

**Elementary World Language Task Force
School Board Study Session Report
December 13, 2016**



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I. Strategic Plan Charge

Pillar 1:

Systemically integrate the principles and content of 21st Century learning into academic and co-curricular programs to prepare all students to meet current and future challenges

Action Step:

Determine viability of world language implementation at the elementary level (K-5)

II. Research: Benefits of Early Language Acquisition

- Promotes unique insight into other cultures
- Builds cultural competency skills in a way that no other discipline is able to do
- The age of ten is a crucial time in the development of attitudes toward nations and groups perceived as ‘other’ according to the research of Piaget, Lambert and others
- Enhances children’s understanding of how language itself works and their ability to manipulate language in the service of thinking and problem solving (Cummins, 1981)
- At age 10, children are in the process of moving from egocentricity to reciprocity and information received before age 10 is eagerly received (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004)
- Second language study benefits higher order, abstract and creative thinking
- Studies show that those who learn a second language are more creative and better at solving complex problems than those who do not (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991), and show greater cognitive flexibility, better problem solving and higher order thinking skills (Hakuta, 1986)
- Longitudinal studies by Harvard University confirm that learning additional languages increases critical thinking skills, creativity and flexibility of the mind in young children
- Not only does linguistic abilities develop, but cognitive abilities do as well
- Students outscore their non-foreign language-learning peers in verbal and math standardized tests
- Students who begin any language as early as possible and continue in a well-articulated sequence can learn a third or fourth language more easily
- The brain is open to new sounds and patterns (cognitive flexibility) and are better at mimicking and adopting near native-like pronunciation and intonation
- They have time to learn through play-like activities. Language lessons can be informal and children’s minds are not yet cluttered with facts to be tested
- Children develop empathy for others and a curiosity for different cultures and ideas; prepared to take their place in a global society.
- Literacy skills that are being developed in the native language transfer to the learning of the new language

III. Elementary World Language Models

NAME & DESCRIPTION	PROS	CONS	CONSIDERATION
Foreign Language Exploratory (FLEX) Refers to general exposure to language and culture, learn basic words and phrases, and/or develop an interest in foreign language for future study. Portions of this program may be taught in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explores multiple languages and cultures in a variety of geographic areas Develops an interest for future study Also develops listening skills and linguistic and cultural awareness Easiest program type to implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not lead to language proficiency If structured as a before / after school program, often not viewed as an equal to school day subjects Issues of equity (program fees, transportation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-5 % of class time Exposure to a variety of world languages Difficulty finding highly qualified teachers who can teach multiple languages Not enough exposure to a single language – less intensive study
Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) Refers to ongoing instruction by a world language specialist trained in the learning styles and needs of elementary students. It is part of an extended sequence of study through the elementary grades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquires proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing the world language (degree of proficiency depends on program) Acquires an understanding of / appreciation for other cultures Complements/supports the curricula of core subjects & school initiatives using the target language Most dominant approach in regional / similar districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires staff, space, time during the school week More difficult to implement than FLEX Sessions meet multiple times per week – impacts scheduling and time in content areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-15 % of class time Easier to find a world language teacher who can teach one language well Offers deeper concentration in a single language
Immersion: Partial, Total or Two-Way (Also called <i>two-way bilingual</i> , <i>dual language</i> , or <i>developmental bilingual education</i>) Students spend at least half the school day studying content areas in the target language. Student population is both native speakers of English and of the world language. Students spend most or all of the school day studying content areas in the target language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becomes functionally proficient in the world language Masters subject content taught in the foreign language Acquires an understanding of / appreciation for other cultures Most effective program for gaining proficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full vs. Partial (degree of proficiency will vary based on % of time spent learning in the foreign language) Two-Way or Dual Language (students are both native speakers of English and the world language) More difficult to implement than FLES/FLEX 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50-100 % of class time Requires specialized teachers who possess highly effective content, developmental, and world language skills and certifications Upheaval of elementary program Questions of sustainability and need

