

Meeting in the Middle

Introducing the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program in the Shaker Schools

Shaker Heights is poised to become the first school district in Greater Cleveland to adopt the highly regarded International Baccalaureate program at all grade levels. International Baccalaureate is an internationally recognized educational program with a rigorous curriculum that emphasizes creative problem solving, hands-on projects, inquiry-based learning, global focus, and community service.

By design, the Shaker schools began introducing International Baccalaureate programming at the High School and K-4 buildings first. In 2010, Shaker Heights High School became an International Baccalaureate World School and began offering the elective International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme to students in grades 11 and 12. All five Shaker elementary schools have also been designated as International Baccalaureate World Schools, offering the program to all Shaker students in pre-kindergarten through grade 4.

Now, students in grades 5-10 are being introduced to the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, which is being phased in.

What are the basic elements of the Middle Years Program?

The Middle Years Program continues to emphasize the basic tenets of the International Baccalaureate program: creative problem solving, hands-on learning, student-led inquiry (as opposed to teacher-directed learning), global awareness, and community service.

Students will continue to embrace the 10 International Baccalaureate learner attributes: Inquirer, Knowledgeable, Thinker, Communicator, Principled, Open-Minded, Caring, Risk-Taker, Balanced, and Reflective. The common language and instructional approach help to provide greater consistency from one level to the next. The attributes will be explored and applied in an increasingly sophisticated manner as the students continue to grow and mature.

How does the Middle Years Program affect the current curriculum?

International Baccalaureate programming does not replace the current curriculum, but rather enhances it, fostering creativity for both students and teachers. Students will continue to learn traditional subjects, meeting all Common Core and state academic content standards. The International Baccalaureate framework allows students to see connections among the subjects they study and to apply them to real life, encourages global thinking, and supports the development of effective communication skills – all of which align perfectly with the District’s mission.



How is the Middle Years Program different from the Primary Years Program?

In the Middle Years Program, International Baccalaureate places equal emphasis on eight subject areas: the sciences, arts, mathematics, humanities, native language (English language arts), a second world language, physical education, and technology, which encompasses a “design-build-test” process.

Teachers collaborate to develop a shared unit plan with a central focus and common assessment. Where possible, connections are made across subject areas as well. A more formal emphasis is placed upon developing community awareness and concern. Community service projects typically begin in the classroom, but then extend well beyond it. The Middle Years Program will eventually culminate in a personal capstone project for each student.

What is the timeline for adopting the Middle Years Program?

Teachers are collaborating by subject area and grade level to develop initial unit plans, some of which have already been shared with students. Teachers will continue to develop and refine unit plans for all subject areas throughout 2013-14, with the help of a consultant assigned by the International Baccalaureate Organization. We anticipate applying for authorization in 2014.

How can I learn more about International Baccalaureate?

Information about International Baccalaureate is available at www.ibo.org. For questions, please contact:

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**International Baccalaureate
learners strive to be:**

**Inquirers
Knowledgeable
Thinkers
Communicators
Principled
Open-minded
Caring
Risk-takers
Balanced
Reflective**

**International Baccalaureate
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**Appreciation
Commitment
Confidence
Cooperation
Creativity
Curiosity
Empathy
Enthusiasm
Independence
Integrity
Respect
Tolerance**