



# Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**To:** District 97 Board of Education  
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent of Schools

**From:** Jennifer DeBruin, Julian IB Coordinator  
Christiana Harrington, Brooks IB Coordinator  
Dr. Amy Warke, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer  
Dr. Tawanda Lawrence, Senior Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

**Re:** IB Reauthorization Update Board Report

**Date:** January 15, 2019

**Type of Report:** Informational

**Purpose of Report:** The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of Education on the efforts related to the IB MYP Evaluation process including the continued alignment between the IB program and the district vision.

## **IBO Mission Statement**

*The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.*

*To this end the IBO works with schools and governments and international organizations to develop international education and rigorous assessment.*

*These programs encourage students across the world to become compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.*

## **IB Overview**

Prior to the adoption of the IB philosophy and framework, the middle schools were quite different from one another. In addition, at each school there was a level of variation between classes of the same subject and grade level. In an effort to ensure all children received an equitable and appropriate education, the superintendent at the time recommended that board members, teachers, and parents look into the International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization. He believed that the IB encompasses best practices of education that we as a community believe in, within one organized, supported, research--based program.

Exploration of the IB MYP program began with a school visit to an IB school in Shaker Heights, Ohio, in Spring 2012. This school's demographics and size were similar to District 97, and therefore we were able to see an IB program in action and the ways in which the program affected the school climate, culture and curriculum. From the conversations after our site visit and further investigations into the program, we as a district determined it was beneficial to become IB schools for multiple reasons: quality professional development grounded in best practices, focus on educational practices that prepare students for the real--world, widening of student perspectives beyond the classroom, solid unit planning platform to guide curriculum planning in a consistent manner, and an all--school philosophy that is inclusive.

On July 17, 2012, the Board of Education endorsed the implementation of the IB MYP program at the middle schools, following a Board Report presented to the Board on [June 26, 2012](#).

After a great deal of teacher professional development, both schools were officially given the designation of being International Baccalaureate schools before the commencement of the 2015-2016 school year. This initial authorization indicated that both schools had the structures, personnel, and philosophy needed to create an effective, holistic IB program. From that point on teachers, administrators, and IB coordinators have worked diligently to align teaching and learning experiences, including but not limited to day to day lessons and summative assessments, with the IB philosophy. This has been an ongoing, collaborative effort with all stakeholders involved. Now subjects and grade levels have their curriculum organized into cohesive, consistent units with appropriate assessments. Of course, these units will be consistently updated and revised to ensure real-world connections stay relevant in a way that engages our students. In addition, our schools use the mission statement and the program standards and practices of IB to guide future changes.

### **Through the Lens of the District Vision**

Oak Park Elementary School District 97 will create a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child.

- **Equity:** The equitable component of the IB is developed through the concept--based approach. The MYP is a concept--based curriculum. “A concept--based curriculum is naturally more equitable than a traditional coverage- centered curriculum.” (Stern, Lauriault and Ferraro, 2018) Facts are organized around key concepts, it makes them easier to remember. This automatically benefits students who struggle with strict memorization without context or meaning. Students find their own examples that support their conceptual understanding based on their own interests and experiences. This type of learning is meaningful and creates a deeper understanding for students. Students experience rigorous learning objectives and consistent assessment criteria. The assessment criteria is consistent for all subjects, the cognitive demand increases up to year 3. This is great for students because they are aware of the criteria they are held to throughout their middle school experience.
- **Inclusiveness:** The MYP is an inclusive program. The “wall-to wall” program means that all students in the middle school receive and experience the MYP. Currently, some special education students do not take all eight IB courses due to accommodations outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IBO is aware of this and approves of this practice, because we are doing what is in the best interest of the student, particularly those with specialized needs identified in their IEP. However, the scheduling committee will continue to look into this area as we plan for next year.
- **Positive learning environment:** This is achieved through deep inquiry into human identity and global challenges that explores what it means to be internationally minded. The idea that “people with their differences can also be right” (IBO Mission Statement) is a key pillar in the IB program. Promoting and teaching this ideal in our students creates a positive learning environment that is contributed by all students. The units of study incorporate real world connections and content.
- **Whole child:** The emphasis on critical and creative thinking, social and emotional well-being, and learning how to learn skills are deliberately planned for by MYP teachers. The goal being students are able to embody and carry out the IB mission statement, “Education for a better world.”

- **Summarize:** The program establishes a common language for teaching and learning, promotes effective collaboration and planning, and creates opportunities for powerful conversations about transitions and learning over time. The result is ongoing professional practices that promote a dynamic culture of learning and underpins continuous school improvement.

