

# **World Language Program Evaluation Report K-5**

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### **Committee Members**

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### **Program Scope and Highlights**

In January of 2015, the Bernards Township Board of Education Curriculum Committee created a list of three goals to strengthen the academic program of the schools. One of the three was to *Design an elementary world language program that returns spoken language to grades K—5 and is a model program for the county, state, and nation.* This goal sparked the initiative of the K-5 WL Program Evaluation committee in the Spring of 2015.

That March, Dr. Brian Heineman, Director of Curriculum, Ms. Joanne Hozeny, Principal of Mount Prospect School, and Ms. Katherine Stotler, Supervisor of WL and ELL, visited the Hillsborough Public Schools to learn about their unique elementary WL program. The following spring, the program evaluation team visited Princeton Public Schools to observe their model program as well as their new dual language program.

Between January 2015 and July 2016, surveys were administered to the elementary teachers and district families to assess the current program as well as to gain perspective as to desires for future programs. In addition, the team conducted research on best practices and programs offered across the state. All observations and research were checked for alignment with the NJCCS for WL Standard 7 as well as the ACTFL World Language Readiness Standards for Language Learning.

### **Program Mission Statement and Vision**

#### **Mission:**

To foster knowledge and appreciation of language and culture around the world.

#### **Vision:**

Our children grow up in a global society where communication skills and cultural awareness are essential. Collaboration and teamwork, creativity and imagination, critical thinking and problem solving play a leading role in students' success. With our elementary world language program, we envision our students to achieve multiple goals: understand, speak, read and write a world language, appreciate cultural diversity, and develop 21st century skills. By way of this program,

we foresee more robust language and cultural appreciation in our students as they progress through our school district.

### **Analysis of Current Program**

Currently, students in grade four and five receive Latin instruction from their classroom teacher. Latin was introduced in 2010 in the 4th grade and then brought up to the 5th grade the following year.

Bernards Township classroom teachers are not required to possess any formal background knowledge in Latin. In the fall of 2010 and 2011, 4th and 5th grade teachers were given brief instruction from the middle school and high school Latin teachers through a formal pull out meeting. Since that time, there has been one 1-hour session provided to the elementary teaching staff. The Latin teachers are always available to answer questions and help with the program via email through their own kindness and generosity.

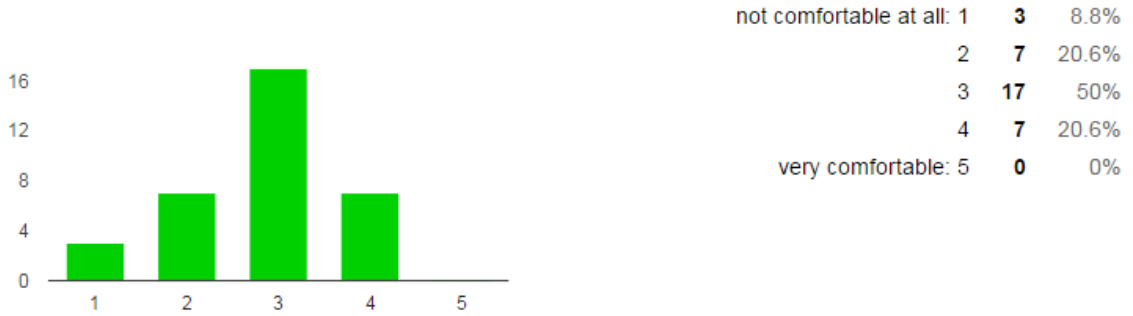
The current program consists of 35 30-minute lessons. This totals just 2 hours per month and 20 hours per year. By the time a child exits 5th grade they will have received less than 2 days of world language instruction in their elementary career.

The provided lessons include verbal instruction, written activities, games and creative opportunities. This curriculum was developed and written by Bernards Township Latin teachers in 2010 and then revised with supplemental activities in 2014. Part of the curriculum includes students receiving a copy of *First Latin: A Language Discovery Program* to be used in class. Teachers refer students to pages in the student activity book to guide instruction. Students use the same workbook in 4th and 5th grade. Teachers are encouraged to teach one lesson per week for the entire school year. Some teachers find it helpful to chunk lessons together to teach a few lessons over a few consecutive days resulting in weeks before the next instruction. Teachers are invited but not required to combine Latin lessons with language arts vocabulary lessons utilizing prefixes, suffixes and root words.