IV. Why FLES May be the Best Approach for Pelham?

- FLES is an acronym for *Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools* also referred to as *Foreign Language Early Start*
- The goal of the program is to create an atmosphere of an immersion experience which is the most effective way for students to acquire a second language
- Conducting classes in the target language (TL) allows students to attune their ears to the sounds of the language
- FLES is an introduction to a target language acquisition, following the natural sequence of language learning: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing
- Although the FLES program focuses less on teaching grammar, and more on the development of listening and speaking skills, it is important to note that grammar is not ignored, but is learned indirectly through instruction.
- It is meant to enhance cultural awareness, an attribute which will serve students all throughout their lives
- Provides a sequential program that continues through the elementary grades
- A push-in model allows for greater flexibility with scheduling
- May significantly improve students' knowledge of and attitudes towards people of other cultures
- Enables a blended content approach that reinforces learning in math, science, ELA, and social studies, among other areas

V. What does FLES look like?



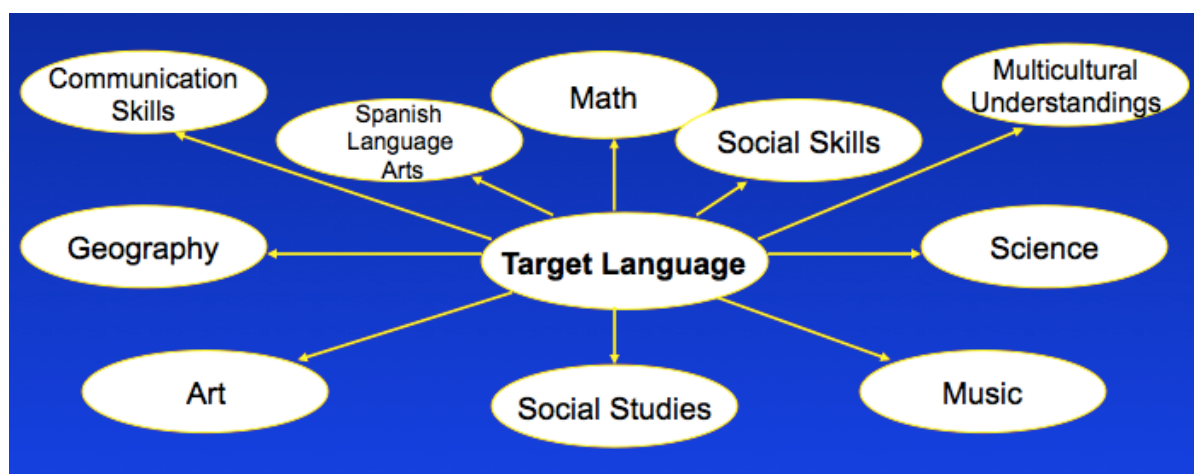
VI. Recommended Literacy Models in FLES

- In first grade, students listen and speak in the target language, but are not asked to read or write during their first year of instruction
- In second grade, students are introduced to the written word for the first time and are asked to copy the vocabulary words in the target language
- In third grade, students not only copy words but also questions, phrases and sentences. They begin to do written cloze activities
- In fourth grade, students begin to create their own original sentences and combine vocabulary from different units/topics
- In fifth grade, students write multiple sentences on a variety of topics

VII. Components of Model FLES Programs

- Qualified teachers (FLES certified)
- Written curriculum (content related/coordinated)
- Age appropriate materials
- Student-centered classroom
- Interactive instruction
- Enough time on task
- Use of target language in class
- Communication, coordination and cooperation among FLES teacher, classroom teachers, administration and parents
- Inclusion of ALL students
- Diversification of instruction and materials
- Ongoing evaluation and improvement of program

VIII. Content Coordination in FLES



IX. Streamlining FLES Curriculum with the Grade Level's Curriculum

- The FLES teacher consults with the general education teacher to align curriculum
- FLES Instruction then helps to strengthen skills learned in other disciplines such as classifying, acute listening skills, geography skills, global awareness, etc.
- Thematic units in the FLES curriculum should complement the core curriculum

X. Common Challenges with FLES Programs

- Space
- Staffing
- Curriculum development
- Program as an academic subject (legitimacy)
- Schedule
- School culture

XI. Survey of Elementary World Language Programs in Westchester (fall 2015)

Respondents	Type of Program	Language
Blind Brook	FLEX	Spanish
Elmsford USFD	FLES	Spanish
New Rochelle	FLES/Immersion	Spanish, Italian, Mandarin
Peekskill	Immersion	Spanish
Rye City	FLES	Spanish
Scarsdale	FLES	Spanish
White Plains	FLES/ Dual Language	Spanish
Hastings -on -Hudson	FLES	Spanish
Greenburgh	FLES (modified)	Spanish
Ossining	FLES/Dual Language	Spanish
Dobbs Ferry (IB)	FLES	Spanish