## **IB School Evaluation**

During the 2019-2020 school year, our school will be formally evaluated on the extent to which all facets of teaching and learning at both middle schools align with the IB philosophy. There are 72 standards and practices each school will be evaluated on. These standards and practices include:

- A. Philosophy (9 standards)
- B. Organization
  - 1. Leadership & Structure (7 standards)
  - 2. Resources & Support (12 standards)
- C. Curriculum
  - 1. Collaborative Planning (9 standards)
  - 2. Written Curriculum (11 standards)
  - 3. Teaching & Learning (16 standards)
  - 4. Assessment (9 standards)

Preparations for this evaluation are ongoing and include multiple components.

**Building Quality Curriculum** - During the 2018-2019 school year, we will submit two units from each department for formal feedback and analysis by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), as part of the organization's required Building Quality Curriculum framework. Prior to submitting these units our department chairs will self-evaluate the units of study and identify opportunities for growth. Once we receive formal feedback from the IBO at the end of the 2018-2019 school year, department chairs and IB coordinators will create a plan for the 2019-2020 school year and beyond to address all unit feedback and make adjustments to ensure all units include the highest quality of teaching and learning experiences for all students.

**Self-Study** - To prepare for the formal evaluation, the IBO requires that schools participate in an intense self-evaluation of all standards. All stakeholders in some capacity will evaluate our progress based on the practices related to the standards identified above. This has already begun and will continue through the 2019 calendar year.

**Application** - By December 2019, we will apply for evaluation. This application for evaluation will include extensive documentation related to all standards we are evaluated on.

**Evaluation Visit** - During the Spring of 2020, three representatives from the IBO will visit Oak Park for a total of 4 days, 2 days per school, to tour the school and speak with all stakeholders. This visit along with all documentation previously submitted will be used for the formal evaluation. A report will then be generated to provide us feedback on our alignment with the IB standards and practices. The feedback for each of the standards and practices fall into one of four categories:

- Commendation: - Praise given for the standard being in place in a creative and/or above and beyond way.
- Finding:- The standard is evident.
- Recommendation:- The standard may be evident but not entirely. Improvements will need to

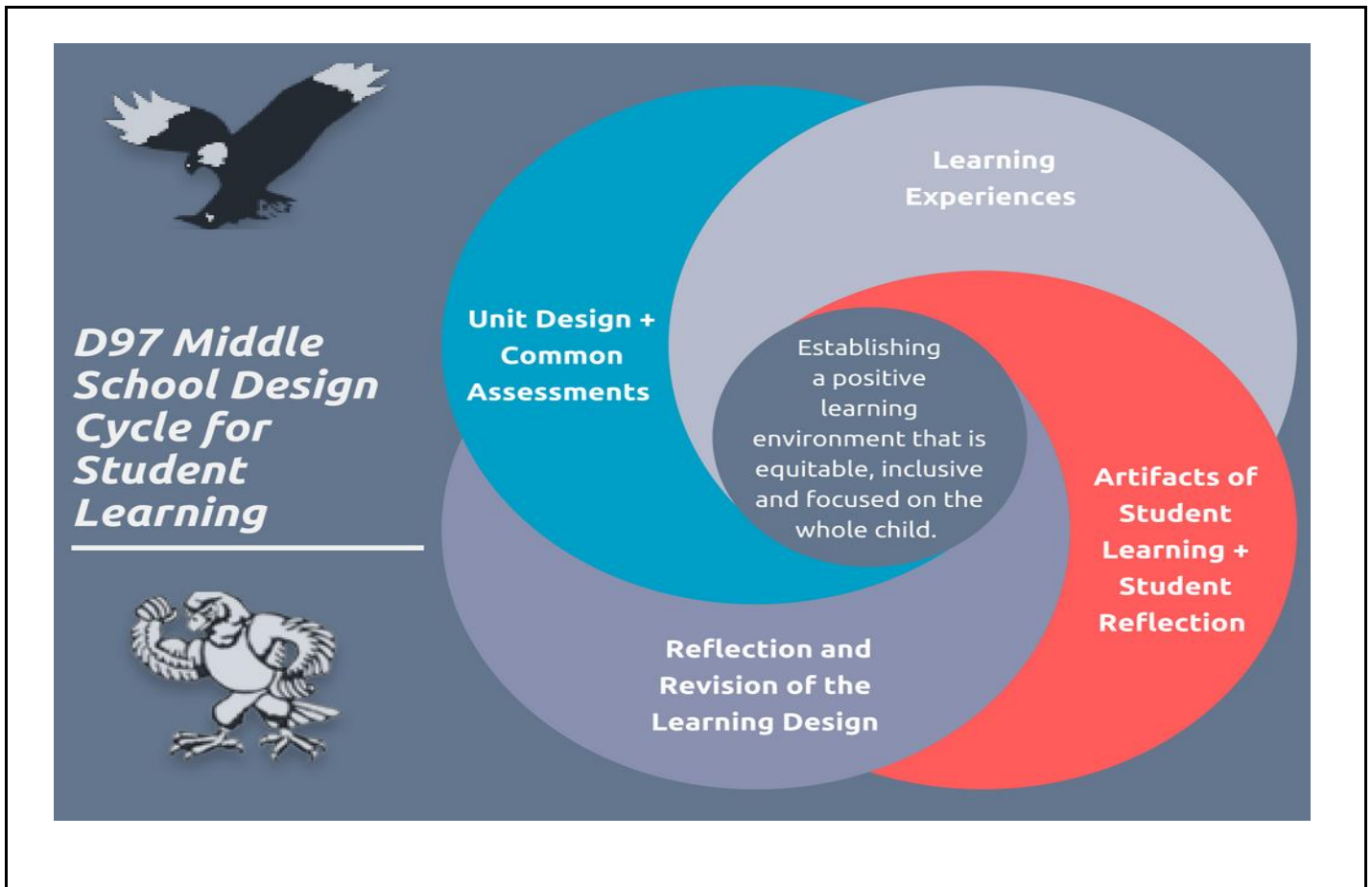
be made prior to the next evaluation visit in 5 years.