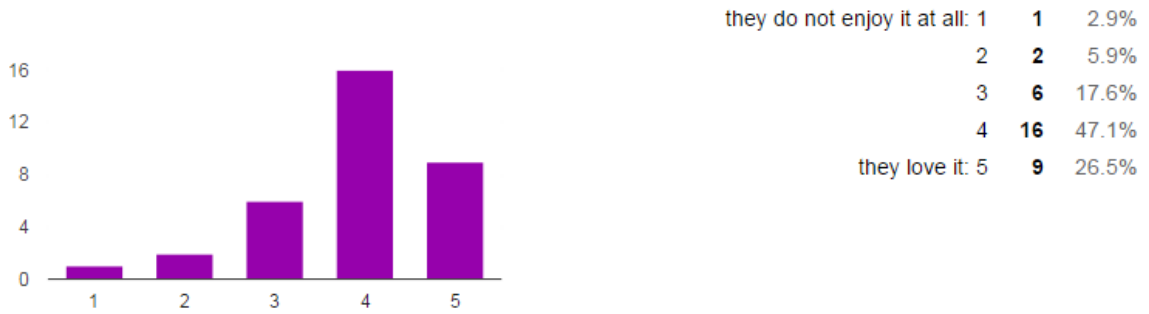
The current program is graded with **B**eginning, **D**eveloping or **S**ecure reported on the report card. Students are assessed through teacher observation and class participation. There are no formal assessments.

When surveyed in January of 2015, the 4th and 5th grade teachers responded that they felt moderately comfortable teaching the material. At the same time teachers responded that majority of the students appear to enjoy the program. However, only a small part of the teaching staff felt that the program was sufficient.

**How would you rate your comfort level teaching the Latin curriculum?**



**How would you rate your students' sentiments regarding learning Latin?**

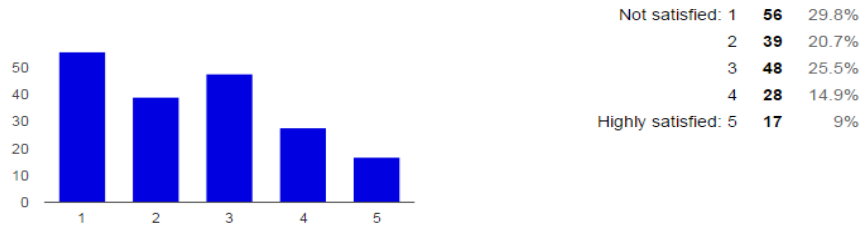


**Do you feel that the current offering of Latin in grades 4 and 5 is sufficient?**



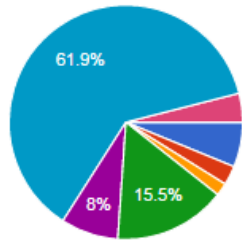
According to the results of the 2015 - 2016 World Language Elementary Classroom Parent Survey, Bernards Township parents are dissatisfied with the current Elementary World Language offerings in our Elementary Schools.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 how satisfied are you with this current elementary offering?**



When asked what language parents would like to see taught at the elementary level, the majority of the parents would like to see Spanish, and that was followed by Latin and Mandarin as the second and third choice.

**If only one language was taught in elementary school what single language would you like to see?**



French	14	6.2%
Hindi	6	2.7%
Italian	4	1.8%
Latin	35	15.5%
Mandarin	18	8%
Spanish	140	61.9%
Other	9	4%

Around 78% of the parents would be interested in enrolling their child and/or learning more about a dual immersion program if our district offered one, in which students would receive daily academic instruction in Spanish as well as English.

**If our district were to offer a dual language immersion program, in which students receive daily academic instruction in Spanish as well as English, would you be interested in enrolling your child?**



**Prior Goals and Progress**

The prior elementary program evaluation was conducted in 2004-2005 at which point elementary world language instruction was delivered in grades one through five once per week for 55 minutes with one WL specialist in each building. The following six goals were proposed in the fall of 2005.

