

Mountain Brook Schools

Foreign Language Exploratory Program

The goal at the elementary level is to provide a strong foundation of cultural and language awareness, in order to facilitate foreign language education at a higher level for each student. A significant degree of language proficiency is not an outcome. Although language proficiency is directly proportional to the amount of time spent with the student, students will have sufficient vocabulary to have fun with the language and communicate on a basic level in a structured setting. Students will ultimately develop sequential listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

~GOALS~

- * introduction to language learning
- * awareness and appreciation of foreign culture
- * appreciation of the value of communicating in another language
- * enhanced understanding of English
- * motivation to further language study (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 426).

At the elementary level, each student takes Spanish once a week for 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the grade level.

From kindergarten to third grade, students learn useful and frequently used phrases. Students are exposed to basic vocabulary throughout these first years, such as colors, numbers, calendar, weather, shapes, community, transportation, body, clothes, family, house, and school. Not only are the students exposed to the Spanish language but also to the culture. The students will learn about the culture and geography of many Spanish speaking countries; however, the focus will be on Mexico and Spain. Instruction is done through the use of authentic objects, traditional crafts, music, games, and literature.

From fourth grade to sixth grade, the basic vocabulary is reviewed and practiced through verbal and written communicative activities. The students will be exposed to many of the Spanish-speaking countries. The curriculum covers geography, landmarks, important people, important events, and interesting facts.

- * third grade focuses on Mexico
- * fourth grade focuses on South America
- * fifth grade focuses on Central America and the Caribbean
- * sixth grade focuses on Spain

The goal of the program is not for the students to be fluent in Spanish by the time they complete the sixth grade, but to learn basic vocabulary and useful phrases, and to develop an understanding of the Spanish culture. This will help prepare them to be better citizens in our global society.