- Matter to be Addressed:- The standard is not evident, and this must be addressed prior to IB granting continued IB status.

The feedback provided in the report which will serve as a “compass” for our continued work implementing the framework. The action plan for continuous improvement will be informed by this feedback.

### **Strengthening Middle School Instruction**

During this school year, all departments will continue to refine their IB units and assessments. All departments have participated in an intense self-evaluation facilitated by department chairs to ensure all subjects have well-written units that assess students by each of the four criterion twice per school year. Middle school departments at Brooks and Julian collaborate on IB units and assessments during grade level/department meetings, Institute Day, and some departments have received early release days.



The graphic above is the Design Cycle for Student Learning. This is the process of continuous improvement that all departments follow to strengthen middle school instruction. The department of teachers enter the design cycle as the IB units are created and revised. This is a cycle that is intended to be a continuous cycle of improvement to strengthen middle school instruction and improve upon the written curriculum. The learning engagements, assessments and student work are analyzed for rigor, accessibility and depth. The result of this process is improved learning for students by identifying any skill or concept gaps through a student work protocol. This process allows teachers to revisit, reteach and extend these skills gaps in the following units. The teachers discuss strategies that were successful in delivering the content. Finally, the unit plans are updated with any new learning experiences.

The creation of authentic, inquiry based unit plans is a process that teachers engage in across all subjects. Teachers utilize the MYP objectives, assessment criteria, and the Illinois Learning Standards to design assessment. One thread that is evident in all assessments is the emphasis on written communication. This component is thoughtfully planned to engage students in writing across the curriculum.

One example of this can be seen in Humanities and Language Arts. One of the many learning experiences students engage in is an interdisciplinary unit where students are exposed to the horrendous, historical event of the Holocaust. In this unit, students read the novel, Night, by Elie Wiesel and learn the dangers of being a bystander. In Language Arts, the students are writing about the dangers of remaining silent in the face of horrible acts and inhumane treatment. While, in Humanities class students learn the conditions and events in history that caused World War II. Students examine the political and military actions involved in stripping groups of people of their citizenship and basic human rights. As a writing experience, students analyze the Nobel Prize speech acceptance speech delivered by Elie Wiesel. Students analyze the argument and write about the change that the speech and his action inspire. These actions and concepts remain relevant in today's society and lend themselves to real world reflection and action. Working within the framework of the MYP allows teachers the agency to bring in relevant real world experiences framed within a global context that is age-appropriate and engaging for adolescents.

An additional experience of writing across the curriculum is in the Science course. The science department plans, Argument Driven Inquiry (ADI) lab experiences for students that are designed around the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the MYP Criterion B. Inquiring & Designing and Criterion C. Process & Evaluating. In the ADI lab, students determine the problem and the methods in which they will conduct the lab. They collaborate on carrying out the lab and design how they will present their data. Finally, they produce their lab write up in the form of Claim, Evidence and Reasoning. In this learning experience, students produce an argument that explains the phenomena or conclusion as a result of the lab and the data produced. The strong emphasis on academic writing is an underlying thread in the MYP.