Goal 1: Increase the amount of weekly exposure from fifty minutes, once a week, to thirty minutes, three times a week

Goal 2: Expand the world language program to Kindergarten offering three 20 minute sessions per week

Goal 3: Revise current curriculum adding explicit cultural links and linking activities to the modes of communication

Goal 4: Develop a district-wide oral and written assessment for elementary world language during the school year 2005-2006

Goal 5: Increase communication between the world language teachers and the regular classroom teachers.

Goal 6: Schedule meetings with both elementary and middle school teachers of Spanish at regular intervals during the year

In 2009, staff was reduced to 1 specialist per two schools and instruction was supplemented with MUZZY, a video-based program.

In 2010, due to district wide budget constraints, the elementary world language program took some drastic cuts resulting in the loss of the Spanish program and the development of the Latin program. Language Specialists were relocated to the higher level programs and elementary classroom teachers were required to teach Latin.

### **Program Comparisons and Best Practices**

The NJ DOE has a specific process for selecting schools to serve as model world language programs for the state. The criteria is as follows:

- Classes meet at least twice a week for 30 minutes
- Classes are taught by a Language Specialist
- The teacher to student ratio is a minimum of 1:20
- Curriculum should include thematic connections to grade level curricula
- Multiple entry points are offered
- Variety of languages are offered
- Articulation is both vertical and horizontal
- Teachers use the target language consistently for instruction with minimal use of English language
- Culture is integrated into language learning activities
- Comprehension is emphasized rather than speaking at the beginning stages of the program.

As per the NJ DOE, Englewood and Princeton are two examples of NJ Model Elementary Schools which we have chosen to focus on. In addition, we spent time examining the Hillsborough Public Schools as their program offers two languages to all elementary students, a characteristic different from most schools.

Englewood has a Spanish/English Model Dual Language Program. In addition, they provide students with the opportunity to acquire high levels of proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. Project IMAGE (Immersion in Mandarin Achieves Gains in Education) is specifically designed for English and bilingual speaking students to assist in fostering high levels of student achievement in a second or third language, as well as in other content areas. The dual immersion program facilitates the development of the student's first language and the acquisition of a second language through content of the elementary curriculum. All instructional activities are presented to students in a parallel mode in both target languages (English and Spanish). In the same way, the Mandarin program is afforded to all students beginning in Kindergarten through the sixth grade and in an immersion form for secondary education students.

In Dr. John Grieco Elementary School, first and second grade students are picked up during their related arts and social studies/science blocks to receive instruction in these areas in Mandarin for 80 minutes each day totalling 1760 minutes per month. In third grade students receive 40 minutes of Mandarin instruction during their related art periods every day totaling 880 minutes per month. In Kindergarten at the D. A. Quarles Early Childhood Center, every student has Mandarin once a week as one of the related arts subject, totalling 160 minutes per month.

Princeton Public Schools began their first year of Dual Language Instruction K - 1 in September 2015 at the Community Park School. This 50/50 model in Spanish and English started with K-1 and each year a grade level will be added with the completion of the 5th grade level in the 2019-2020 school year. It is a one-way 50 / 50 program in Spanish and English. Students learn Spanish language arts, science and math on the Spanish side and English language arts and social studies on the English side of the day. As of the 2015-16 school year, the other district elementary schools received Foreign Language Elementary Setting (FLES) instruction where K-1 met four times a week for 20 minutes and 2nd-5th met four times a week for 25 minutes as part of the core academic program. In comparison, the students receiving FLES instruction received an hour and forty minutes of instruction in a week while the Dual Language Instruction students receive two and a half to three hours a day of the world language making them more fluent. All students begin study of Spanish in Kindergarten and each school has a full-time certified Spanish teacher. In 6th grade students either continue with Spanish or change to French. In 7th grade students may add Mandarin to their French or Spanish course.

