September 2020

Dear Families:

Welcome to an IB School! Your child is an important member of a school that offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) to all students. This international framework for teaching and learning at select elementary schools in AACPS values learning across the subject areas in order to create lasting knowledge and to build skills for learning and for life.

What is the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme?

The IB Primary Years Programme, for students aged 3 to 12, focuses on purposeful inquiry as the leading vehicle for learning. The PYP framework emphasizes the central principle of agency that is threaded throughout the structure of the programme: the learner, learning and teaching, and the learning community. The structure underlines that everyone connected to the school community has voice, choice and ownership to impact learning and teaching. These holistic components complement and reinforce each other to form a coherent whole.

What are the Essential Elements of an IB World School Education?

Essential elements are incorporated into this framework, so that students are given the opportunity to:

- gain knowledge that is relevant and of global significance
- develop an understanding of concepts, which allows them to make connections throughout their learning
- acquire transdisciplinary and disciplinary skills
- develop traits that will lead to international mindedness
- develop agency by taking meaningful and intentional action

Concepts: What do we want students to understand? Powerful ideas that have relevance within the subject areas, but also transcend them. Students must explore and re-explore to develop a coherent, in-depth understanding. *Form, Function, Causation, Change, Connection, Perspective, Responsibility*

Knowledge: What do we want students to know? Students will explore significant, relevant content, taking into consideration their prior experience and understanding. The most significant and distinctive feature of the IB Primary Years Programme is the **six transdisciplinary themes:** *Who We Are, How We Organize Ourselves, Where We Are in Place and Time, How We Express Ourselves, How the World Works, Sharing the Planet*

Approaches to Learning: What do we want students to be able to do? We expect students to develop skills needed to succeed in a changing, challenging world, which may be disciplinary or transdisciplinary in nature. *Thinking, Self-management, Communication, Research, Social*

Action: How do we want students to act? Student-initiated action is considered as a dynamic outcome of agency, and an integral part of the learning process that can arise at any time. Action might come in the form of *participation, advocacy, social justice, social entrepreneurship, and life choices.*

IB Learner Profile Traits recognized and explicitly taught as those of an internationally minded citizen: ***Thinker, Inquirer, Principled, Knowledgeable, Communicator, Open-minded, Risk-taker, Balanced, Reflective, Caring***

For more information:

www.ibo.org

https://www.aacps.org/Page/6747

How is the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme taught in AACPS?

All of our students learn a world language, specific to each school. As we become internationally minded, students expand ways to use their knowledge and skills to take steps to positively impact the school community, and then extend to the local, regional, national and global community. In both IB and AACPS, differentiated instruction is expected at all grade levels; we determine prior knowledge of a student and support and challenge him or her to meet the standards and move beyond them. Our inclusive classrooms are highly diverse, and teachers plan strategically in order to meet the needs of ALL learners. IB schools, including ours, welcome parent/guardian involvement for you are critical in helping us meaningfully connect school learning to the world around us and to our communities.

As an IB Primary Years Programme school, we integrate traditional subject areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies in the classroom, though enhanced with greater connections among them. As part of this transdisciplinary approach, the arts, health & wellness, real-world applications, the target world language, and opportunities to take action from learning are an integral part of the students' day. In Grade 5, one of the final Units of Inquiry is a capstone unit focused on taking action around an issue of interest to the student, known as *Exhibition*.

An IB Primary Years Programme school develops unique Units of Inquiry based on identified local, state and IB standards, including the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, Standards for Mathematical Practices, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 standards, and the IB scope and sequence for Language, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Each school's units are reflective of the students, the teachers, and the school community. Within the Units of Inquiry, your child will experience developmentally appropriate teaching and learning including the following subject areas required by our county, our state, and the International Baccalaureate Organization:

Language/English Language Arts: Language is the vehicle for creating meaning. Students in Grades 3-5 continue to develop and expand their literacy skills in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, speaking and listening, viewing and presenting by engaging in a variety of lessons and activities. Intermediate students engage in fluent reading and comprehension of complex literary and informational texts directly connected to their Units of Inquiry. As writers, they engage in opinion, informative, narrative and poetry writing that flows logically from a Unit of Inquiry. While composing writing pieces, language conventions are developed. Students respond to text-dependent questions and write to source in all content areas. Furthermore, students develop a more sophisticated understanding about utilizing online resources and interact with a variety of computer applications to research, to collaborate and to communicate about their learning.