XII. FLES Guest Speakers at WLTF Meetings

- Marissa Coulehan, FLES Teacher Leader - formerly Harrison School District, currently North Shore School District in Long Island
- Rye City School District representatives
 - Angela Garcia, Osborn School (K-5) Principal
 - Reina McGolddrick, FLES teacher
 - Lauren Gobbo, FLES teacher
 - Vanessa Franco, FLES teacher

XIII. FLES Models in Region

Harrison Model (defunct)

- K-4 - Spanish Only
- 5th Grade - ALL 5th graders had a half year of Spanish and a half year of Italian
- Instructional Time:
 - Grades K-3: Spanish 10 minutes every other day
 - Grade 4: Spanish 20 minutes every other day
 - Grade 5: Spanish 20 minutes every day for 1st half year and Italian 20 minutes every day for 2nd half year – original 40 minutes every-other-day plan was not as effective for scheduling
- 4 full-time Spanish teachers and 1 full-time Italian teacher across 4 elementary schools for 1700 students
- FLES included on the report card: behavior/attitude, class participation, and linguistic development

North Shore, L.I. Model

- K-2 Mandarin - 30 minutes 2 days out of the 6 day cycle
- Grade 3 choice to continue with Mandarin or switch to Spanish - 30 minutes 2 days out of the 6 day cycle
- 2.5 Mandarin Teachers & 2.5 Spanish Teachers across 3 elementary schools for 1150 students
- ACTFL standards-based report cards: Engages in conversations, expresses feelings and exchanges ideas in target language; Understands written and/or spoken target language; Writes and/or speaks in target language; Understands the concept of culture by comparing target culture with his/her own
- No English Spoken and no homework

Rye City Schools Model – site visit in October 2016

- Rye started their FLES program both in 1st & 5th grades
- Only 1 language - Spanish
- 4.5 FLES teachers
- Each FLES teacher teaches 300 students
- Scheduling
 - Grades 1 & 2: 20 minutes 3 times/week
 - Grades 3 – 5: 30 minutes 3 times/week
- Push in model; no dedicated FL classrooms as primary teacher remains in the classroom (not a prep period)
- Integrated curriculum with elementary core content
- FLES included in report card
- No English is spoken and no homework

Scarsdale Model – site visit in November 2016

- Each elementary school (5) staffed with one FLES teacher
- Sequence begins in Grade 2 through Grade 5
- Only 1 language – Spanish
- Classes meet twice in 6-day cycle for 40 minute sessions, similar to other “specials” like Art and Music
- FLES included in report card (Level 1-4, focusing on communication)
- 5th grade speaking and listening assessment
- Curriculum is stand-alone, and not integrated with elementary core content
- Google Classroom (Heathcote)

XIV. Budget and Scheduling

Financial Considerations

- 1.0 FTE FLES teachers shared across 4 elementary schools - salary & benefits estimated at \$112,578
- Materials and teaching resources
- Professional development and planning
- Tax Cap

Logistical Considerations

- Instructional time / frequency in cycle [See Appendix A for mock schedule]
- Grade level selection
- Impact on school scheduling
- Impact on instructional program

XV. Suggested Pelham FLES Program Characteristics

- A FLES consultant recommended to help planning and teacher professional development
- Common collaborative planning time between FLES and Classroom teachers
- Highly Qualified teachers (FLES certified) in tenure track
- Push in model<30-minute sessions, 3 days per cycle for grades 4, 3, 4 and 5
- FLES progress/grades on report card
- No English should be spoken in class
- Focus on Spanish conversational skills
- Begin cycle in 2nd Grade across all four elementary schools
- When possible, thematic units complement the grade level core curriculum [See Appendix B for samples]

XVI. Suggested Options for Implementation

A. Four Year Option

Timeline	Grade Level	Personnel	Estimated Financial Commitment
Year 1: 2017-18	2 nd	"1.0 FTE	\$ 112,578
Year 2: 2018-19	3 rd	1.0 FTE	\$ 232,938
Year 3: 2019-20	4 th	1.0 FTE	\$ 361,452
Year 4: 2020-21	5 th	1.0 FTE	\$ 506,068

