

September 2020

Dear Pre-Kindergarten Families:

Welcome to Pre-Kindergarten in an IB World School! This will be an important and exciting year for you and your child. Your child is entering 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. All of our students learn a world language, and at our school the additional language is specific to your school. Our students and teachers purposefully connect learning to the community around us as we become internationally minded.

Even Pre-Kindergartners begin to use their rapidly growing knowledge and skills to take steps to positively impact their family and friends. Your child will be involved in a wide variety of engaging learning experiences organized into four inquiry-based units of study that will nurture academic and social development, as well as the IB Learner Profile. In both IB and AACPS, differentiated instruction is expected at all grade levels; we meet each student at his or her current level 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 the traditional subject areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies with greater connections among them. We supplement classroom instruction with arts, health & wellness, real-world applications, the target world language, and opportunities to take action from learning. Teacher teams use the standards to craft four concept-based Units of Inquiry.

An IB Primary Years Programme school develops unique Units of Inquiry based on identified local, state and IB standards. Each school's units are reflective of the students, the teachers, and the school community. We reflect and improve on the Units of Inquiry annually. 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. Language learning includes reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting. Pre-Kindergarten Language Arts instruction is based on the Maryland College and Career Readiness Curriculum and the IB PYP Language scope and sequence. Objectives related to reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, reading strategies, and reading comprehension are taught during both large group and differentiated small group sessions. A variety of texts are used to support the establishment of reading for beginning readers. Prekindergarten writing instruction focuses on the conventions of writing as well as writing to communicate ideas related to personal experiences and stories. Children learn to use writing to communicate ideas by participating in shared writing experiences with their teacher and by writing in small instructional groups with either the teacher or instructional assistant.

Mathematics: Mathematics instruction is based on Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards for Mathematics, including the Standards for Mathematical Practice, and the IB PYP Mathematics scope and sequence. A focus on establishing and extending understanding related to number, quantity, addition, subtraction, geometry, and measurement. Students will participate in both large and small group instruction that will help them acquire and extend their understanding of mathematical concepts and improve their ability to apply their new understandings to real life situations.

Science: Students actively engage in interdisciplinary applications and learning based on the Maryland Curriculum Objectives for Science and the IB PYP Science scope and sequence. Students engage in both large group and small group instructional sessions that focus on learning important science concepts and applying their new science understandings to hands-on activities that bring science to life.

Social Studies: Students actively engage in interdisciplinary applications and learning based on the Maryland Curriculum Objectives for Social Studies and the IB PYP Social Studies scope and sequence in order to become informed citizens. Social Studies at Pre-Kindergarten also incorporates social/emotional literacy to support instruction in empathy, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

Environmental Literacy: Students actively engage in interdisciplinary applications and learning using the MSDE Environmental Literacy standards. These standards support the IB Primary Years emphasis on caring for our world through stewardship. Students have an opportunity to take action around the idea of eliminating litter.

Single-subject **Cultural Arts** classes offered to Pre-Kindergartners in our AACPS IB Primary Years Programme school include: **World and Classical Language** and **Library Media**.

We are eager for an exciting year of transdisciplinary learning for your child and with your child. Attached is more information about the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme for your home reference. If you desire additional information, please contact your child's teacher, school based IB Coordinator or your principal.

Sincerely,

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 about?

Significant, relevant content that we wish students to explore and know about, 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?

Demonstrate the 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>