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How to Improve Your School with International Baccalaureate Programmers? by Nvid Lada

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The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) for prekindergarten through fifth grade, Middle Years Programme (MYP) for sixth through tenth grade, and Diploma Programme (DP) for eleventh and twelfth grades are arguably among the best, if not the best,educational programs available today. If you want school improvement, consider implementing one or more of the three IB programmes.

The PYP and MYP are transdisciplinary and inquiry-based, which is what distinguishes them significantly from other programs. When schools deliver high quality PYP and MYP programmes, they look dramatically different than typical schools. Students are actively engaged in learning rather than sitting passively at their desks. They are excited and eager to learn. They love school. Teachers are equally thrilled. They love working together collaboratively to plan and teach the curriculum, rather than planning and teaching in isolation. They share resources, come up with extremely creative ideas and projects, help each other out, solve problems and feel ownership of the school.

The Shepard Elementary School program is part of the Washington D.C. Public School System's ongoing efforts to integrate the International Baccalaureate Program into the elementary school level. Beginning in August 2006, all grade levels at Shepard Elementary school will begin participating in this internationally recognized program.

The Primary Years Program

The Primary Years Program is designed to teach the whole child through a range of interdisciplinary activities. Designed for students aged three through twelve, it involves an overall development of the mind, body, and heart and focuses on the needs of the child in all forms of development, including social, physical, emotional, cultural, and academic. The curriculum is published in English, French, and Spanish. The Primary Years Program is designed to prepare students for the International Baccalaureate Program, a college preparatory program offered at high schools throughout the world, including many locations in the United States. The introduction of the Primary Years Program in Washington, D.C. is in response to the large international community that lives and works in the area.

An International Baccalaureate site team spent two days last fall visiting the school and interviewing staff, students and teachers. The International Baccalaureate is currently offered in only seven schools in the state of Indiana. The International Baccalaureate follows a very tough curriculum of study. It includes tough pre-college workloads in such traditional areas of study as math, foreign language, history, science and the arts. Students who are eligible for the program will be required to write an extended essay and be expected to participate in 150 hours of community service that has been initiated by the student. All of the International Baccalaureate programs in Indiana are at the high school level. Indianapolis School District's Center for Inquiry is currently in the certification process to offer an elementary and middle grades International Baccalaureate academic program.

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