Mathematics: Mathematics instruction utilizes high-quality academic goals which provide rigor, focus, and coherence to prepare our students to be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school, while requiring students to persevere when solving problems, explain their reasoning to others, choose appropriate mathematical tools, and be accurate. Students will practice and acquire mathematical concepts and be able to apply them to real life situations, connected to the Unit of Inquiry whenever possible. A variety of resources are employed to teach the mathematical skills that include *Ready Common Core, Teaching Student Centered Mathematics, Number Talks, Hands-On Standards*, and web-based resources such as Learn Zillion. The computer programs, *First in Math* and *FASTT Math,* are designed to assist students with basic fact retention in an engaging manner. The mathematical concepts taught in Grades 3-5 include:

- Number and Operations in Base 10
- Number and Operations - Fractions

- Operations and Algebraic Thinking
- Geometry
- Measurement and Data

Science: Students continue to develop skills and processes to study scientific concepts as part of their Units of Inquiry. With teacher guidance and modeling, students design and conduct science experiments selecting the appropriate science materials and tools. Students experience developmentally appropriate readings, scenarios, data, modeling, and the ideas of others. Students apply scientific information to understand a new situation and apply scientific concepts to make decisions. Students are encouraged to observe, collect, and evaluate data and evidence to make connections, communicate conclusions, and take informed action about concepts being studied.

Environmental Literacy: Students actively engage in interdisciplinary applications and learning using the MSDE Environmental Literacy standards. These standards support the IB Primary Years Programme's emphasis on caring for our world through stewardship. Each year students have a more sophisticated environmental focus. During 4th Grade, students take part in experiences with AACPS's Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center staff where the focus is on their local Chesapeake Bay environment, students learn and understand issues affecting the Bay and how they can make a difference. During 5th Grade, students participate in Drownproofing, a comprehensive aquatic safety program.

Social Studies: Students become informed citizens by investigating important concepts from the disciplines of social studies: geography, economics, civics, and history and investigate the concept of culture. Intermediate students move along a progression of a case study in Grade 3 of Anne Arundel County, to a focus of Maryland in Grade 4, and then the United States in Grade 5, all while investigating global context for each social studies concept. Students continue to practice the skills of social studies: sequencing events, analyzing cause and effect, analyzing perspective, and reading and writing independently. They also listen to children's literature to learn concepts of social studies. They complete short writing assignments, and read and construct maps, charts, tables and graphs.

Single-subject **Cultural Arts** classes offered in our AACPS IB Primary Years Programme school include:

- World and Classical Language (specific to this school)
- Visual Arts
- General Music
- Media
- Physical Education
- Health

Additionally, optional instruction in **Instrumental Music (Strings)** is available in Grades 3-5. **Instrumental Music (Band) and Chorus** is available in Grades 4 and 5.

English Language Acquisition Program (ESOL): English Language Acquisition (ELA) classes comply with the requirements of Title III ESSA. The goal of English Language Acquisition instruction is to enable English Learners to construct meaning from oral and written language, express complex ideas and information, as well as access instruction. In order to accomplish this goal, the ELA curriculum is based on WIDA English Language Development (ELD) standards:

- Social and Instructional Language
- The Language of Language Arts
- The Language of Math

- The Language of Science
- The Language of Social Studies

While the ELA teacher is responsible for English Language Development according to the WIDA ELD standards, the Maryland State Standards for College and Career Readiness, as well as National and State Content Standards, are the context used for teaching the language. All students who have been identified as eligible to receive English Language Acquisition services will take WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, the annual assessment to measure English Language Proficiency.

Technology: Students increase their creativity, communicate and collaborate with others, and gather, evaluate and analyze information and data using computers and other devices. They solve problems and make decisions in a manner that demonstrates their understanding of the social, ethical, and human issues related to technology.

We are eager for a year of transdisciplinary learning for your child and with your child. Through our inquiries, teaching and learning activities, interactions with students, educators, and the community, your child will further develop our IB Learner Profile: *Thinker, Inquirer, Principled, Knowledgeable, Communicator, Open-minded, Risk-taker, Balanced, Reflective, Caring*. If you desire additional information, please contact your child's teacher, school based IB Coordinator, or your principal.

i-Ready Diagnostic and Personalized Path: This year, our students will take the i-Ready diagnostic. This diagnostic is a short series of questions that will help teachers know how to group students so that we can best address student needs and build on their strengths. The i-Ready diagnostic is administered on the computer and then the program creates a personalized series of games and activities unique for each student. We ask that each student spend 10 - 15 minutes each day on reading and math i-Ready activities for homework or asynchronous learning time. To learn more about i-Ready, please go to www.aacps.org/iready.

Sincerely,