Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) Program Overview

1) Program Description
The acronym FLES stands for Foreign Language in the Elementary School. Arlington Public Schools currently offers a sequential, proficiency-oriented, content-enriched FLES model that is part of an integrated K-12 sequence for the study of Spanish.

2) Vision and Purpose

“Students communicating enthusiastically about a variety of topics and in multiple contexts while enriching their lives and preparing for a successful future”

The purpose of the FLES Program is reflected in Goal 1 of the Arlington Public Schools 2011-2017 Strategic Plan: “ensure that every student is challenged and engaged.” This goal establishes that “APS will provide students all the knowledge and skills to succeed in the 21st century.” The FLES program aligns with the School Board’s value regarding world languages, which states: “All APS students should be proficient in at least two languages upon graduation and should have access to world language proficiency programs regardless of school of attendance.”

3) Mission
Our mission is to provide high quality foreign language instruction at a developmentally critical time in a student’s language development. Students participating in the FLES program begin to develop basic communicative skills in the target language while reinforcing and enriching content in other disciplines.

4) Goals
The goals of the Arlington Public Schools FLES program are to:

- Develop functional proficiency in Spanish at the beginning stage of language acquisition. A proficiency level within the Novice-Mid to Novice-High range is expected after completing a K-5 sequence of study. This proficiency target is determined by following the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) K-12 Proficiency Guidelines.
- Give students the skills that allow them to develop their skills in the three modes of communication: Interpretive, Presentational and Interpretive.
- Provide a meaningful context for developing communication skills in Spanish.
- Promote global awareness and cross-cultural understanding by studying the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world.
- Strengthen the language competency of Spanish-speaking students (native or heritage speakers).
- Support academic content area instruction, through clearly articulated units tied to grade level SOLs.
- Support Arlington Public School’s Strategic Goals 1 and 2: Ensure that Every Student is Challenged and Engaged and Eliminate Achievement Gaps.
5) Arlington FLES Model:
- Instruction is provided by highly qualified teachers who hold a Virginia Spanish K-12 teaching license.
- Utilizes a well-developed curriculum framework aligned to state and national standards.
- Aims to achieve proficiency goals at the Novice-Mid to Novice-High level in Spanish after completing the K-5 sequence. At the Novice-High level students can:
  - Engage in simple conversations, relying on memorized speech patterns.
  - Speak and write short sentences, relying on memorized speech patterns.
  - Read and understand brief text, with the help of visual aids.
- Incorporates high quality instructional materials.
- Provides teachers with on-going professional development.
- Allows for on-going development and monitoring of assessment component.

6) Instructional Time for FLES:
FLES instructional time is a minimum of 90 minutes per week and classes either meet 3 times per week for a minimum of 30 minutes or 2 times per week for a minimum of 45 minutes. The World Languages Office strongly recommends that students receive instruction 3 times per week where the schedule permits, in order to give students the greatest frequency with the language.

7) Instructional Resources
A detailed Scope and Sequence for each year of the FLES Program is the guiding document and contains: student expectations for language functions (what the students can do with the language, central themes, connections to Science and Math, and key vocabulary. The FLES Program utilizes a variety of instructional materials that extend the themes as articulated in the adopted curriculum framework. These materials include Descubre el español© (Santillana) and in some schools Viva el Español© (The Wright Group): Systems A and B and textbooks ¡Hola! and ¿Qué Tal? The implementation of these materials has been scaled and adjusted according to the students’ language needs. Curricular revisions have been made to accommodate for greater articulation between the content areas and Spanish, especially with science connections that directly tie with Science SOLs at each grade level. Additional materials that allow for cross-curricular connections with Math, Social Studies, Music and Art are available to FLES teachers.

8) Assessment
Teachers administer ongoing formative assessments developed by the school district. FLES grades are reported electronically at the end of each quarter. All Grade 5 students from schools who have had the FLES program for a full K-5 sequence participate in the STAMP 4Se (STAndards-based Measurement of Proficiency, from Avant Assessment) as part of the ongoing evaluation of World Languages. The STAMP 4Se is an online proficiency-based assessment aligned to the ACTFL Standards for listening, speaking, reading and writing in the target language.

9) Articulation
Students who have participated in FLES have the option of participating in the Grade 6 Spanish class. This is a semester course paired with a semester of reading in English. A student must be reading on

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1 Parents should check with their designated middle school to verify offering.
grade level in English to be able to participate in the semester Spanish course. Students who wish to continue studying Spanish may register for Spanish I in Grade 7.

10) FLES Methodology
FLES instruction is proficiency-oriented. Teachers use the target language for instruction as much as possible, with the stated expectation of at least 90 percent of the time. The main focus of FLES is to develop listening and speaking skills commensurate with the expectations of a Novice learner. As students gain more proficiency, they also work on developing basic reading and writing skills. Teachers use multiple venues to elicit student responses and use methodology that is age appropriate and engages the students. The FLES teacher makes language learning meaningful and enjoyable by tapping into students’ interests and by connecting language learning to the content that students are learning in the regular classrooms.

11) The Role of the Classroom (Homeroom) Teacher
The classroom (homeroom) teacher is not expected to remain in the classroom while the FLES teacher delivers the language lesson. However, communication between the FLES teacher and the classroom teacher is essential and strongly recommended to allow for an effective integration of content and language. This exchange can occur by the FLES teacher participating in team or grade-level meetings and by classroom teachers sharing resources such as curriculum mapping documents and thematic units with the FLES teachers. Programs are most successful when time for communication between FLES and homeroom teachers is built into the schedule.

12) Professional Development
The World Languages Office administers countywide training to all FLES teachers at least three times per year: during Pre-Service Week and during fall and spring conference days. The goals of this professional development is to assure fidelity of implementation, enhance best practices in the FLES classroom and allow for a professional collaboration and dialogue between FLES teachers.

For more information on the APS FLES Program, please contact the World Languages Office at (703) 228-6097.