In the Hillsborough Public Schools, in all elementary schools, Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade students receive a half a year Mandarin and a half year Spanish. Students receive instruction for 40 minutes every 6-day cycle for a up to 160 minutes a month. Their cycles are Physical Education (twice a week), Library, Music, World Language, and Art. There is a World Language

teacher in each elementary building for a total of 3 Spanish, and 3 Mandarin teachers. Teachers switch schools and move all materials mid-year. Teachers meet twice a month in a contractual afterschool PLC to discuss curriculum. All curriculum is thematically developed and teacher created; there are no texts. Students receive grades and have common assessments that serve as Student Growth Objectives (SGOs). In 4<sup>th</sup> grade, students must select a language of study for 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the Intermediate School. During our site visit to the district we observed two 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Chinese classrooms and one 4<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish class. Teachers spoke primarily in the target language with some few exceptions to highlight culture and clarify directions. Individual student tablets and smart boards were used in all three classes. Music was often used to assist in student language production. Students appeared very happy to learn the content, they spoke with accents and understood the teacher and were able to carry out tasks as directed.

In addition to the 3 schools researched, the following information was gathered from administration in several additional schools. It should be noted that some schools had different time allotments and schedules for each elementary building based on the individual schools' needs.

<b>District</b>	<b>How is the instruction delivered?</b>	<b>Language(s) Offered</b>	<b>Average minutes per class</b>	<b>Average classes per week</b>	<b>Grade Level Program begins</b>
Bridgewater-Raritan SD	Language Specialist	Spanish	40	1	5
Cranford	Language Specialist	Spanish	30	2	5
Englewood	Language Specialist	Spanish, Mandarin	40	5	K
Glen Rock Borough	Rosetta Stone	French, Mandarin, Latin, Spanish	unknown	unknown	unknown
Haddonfield	Language Specialist	Spanish	30	2	1
Hillsborough	Language Specialist	Mandarin, Spanish	40	1	K
Millburn	Online Program and Language Specialist	Spanish	40	1-2	4 Online Program 5 Language Specialist
Montgomery	Language Specialist	Spanish	40	2	1
Mountain Lakes	Rosetta Stone and Language Specialist	French, Spanish	40	2	K Rosetta Stone 4th Formal Instruction
Princeton	Language Specialist	Spanish	30	4	K
Ramsey Public Schools	Language Specialist	French, Spanish	40	1	4
Ridgewood	Classroom Teacher	Spanish	60	0.5	K
School District of the Chathams	Language Specialist	Spanish	30	2	4
West Windsor Plainsboro	Language Specialist	Spanish	40	2	2
Westfield Public Schools	Language Specialist	Spanish	30	2	3



### Scholarly literature

1. Successful learning by young children, as well as constraints on that learning, are changing theories of language acquisition. Multiple empirical studies demonstrate that students who began learning languages early, attained statistically higher proficiency levels than those who began later. Numerous longitudinal studies also strongly support school- based language instruction beginning in kindergarten. (Boyson et al., 2013; Spolsky, 2011; Gilzow, Douglas, & Branaman, 2000; Kuhl, 2004).
2. Students in elementary school foreign language programs do better on tests of reading and language arts than students who have not taken foreign language. Also, studies have documented the positive relationship between early language learning and cognitive functioning (VanPatten, 1992).
3. Only 18% of Americans report speaking a language other than English, while 53% of Europeans (and increasing numbers in other parts of the world) can converse in a second language (Skorton & Altschuler, 2012).
4. Europe has compulsory education in foreign languages by age 8, and introduces foreign languages in the elementary grades. This contrasts starkly with the United States, where the majority of students who study a foreign language do not start before age 14 (Spolsky, 2011; Enever, 2011).
5. Lindholm-Leary and Borsato (2001) examined the influence that participation in a two-way bilingual elementary program has had on former program participants' language and achievement outcomes; current schooling path and college plans; and attitudes toward school, self, and others. Study participants were current high school students who were enrolled in a two-way immersion program during elementary school (n=142). Their findings suggest that students valued their bilingualism and were using Spanish on a regular basis, had very positive attitudes toward school and attending college, believed they would not drop out of school, and gave very high marks to the two-way program (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2001).

### **Dual Language Instruction/Immersion:**

In a dual language immersion program the goal is for the students to be able to communicate in the language with a high level of proficiency and acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures. At least 50% of the school day is taught in the foreign language, including academic subjects. It can be called partial, total or two-way immersion, depending on the amount of foreign language used and the makeup of the student body.

