at Excelsior. Petterson said she found the programs to be geared toward each age group in a way that engaged the student and made it an enjoyable class for them. Her younger child, Joshua, took the class as a first- grader.

"It was more games and vocabulary without the reading and book work, because they were still working to become proficient at reading and writing in English," she said.

Petterson's daughter, Kate, took the class as a fourth-grader, which involved more reading and writing in Spanish.

Despite any changes that may take place to reduce the fiscal impact of the budget changes in the district, the ESF has committed to continuing the Spanish Language program in 2009/10. It is also still possible for students to be added to classes this year.

For more information and space availability, parents should contact Heidi Biermann, Spanish language program coordinator at [hbiermann@surewest.net](mailto:hbiermann@surewest.net) or call the principal at their child's school.

To learn more about the Eureka Schools Foundation, visit [www.eurekaschoolsfoundation.org](http://www.eurekaschoolsfoundation.org).