### **Reporting Committee**

The D97 IB Reporting Committee was formed during the 2017-2018 school year and consists of middle school teachers from Julian and Brooks, Principals, IB Coordinators, Senior Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and Information Systems Coordinator. The Reporting Committee meetings are held every other Thursday (7:30 am - 8:30 am) and facilitated by IB Coordinators. The outcomes for committee work are as follows:

- Design a report card that will be implemented during the 2020-2021 school year to align with IB requirements and report student performance on the four IB criterion for each subject
- Plan communication, rollout, and professional development related to the report card
- Implement student-led assessment reporting during the 2019-2020 school year through student-led portfolio-style reporting of four criterion for every subject

The table below provides an overview of the scope and sequence for committee work and areas of focus for the year.

<b>2018-2019 Areas of Focus</b>
Learn about IB Assessment requirements
Establish a mission statement

Reflect on best practices on assessment reporting
Reflect on D97 Elementary Report Card
Provide feedback on Beta D97 Middle School Report Card
Plan for transition (student-led-assessment reporting) which will serve as a bridge to the new report card
Brainstorm, strategize, and participate in communication to stakeholders (Superintendent, School Board, Teachers, Parents and Community)
IB Reporting Committee members will pilot a student-led assessment reporting system during the 2018-2019 school year.

The committee has spent time exploring best practices in assessment and reporting. The requirements of IB are all grounded in best practices in education today, but it is important for this committee to understand the rationale behind the requirements, so they can advocate for this change moving forward. The committee has spent time reading and exploring ideas to build up their personal understanding as a member of this group that will be communicating these changes to the greater staff.

Students at the elementary school currently receive standards-based report cards. This means families are given multiple points of information about a student's performance for each subject. This information is targeted and leveled by the student's performance ability at the end of the grading term.

As an IB school, we are expected to provide feedback in a similar manner. Each subject has four objectives prescribed to them by the IBO. This is similar to the standards that are on the elementary school report card, except the IBO objectives are skill based to accommodate the complexity of middle school assessments that include multiple standards. For example, for Language Arts the IB objectives are:

- A. Analyzing - Ability to analyze what is read
- B. Organizing - Ability to organize ideas and opinions
- C. Producing Text - Ability to write text that include creative, novel ideas
- D. Using Language - Ability to use proper grammar, spelling, and sentence structure

A performance task would focus on assessing a student's ability in one or two of these areas and their final grade would be a 0-8 score which is clearly laid out on a detailed rubric. IB requests that since we are assessing students in alignment with these objectives, the report card should also be in alignment with these objectives.

This means a student's report card will look differently in two main ways, 1) each student will be given four grades for each course and 2) those grades will be 8-0 rather than A-U. Students have been receiving assessment grades in this fashion for at least the last year and a half. The change is seeing this information on their report card.

During the middle of trimester one, this information was shared with all teachers in a small group setting to allow for processing and questioning. The changes to the report card will require a strong alignment between in-class assessments and the IB objectives for each grade level and course. Teachers will need time moving forward to ensure this alignment is completed for all assessments. When information about this change was shared with the staff the biggest question/concern was time. Teachers will need to be allotted time to align all assessments.

Teachers on the Reporting Committee feel the experience of serving on the committee has been a concerted and deliberate process that will create a reporting system that serves all students. Here are some reflections from members of the committee that they would like to share with the Board of Education:

- It's been great to have the opportunity to work collaboratively (District Office administrators, middle school administrators, and teachers) to create a report card that will better communicate student learning to our families.
- The new reporting system is more intentional in the way that it only shares out information in student friendly language that is relevant to where the student is at that specific time (skills that are not assessed/taught are not included on the report card)
- Reporting on specific criterion related to student growth and development will enable teachers, parents, and students to have more meaningful conversations about what is being learned during a trimester grading period.
- We have a culture where grades are emphasized more than the learning. What does an "A" truly mean? What does an "F" mean? Letter grades create extrinsic motivation to be successful, yet students and parents are unable to articulate what was learned, why, and what impact it will have on the student's future learning. ...Having the consistency will help students understand their progress and have a common language. The change in report card also allows teachers to be intentional and clear about what each students needs to master and what they have mastered. This provides more data to teachers that can allow them to tailor instruction and interventions to meet the needs of all students.

The Reporting Committee next steps include the following:

We plan to educate middle school staff on standards-based reporting and how this system will look at Brooks and Julian. The team will provide professional learning in this area to help shift the mindset with all staff from a traditional grading system to a new system of reporting across all disciplines and content areas. Our planned and purposeful roll out from now until 2020-21 for all teachers is to understand this system philosophically so that it can be implemented in the best interest of our students.

The teaching and learning department is collaborating with the communications department to develop a plan to inform families and the community of the purpose and goals of the Reporting Committee, the status of the committee as it relates to accomplishing these goals, and how the committee will communicate changes to the report card to families. This message will be communicated to the greater community after winter break.

### **Works Cited**

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