"[In dual immersion programs] English-dominant and target-language-dominant students are purposefully integrated with the goals of developing bilingual skills, academic excellence, and positive cross-cultural and personal competency attitudes for both groups of students."  
(Lindholm-Leary, 2001 pg. 30)

In dual immersion programs, students learn content through both their native language and the target language; translation is never used. By the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, all students in the program are proficient in English, proficient in the target language, and at or above grade level academic benchmarks (What is Dual Immersion, 2016).

A researcher at Georgetown University Medical Center, Dr. Michael Ullman, used advanced techniques in brain study and set out to study which of the two methods (traditional vs. immersion) were most effective. Professor Ullman and his colleagues enlisted the help of 21 adults who learned an imaginary language called Brocanto2 using one of the two methods. The language only features 13 words and is the only way to describe the actions in a chess-like computer game that the learners played. Then, three to six months later, the participants' brain waves were measured during a test of the language. Those who had learned Brocanto2 through the immersion method had brain waves that were more similar to those of a native speaker than those participants who had learned the language in the traditional classroom fashion (Morgan-Short, Steinhauer, Sanz, & Ullman, 2012).

### **Traditional model:**

In a traditional World Language classroom (Often called FLES- Foreign Language in the elementary school): the goals are to acquire listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills; to gain an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures. The focus of instruction can be on language and/or subject content; students familiarize themselves with vocabulary and grammar in order to prepare themselves for speaking the target language.

This type of program is typically 3x a week for approx 30 minutes per session exposing students to both language and culture.

Most research does not support the use of a tradition model in the classroom when compared to immersion programs or study abroad programs.

### **The Exploratory Language model:**

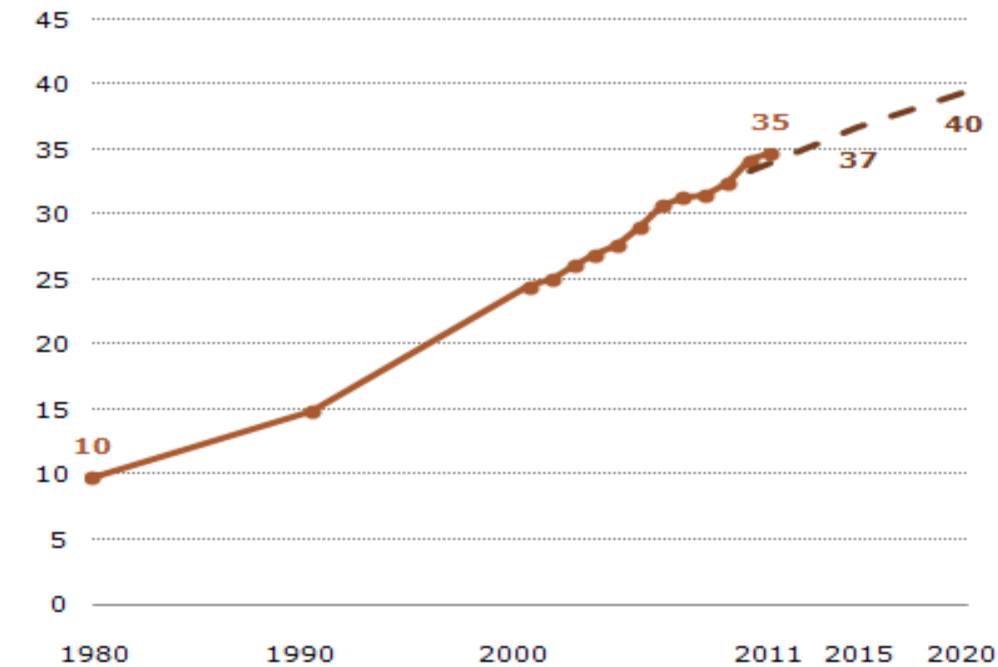
In the Exploratory Language Program (often called FLEX - foreign language experience/ exploratory): the goals are to gain general exposure to language and culture, learn basic words and phrases and/or develop an interest in foreign language for future study. Portions of this program may be taught in English.