B. Three Year Option

Timeline	Grade Level	Personnel	Estimated Financial Commitment
Year 1: 2017-18	2 nd & 3 rd	"2.0 FTE	\$ 225,156
Year 2: 2018-19	4 th	1.0 FTE	\$ 349,407
Year 3: 2019-20	5 th	1.0 FTE	\$ 481,936

XVII. Other Budgetary Considerations

- Curriculum Writing
- Materials and Supplies
- Consultant Fees

XVIII. Other Considerations

- Assessment / measures of success [See Appendix C for samples]
 - American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*
<https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf>
 - ACTFL *Proficiency Guidelines* - descriptions of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context
<https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>
- Impact on secondary program
- Teacher recruitment
- Classroom teacher support for program
- Sustainability
- Impact on other staffing and programs
- Program Supervision

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APPENDIX A

MOCK GRADE 2 FLES TEACHER SCHEDULE 2017-18

Time	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
8:30-9:15	Colonial 30 min x 3 sections	Siwanoy 30 min x 3 sections	Hutchinson 30 min x 3 sections	Prospect Hill 30 min x 3 sections	Colonial 30 min x 3 sections	Siwanoy 30 min x 3 sections
9:15-10:00						
10:00-10:45						
10:45-11:30	PREP	PREP	PREP	PREP	PREP	PREP
11:45-12:45	LUNCH					
12:45-1:30	Hutchinson 30 min x 3 sections	Prospect Hill 30 min x 3 sections	Colonial 30 min x 3 sections	Siwanoy 30 min x 3 sections	Hutchinson 30 min x 3 sections	Prospect Hill 30 min x 3 sections
1:30-2:15						
2:15-3:00						

Please note that a Grade 2 FLES teacher is technically 1.0 FTE based based on an initial scheduling model:

- 180 teaching minutes classes
- **60 minutes collaboration time - not included in above schedule**
- 10 - 20 minutes travel between schools - not included in above schedule
- Travel time between classrooms - not included in above schedule
- Consideration for Specials, i.e. PE, Music, Library, and Art, is not reflected in the above schedule

Appendix B

Arlington Public Schools World Languages Office

FLES Program

2nd Grade Scope and Sequence

**Text in purple throughout the document indicates that it is new for this grade level.*

Theme 1: Personal and Public Identities: Socializing, Talking about Self and Recognizing Objects Around Me (Greetings and Expressions of Courtesy, Introductions, Calendar, Colors, Classroom objects, School subjects)
Write a typical introduction between two people
Ask basic personal information of others
Introduce self
Introduce others
Telling age
Tell how old you are
Ask someone's age
Tell the date
Tell when someone else's birthdate is
Write today's date in a complete sentence
Identify holidays using visuals
Identify days of the week
Recite, ask and tell the days of the week
Match days of the week to special classes
Recognize and count by 2's and 5's numbers from 0-100
Identify whether numbers are even or odd
Use primary and secondary colors in written texts
Talk about school
Identify and name familiar classroom objects
Identify and name subjects taught in school
Describe what you do in particular classes
Describe your favorite subjects taught in school

Theme 2: Contemporary Life: Talking about others and Daily Life (Calendar, Numbers, Shapes, Colors, Seasons, Weather, Clothing, Food, Activities)
Talk about the calendar and weather
Name the months in each season
Talk about the weather of each month in two different ways
Clothing
Talk and write a list about what to wear for each season and weather
Talk about what to wear for different activities
Read a story about clothing and correctly answer 1-2 related questions
Talk about others
Ask others about their activities during and after school
Ask what someone is going to do
Ask others about their likes and dislikes
Identify and recognize activities that you and others do
Organize activities in order of when they occur
Food
Identify and name some typical foods and food-related items
Write a daily schedule of foods that you eat with visual support
Read food-related texts and correctly answer 1-2 related questions
Utilize numbers
Recognize numbers from 0-100 and match to the price of different food items
Write in words numbers 0-100 by tens
Add and subtract numbers from 0-100
Count backwards from 100 by tens
Shapes and Colors
Tell and write about the color of objects in a complete sentence
Use primary and secondary colors to describe objects orally and in writing (pattern sentences)
Theme 3: Families and Communities: Talking about your Community and Living things (Community Places, Animals, Family, Parts of the body, Home, Animal Habitats)

