

# Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools



**Public Schools  
of the Tarrytowns**

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# What is FLES?

A wide range of elementary school foreign language programs have been designed for the English-speaking child. These programs vary in intensity and outcome, depending on the goals and the availability of time and resources. Before starting a new language program, teachers and administrators should consider all possible program models and select the one that corresponds best to their goals and available resources.

Elementary school foreign language programs fall into the following broad categories: total immersion, partial immersion, content-based FLES (foreign language in the elementary school), regular (non content-based) FLES, and FLEX (where classes may meet only once or twice a week).



# FLES in the Tarrytowns

- Officially launched in 2016-2017 school-year with the intention of growing to each subsequent grade in successive years to include kindergarten through grade 5
- Intended to bridge access to a second language for students placed on waitlist for Dual Language
- Currently staffed with 3 teachers from kindergarten through grade 4
- All teachers possess Spanish language certification

- \*\* FLES is not to be confused with Dual Language (DL) which provides instruction to students equally in two languages
- DL develops content-specific language
  - FLES exposes students to the basics of a new language & culture through conversational language



# FLES Implementation Barriers

## Program Fidelity

FLES programs now focus less on the teaching of grammar, and more on the development of listening and speaking skills and on cultural awareness. Grammar is not ignored, but is learned indirectly rather than through direct instruction. FLES programs follow the natural sequence of language learning: understanding > speaking > reading > writing. The primary stress is on understanding and speaking. Instructional techniques appropriate for young children have been developed; physical activity and concrete experiences play an important role. Visuals, manipulatives, and realia are a crucial part of the FLES classroom, and the typical lesson plan includes songs, rhymes, games, play-acting with puppets, and other physical activities that appeal to the younger child.

## Limited Resources

Program growth expanded to grade 4 in the 2019-2020 school year.

It should have expanded to grade 5 during the 2020-2021 school but did not. It has not expanded to date.

WI is currently without a teacher as of October 22nd with no replacement in sight despite hard pressed measures to identify a replacement by school staff.

Time commitment to scheduling decreases access to ELA targeted instruction, reading/writing, science/social studies, remediation & enrichment

# FLES Models

- I. FLES - Focuses on skill development and content in the foreign language
- II. FLEX - Exploratory model to introduce basic language
- III. Full Immersion - closer to a Dual Language model with 50% immersion

The goals laid out in 2016 focused on FLES with up to 15% of daily instruction in the target language.

A few nearby districts were identified with varying levels of FLES implementation. None of which offered FLES and Dual Language Full Immersion.

# Current Implementation

- JP
  - .5 teacher
  - 179 students
  - 90 minutes per week
- WL Morse
  - 1.5 teachers
  - 131 students in grade 1
  - 151 students in grade 2
  - 90 minutes per week
- WI
  - 1.0 teacher (currently vacant)
  - 154 students in grade 3
  - 167 students in grade 4
  - No service to grade 5
  - 80 minutes per week

# 2022 - 2023 Board Approved FLES Model

## Early Grades FLEX Implementation:

Kindergarten through Grade 2

- 20 to 30 minutes 2 times per week = total of up to 60 minutes of access

Goals become:

- Introduce students to a new language
- Motivate students to pursue languages
- Support cultural awareness & appreciation
- Value exposure over proficiency



Teaching will be focused on Spanish:

- Speaking
- Singing
- Dancing
- Read Alouds
- Culture
- Honoring Spanish speaking countries represented in our community

# 2022 - 2023 Board Approved FLES Model

## Intermediate Level Instructional Program

All grades benefit from systematic increase in access to core instruction

- Science & Social Studies instruction were both reduced in each year
- Recouping 40 minutes 2 times per week = total of 80 minutes in science & Social Studies
- Time will be spent on lab instruction using the Science 21 curriculum
- Each teacher will work on a specific lab component to increase expertise
- Student engagement is increased through hands-on lab activities as well as civic understanding in social studies

Continue as a wrap-around service - to be scheduled after school alongside other activities

## Sample Student Schedule Addition

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Science	Social Studies	Science	Social Studies	Science
45 minutes	45 minutes	45 minutes	45 minutes	45 minutes

This schedule provides an additional period of science and social studies each week to:

- Extend learning;
- Incorporate inquiry-based activities;
- Hands-on labs & experiments;
- Research projects;
- Debates;
- Investigations;
- STEAM projects...

Simple Machines Unit (4th grade SS)

- 2 periods - build content knowledge & conduct an experiment
- 3 periods - experimental time becomes trial & error and student led discovery.
- Day 1 - first attempt at success
- Day 2 - revisions & reflection

Colonial Life (4th grade science)

- 1 period - informational/foundation readings
- 2 periods - role playing and interpersonal function during colonial society.

Multidisciplinary Extension (Revolutionary Period - ELA & SS) can include interactive read aloud connecting the content area.