With more than 37 million speakers, Spanish is by far the most spoken non-English language in the U.S. today among people ages 5 and older. It is also one of the fastest-growing, with the number of speakers up 233% since 1980, when there were 11 million Spanish speakers (Pew Research Center, 2013).

According to a 2011 paper by U.S. Census Bureau Demographers Jennifer Ortman and Hyon B. Shin, the number of Spanish speakers is projected to rise through 2020 to anywhere between 39 million and 43 million, depending on the assumption one makes about immigration (Pew Research Center, 2013).

### Number of Spanish Speakers in the U.S., Actual and Projected, 1980-2020

*(in millions among Hispanics age 5 and older)*



Notes: Projections for 2010 to 2020 indicated by broken line.

Source: For 1980 through 2011, Pew Research Center tabulations of census data and American Community Survey data; 2010 to 2020 projections based on U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 population projections as shown in Jennifer Ortman and Hyon B. Shin, "Language Projections: 2010 to 2020."

[http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/acs/Ortman\\_Shin\\_ASA2011\\_aper.pdf](http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/acs/Ortman_Shin_ASA2011_aper.pdf)

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### **Goals/Recommendations**

*Our ultimate goal is to start an Elementary World Language Program where our students reach a least Novice-Mid Proficiency or higher. According to the NJCCS for WL, we hope that our World Language learner will be able to...*

- Understand and communicate at the word level
- Independently identify and recognize memorized words and phrases that bring meaning to text.
- Use memorized words and phrases independently to:
  - Respond to learned questions.
  - Ask memorized questions.
  - State needs and preferences.
  - Describe people, places, and things.
  - Make lists.
- Develop personal identity through experiences that occur within one's family, one's community, and the culture at large.

Goal #1: District creates and implements an elementary Spanish program where all students receive language instruction from a certified language specialist at least 3x a week for approx 30 minutes per session.

Goal #2: District creates and implements a Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program in Spanish and English. Program will begin at the kindergarten level and grow as students move up through grades.

Goal #3: District moves toward building a community culture of world language appreciation through family education events, community outreach, field trips and cultural celebrations.

#### **Problem Statement:**

At the present moment, our elementary program does not meet the state requirement for world language. As part of the required program evaluation, we intend to make recommendations on an elementary world language program that returns spoken language to grades K—5 and serves as a model for the county, state and nation. Literature shows that earlier language learning enhances language acquisition in future grades, improves cognitive functioning, provides greater intercultural appreciation and sensitivity, fosters learning additional languages more easily, and offers our children a competitive edge in future markets and the global marketplace. As such, all districts in NJ are required to have K-12 programs that ensure students meet the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for World Languages (NJDOE, 2014).

#### **Supporting Data:**

As was represented by the research and exploration on programs in the state of New Jersey, it is clear that the need for an Elementary World Language program is paramount to the growth of Bernards Township's academic program. In review of parent requests in conjunction with elementary classroom teacher sentiments, there is an overall desire from the community to expand the current program to Spanish as it is not currently satisfied with our elementary offering. In addition, as the Board of Education Curriculum Committee strives to create a model program, it is imperative that our district align with the New Jersey Department of Education's Model Curriculum Criteria that elementary world language classes meet at least twice a week and are instructed by a certified world language specialist. Another rising force in world language instruction is the emergence of Dual Language programs. These programs allow students to acquire all educational material in two languages thus increasing their linguistic and cultural proficiency. The community has identified this as an area of interest via surveys and anecdotal conversations.

### **Proposed Solutions:**

- Create an elementary WL program in grades 2 through 5 exposing students to language instruction 3x a week for approx 30 minutes per session. This program would involve one Spanish teacher at each school. The curriculum would be based on Maracas, an elementary WL program created by a NJ educator who recognizes the inability of several districts to implement daily world language instruction. This curriculum aligns with NJCCS and has a STEM component that links to grade level curriculum
- District implements a Dual language instruction program beginning in kindergarten at Mount Prospect Elementary School, where the instruction will be 50% English and 50% Spanish. The program would begin in Kindergarten in 2017 and each year a grade will be added until all grades contain at least 1 dual language classroom. Staff would be acquired through annual retirements. Materials would be purchased annually in Spanish for grade and content appropriateness.

### **Resources**

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