

Pelham Public Schools FLES Program



A first step toward making our children members of a global society.

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

¡Bienvenidos! We are so excited to announce that your child will be participating in our new FLES Program in Pelham Public Schools. FLES is an acronym for *Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools* (FLES) and our language of instruction will be Spanish. FLES is an academically challenging and engaging venture in which children will have the opportunity to immerse in the Spanish language. It is an introduction to Spanish language acquisition and embraces the pedagogical ideals of the Natural Language Approach and Total Physical Response (TPR) methods.

The FLES curriculum in the Pelham Central School District is aligned with the New York State standards. Instruction is differentiated and content coordinated lessons are tied to the school community whenever possible. The curriculum is interdisciplinary and reinforces content being taught in other academic areas throughout the year. Instruction also helps to strengthen skills learned in other disciplines such as graphing, patterning, acute listening skills, geography skills, global awareness, etc. Lessons are highly communicative and dynamic. Instruction is age level appropriate, taking into consideration level of language experience, as well as student interest. Lessons are designed to address diverse learning styles and needs. Interactive activities, visuals, manipulatives, Total Physical Response, charades, singing and dancing are all integral components of lessons.

This packet is meant to provide parents and guardians with information about the new FLES program in Pelham Public Schools. We will also send home newsletter updates periodically.

We look forward to a building a partnership with you and hope that this helps to answer questions you may have about FLES, the FLES program and/or curriculum! We will also be providing an informational presentation about the program this fall. Stay tuned!

Sincerely,

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Frequently Asked Questions

What if my child has never studied Spanish before?

I am sure that you and your child may be feeling a little anxious if he/she has never studied Spanish before. Please tell your child not to worry; we are experienced FLES teachers who create an environment of learning in which all students are engaged, eager to participate, happy, and motivated to learn. Our goal is for your child to acclimate to this new style of instruction in very little time and to have a successful and joyful experience. We hope that you are also excited that your child will be learning a new language!

Who will receive Spanish instruction and how often?

Second and third grade students in each of Pelham's four elementary schools will have FLES instruction three times in a six day cycle. Classes will be thirty minutes each.

What is the objective of the program?

The fundamental goal of the FLES program is to create opportunities for students to become active participants in communication, expression, and the negotiation of meaning in the target language, using an integrated curriculum approach to support student achievement and enhance student knowledge of other curricular areas.

How will student progress be evaluated?

Student progress will be evaluated on a daily basis through ongoing observation of varied activities, and careful anecdotal records of student responses to comprehensible input. Periodic quizzes will also be administered to further evaluate student progress.

What can I do to help my child learn Spanish?

- Talk, listen, read, sing and stimulate your children every day.
- Involve your family, extended family, friends and children's friends.
- Maintain a positive attitude toward language learning.
- Let your child teach you what they have learned in class.
- Visit your local public library (an excellent resource).
- Attend cultural events or restaurants that feature the Spanish language/culture.
- Keep books, magazines, newspapers, music, videos and other useful Spanish language resources available at home.
- Explore the Spanish Teacher Pages on the Rye City School District Website
- Review the Spanish newsletters sent home with your children.

What if my child already speaks Spanish at home or has studied Spanish before?

FLES teachers are always excited to have native Spanish speakers or other students with Spanish experience in our classes! Our FLES program is a content-coordinated program, so in addition to learning communicative skills in the target language, our students will be learning grade-level and age-appropriate academic language that they may have never learned in Spanish (telling time, mathematics, geography etc.). Your child will additionally benefit from exposure to Spanish spoken by other voices/accents and will learn new ways to say things in Spanish (vocabulary from different regions, for example).

The Benefits of FLES for Your Child

Second language study appears to facilitate the acquisition of minimum skills in the children's native language, indicating that foreign language study aids rather than hinders the acquisition of English language skills.

FLES reinforces concepts being taught in the elementary curriculum such as graphing, patterning, acute listening skills, narrative description, geography skills and global awareness, etc.

FLES develops the skills and habits essential to the learning process such as creative imagery, and critical thinking.

Students who study a foreign language over a period of years attain higher test scores than their peers who do not have this experience.

Children benefit from exposure to foreign languages in the elementary years even if the exposure is limited. A child who begins a foreign language in the early years will more likely be able to develop near-native language skills than a child who begins at a later age.

Young children acquire authentic pronunciation of a second language better than adults.

Students who study foreign language in the elementary grades gain insight and appreciation for other peoples and cultures and a better understanding of their own language and culture. It helps children move toward intercultural competence.

Children with specific learning disabilities and slow learners do benefit from second language study although it may take them longer.

Foreign Language study has been shown to enhance listening skills and memory.

Various studies show that language students have a significantly higher self-concept than do non-language students.

Helpful Suggestions

Stimulate your child's interest by discussing what he or she has learned each day. Let your child teach you what he/she has learned in class. This is the best way to solidify his/her learning.

- Maintain a positive attitude toward language learning
- Be available to listen to your child practice his or her oral language skills.
- Visit NNELL.org for information about FLES and practice activities.
- Sing with your child.
- Listen to Spanish music as often as possible. The more your children hear the target language the easier it will be for them to learn how to pronounce new words.
- Involve your family, extended family, friends and child's friends in the learning process.
- Encourage your child to seek out opportunities to practice speaking and listening outside the classroom.

For Example:

- Make Spanish- speaking friends
 - Watch television programs in the target language
 - Volunteer in a local Hispanic community
 - Attend Hispanic cultural events.
- Visit your local public library or provide bilingual books and dictionaries.
 - Raise his/her awareness of traditions, culture, geography, sports, and music of Spanish speaking countries.