Talk about parts of the body
Identify parts of the body and their corresponding actions <i>specific to animals</i>
Describe people and objects using at least 2 adjectives
Describe family members <i>in 2-3 sentences</i>
Identify members of the immediate family
Identify other members such as cousins, uncles, aunts, grandparents
Ask and answer simple questions using the verb <i>tener</i>
Community
Write about places in the community (<i>el zoológico, la granja, la escuela</i>)
Talk and write about how you get to different places
Animals
Describe 3-5 <i>wild and domestic</i> animals using 2 attributes
Read a short story about animals, supported by visual clues, and answer 2 related questions about the characters, setting or plot
Habitats
Identify and describe different types of living places, for humans and animals
Match different animals to their habitats
Describe 2 attributes of habitats of 2-3 animals
Theme 4: Global Communities: Communities around the World (Places, Cities, Countries, Geography, Conservation, Traditions and Celebrations in Spanish Speaking Countries)
Locate these countries and their capital cities on a map: Bolivia, Venezuela, España
Recognize and tell the colors of these flags: Bolivia, Venezuela, España
Learn the main ecosystems of the countries of Bolivia and Venezuela
Learn the names of the two principal indigenous cultures that exist in Bolivia
Identify some differences between public schools in Bolivia and Arlington Public Schools
Name different musical instruments that students learn to play at schools in Bolivia, Venezuela and España
Read and act out a story about one of the identified countries, for example: <i>La Leyenda de la Papa</i>
Learn a poem from each of the target countries
Learn how to say “hello, how are you” and “I am fine” in Quechua, and some colors and numbers in Quechua and Aymara
Learn a folk dance from Venezuela: <i>Alma Llamera</i>

Name the clothes worn by the Spanish flamenco dancers
Name the traditional clothes worn by the Aymara women
Learn about <i>azulejos</i> (tiles) from España and color and/or design your own
Name and learn about the two principal foods that the Bolivian people grow
Name five common tropical fruits and two typical dishes from Venezuela.
Taste and learn about <i>arepas Venezolanas</i> or <i>salteñas Bolivianas</i> .
Read about some important people from the target countries, for example: Simón Bolívar, Antonio José de Sucre,
Make a skit about the celebration of the <i>Fiestas del Carnaval</i> from Venezuela and present it to the class
Learn about places to visit in Venezuela and community buildings that surround a town plaza
Learn about Lake Titicaca in Bolivia and name the mode of transportation that people use in the Uros Islands
Describe three environmental habitats in Venezuela.
Describe some animals that live in different Venezuelan habitats.
Play some traditional games that children in Venezuelan schools play at recess.

Arlington Public Schools World Languages Office

FLES Program

5th Grade Scope and Sequence

**Text in purple throughout the document indicates that it is new for this grade level.*

Theme 1: Personal and Public Identities: Socializing, Talking about Self and Recognizing Objects Around Me (Greetings and Expressions of Courtesy, Introductions, Calendar, Colors, Classroom objects, School subjects)
Introductions
Show familiarity with the concept of register, informal <i>tú</i> and formal <i>Usted</i> , through writing and speaking
Simulate conversations between people of different registers
Feelings
Describe how you and others feel in different situations, using <i>tener</i> expressions
Ask and report about how others feel in different situations, using <i>tener</i> expressions
Days of the week
Write a short story/dialogue about where you and others go and are going to go on certain days of the week, using <i>ir</i> and <i>ir + a</i>
Numbers
Multiply and divide numbers from 0-1000
Talk about school
Describe the location of classroom objects using prepositions
Ask and answer questions about to whom school items belong, using <i>¿De quién/es es/son...?</i>
Write and present orally about your favorite subjects taught in school and when you typically have them, using <i>tener</i>
Describe what you and others do in different classes using the verbs: <i>aprender, comprender, leer and escribir</i>
Theme 2: Contemporary Life: Talking about others and Daily Life (Calendar, Numbers, Shapes, Colors, Seasons, Weather, Clothing, Food, Activities)
Talk about the calendar and weather
Describe, orally and in writing, the climates in different geographic locations
Use information from a weather forecast to make plans
Clothing
Give opinions about clothing and how it fits using <i>¿Cómo es?</i> and <i>quedarse</i>

Describe and make comparisons between the sizes and prices of different items of clothing
Talk about others
Interview others about their preferences and use comparisons to say what you and others like more or less
Agree and disagree with others' like and dislikes using <i>también</i> and <i>tampoco</i>
Compare physical and personal traits of others, using <i>más que</i> and <i>menos que</i>
Utilize numbers
Write word problems with numbers 0-1000
Telling time
Talk about how much time you and others spend doing various activities
Make comparisons between time on activities using <i>más que</i> and <i>menos que</i>
Food
Set the table, describing orally items and their location
Categorize 10 different food items into groups, based on the USDA <i>Mi plato</i>
Describe in 3 different ways some typical foods and food-related items especially from Cuba
Demonstrate how to order food in a restaurant
Theme 3: Families and Communities: Talking about your Community and Living things (Community Places, Animals, Family, Parts of the body, Home, Animal Habitats)
Talk about parts of the body
Talk and write about what parts of your body and the bodies of others hurt using the verb <i>doler</i>
Family
Use the possessive adjectives <i>mi(s)</i> , <i>tu(s)</i> and <i>su(s)</i> to write 3-5 sentences about what your family members do as a profession
Community
Read about professions and correctly answer 3-5 questions
Home
Recognize and describe rooms in the house
Talk about your and others' chores
Identify furniture in the home and items needed for chores
Use commands to instruct others to do their chores
Use transitional words like <i>primero</i> , <i>luego</i> , <i>finalmente</i> to give commands in consecutive order

Theme 4: Global Communities: Communities around the World (Places, Cities, Countries, Geography, Conservation, Traditions and Celebrations in Spanish Speaking Countries)
Locate these countries and their capital cities on a map: <i>Nicaragua, Paraguay, Cuba.</i>
Recognize and tell the colors of these flags: <i>Nicaragua, Paraguay, Cuba.</i>
Recognize and identify major landmarks, geographic features and historical places in <i>Nicaragua, Paraguay, Cuba.</i>
Read and act out a story about one of the identified countries.
Learn a poem from each of the target countries.
Name two common fruits and two typical dishes from the identified countries.
Read and relay information about some important people from the target countries.
Play some traditional games that children in the identified countries play.
<i>Learn the importance of and some key elements of the quinceañera.</i>

Appendix C

Yearly Progress Indicators for Second Grade

Novice Low-Mid, based on [©ACTFL Progress Indicators for Language Learners](#)

To be developed throughout the school year

Interpersonal Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* I can say basic greetings, farewells and expressions of courtesy.* I can greet and leave people in a polite way.* I can respond to yes/no questions.* I can answer an either/or question.* I can respond to <i>who, what, when, where</i> questions.
Presentational Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* I can recite words and phrases that I have learned.* I can state the names of familiar people, places, and objects in pictures and posters using words or memorized phrases.* I can introduce myself to a group.* I can recite short memorized phrases, parts of poems, and rhymes.
Presentational Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* I can write words that I use in class (may not be spelled accurately).* I can write the names of familiar people, places, and objects in pictures and posters.* I can fill out a simple form with some basic personal information.* I can write about myself using learned phrases and memorized expressions.
Interpretive Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* I can understand a few courtesy phrases.* I can recognize and understand basic information in words and phrases that I have memorized.* I can recognize and understand words and phrases that I have learned for specific purposes.
Interpretive Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* I can recognize and read the alphabet.* I can alphabetize names or words.* I can connect some words and/or sentences to their meanings.* I can recognize cognates that connect with subjects I study.

Yearly Progress Indicators for Fifth Grade

Novice Mid-High, based on [©ACTFL Progress Indicators for Language Learners](#)

To be developed throughout the school year

Interpersonal Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I can make some simple statements in a conversation. * I can answer questions about what I like and dislike. * I can communicate some basic information about my everyday life. * I can ask and talk about friends and family members and their characteristics. * I can ask about and identify familiar things in a picture from a story.
Presentational Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I can present basic information about my community. * I can talk about my daily activities using words, phrases, and memorized expressions. * I can present information about my life using phrases and simple sentences. * I can tell about a familiar experience or event using phrase and simple sentences.
Presentational Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I can list my daily activities and write lists that help me in my day-to-day life. * I can write information about my daily life. * I can write short notes using phrases and simple sentences. * I can write about a familiar experience or event using practiced material.
Interpretive Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I can recognize and understand words and phrases that I have learned for specific purposes. * I can sometimes understand questions about how old I am, where I live, and what I do in my free time. * I can understand simple information when presented with pictures or graphs.
Interpretive Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I can recognize words and phrases with the help of visuals. * I can recognize words and phrases when I associate them with things I already know. * I can usually understand short, simple messages on familiar topics. * I can sometimes understand short, simple descriptions with the help of pictures or graphs.