

Hazel Goes Cook Elementary

Candidate

International Baccalaureate

School



Parent Handbook

A Guide to the IB PYP Program

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new
landscapes, but in having new eyes.”
—Marcel Proust

Sources used in compiling this guide book:

- Making the PYP Happen
- Kazakhstan International School
- MacFarlane IB Elementary School
- German-American International School
- Alpine Elementary School—Longmont, CO, USA □
- Robbinsdale Area Schools—St. Paul, MN, USA
- RCHK Primary Schools—Hong Kong, China
- The International School International Baccalaureate—Portland, Oregon, USA
- ibo.org
- McKinley Elementary School—San Diego, CA USA



What is the International Baccalaureate Organization?

- It is a non-governmental (NGO) organization of UNESCO. The IB's alliance with UNESCO encourages the integration of its educational goals into the IB curriculum.
- It was established in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is governed by a 16-member council and is funded by fees from IB World Schools.
- The IBO offers three programs of international education for students aged 3-19 years old:
 - The Diploma Program at the high school level (grades 9-12).
 - The Middle Years Program (MYP) (students 11-16 years old).
 - The Primary Years Program (PYP) (for students 3-12 years old).
- There are 651,000 IB students and 2,390 authorized IB schools (242 in the United States) in 129 countries.



What's the story behind the IBO?

Marie Therese Maurette created the framework for what would eventually become the IB Diploma Programme, in 1948, when she wrote *Is There a Way of Teaching for Peace?*, a handbook for UNESCO. In the mid-1960's, a group of teachers from the International School of Geneva (Ecolint) created the International Schools Examinations Syndicate (ISES), which would later become the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The IB headquarters were officially established in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1968, for the development and maintenance of the Diploma Programme, which provided an internationally acceptable university admission qualifications for young people whose parents worked as diplomats or with international and multi-national companies.



What is an IB PYP School?

Regardless of location, size, or make-up, an IB PYP school strives to develop an internationally minded person.

The mission of the IBO:

- To develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people.
- To create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.
- To work with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment.
- To encourage students worldwide to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



What does that mean at Cook?

At Cook students are taught WHY they should know something and how it connects to other subjects and the world around them. It means students often decide the direction of instruction, based on their curiosities and inquiries. It means high quality teaching and learning—challenging instruction and worldwide knowledge “at home” (so to speak, in whichever country where you live and go to school).



How does the IB PYP teach students to be internationally minded?

Through teaching and modeling the “Learner Profile” our students learn to be internationally minded. Regardless of the IB school your child may visit, these characteristics or “Learner Profile” remain the same—foundational to the IB PYP learning experience.



But, really, what does it mean to be “internationally minded” and why is it important?

It is a thoughtful, critical perspective that applies to who we are and what we do. It includes how we communicate, our political awareness, cultural understanding, celebrating diversity, global awareness of global issues, and a reflection on how knowledge is constructed and applied. At Cook, we focus on moving students toward becoming people who reflect on the characteristics of the “Learner Profile and their own growth towards these goals.



Who is an “internationally minded” person?

According to the IB PYP, an “internationally minded” person is someone who demonstrates the attributes of the “Learner Profile.”



What is the “Learner Profile?”

These are qualities determined to be most important in creating positive and productive citizens of the world.



What are these “Learner Profile” qualities?

- **Inquirers**— We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.
- **Thinkers**— We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
- **Communicators**— We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
- **Courageous**— We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
- **Knowledgeable**— We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
- **Principled**— We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.
- **Caring**— We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and the world around us.
- **Open-Minded**— We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
- **Balanced**— We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives- intellectual, physical, and emotional- to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and the world in which we live.
- **Reflective**— We thoughtfully consider our world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.



What are the IB “Attitudes”?

The “Attitudes” are the daily expressions of the “Learner Profile” used by teachers in teaching and by students in their learning.

*“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”
--Winston Churchill*

- **Appreciation**—Seeing and being thankful for the wonder and beauty of our world.
- **Commitment**—Being responsible for our learning, showing self-discipline, and perseverance. Sticking with a difficult task until it is completed.
- **Confidence**—Knowing we can do it! Having courage to take risks, using what we have learned, and making good choices.
- **Cooperation**—Working with others and being willing to lead or follow as needed.
- **Creativity**—Using our imagination while thinking and doing things.
- **Empathy**—Being able to put ourselves in someone else’s place in order to understand her or him.
- **Enthusiasm**—Being excited about learning and life.
- **Independence**—Thinking and acting on our own.
- **Integrity**—Being fair and honest.
- **Respect**—Showing that we can for others, our world, and ourselves.
- **Tolerance**—Understanding, appreciating, and celebrating differences in each other.



What does “attitude” look like?

Attitude is an outward expression of an inner feeling. Some people try to mask their attitude, but a cover doesn't last long—attitude always finds a way to leak out.

“It is the vanguard of your true self. Its root is inward but its fruit is outward. It is your best friend or worst enemy. It is more honest and consistent about you than your words. It is what draws people to you or repels them. It is never content until it is expressed. It is the librarian of your past. It is the speaker of your present. It is the prophet of your future. There is not a single part of your current life that is not affected by your attitude. And your future will definitely be influenced by the attitude you carry with you from today forward.”—The Difference Maker



So, what will my child be learning at Cook?

With the IB PYP at COOK, we are committed to structured inquiry as the vehicle for learning. Six Transdisciplinary themes provide the framework for exploration and construction of knowledge. Teachers and students are guided by these Transdisciplinary themes—as the design units of inquiry for exploration and study. Through this process, students develop an understanding of important concepts, acquire essential skills and knowledge, develop particular attitudes and learn to take socially responsible action.



Ok, what does “Transdisciplinary” mean?

Transdisciplinary is the word that IB uses to describe a discipline that applies across all disciplines—it is an interconnectedness and can be applied across all subjects and applied to real life. A Transdisciplinary concept stretches across math, science, language arts, and social studies and ties it all together; it is not isolated to one subject. For example, the idea of change affects all subject areas—the IB PYP strives to demonstrate this through learning, giving understanding to a real life world.

The IB curriculum incorporates 5 essential elements:

1. CONCEPTS—there are eight fundamental concepts; expressed as key questions, to propel the process of inquiry. These universal concepts drive the research units—called UNITS OF INQUIRY, but they also have relevance within and across all subject areas (Transdisciplinary). The eight fundamental concepts are

- Form: What is it like?
- Function: How does it work?
- Causation: Why is it like it is?
- Change: How is it changing?
- Connection: How is it connected to other things?
- Perspective: What are the points of view?
- Reflection: How do we know?

2. **SKILLS**--There are 5 sets of Transdisciplinary skills acquired in the process of structured inquiry. These are:
 - Thinking
 - Communication
 - Social
 - Research
 - Self-Management

3. **ATTITUDES**--The PYP promotes attitudes that we want our COOK IB SCHOOL students to feel, value, and demonstrate.

4. **ACTION**- Our COOK students are encouraged to reflect, to make informed choices and to take **action** that will help their peers, school staff, and the wider community. This is how our students demonstrate a deeper sense of learning, by applying their knowledge to service and positive action.

5. **KNOWLEDGE**—Rather than provide a fixed syllabus or curriculum, the PYP has identified themes, or areas of knowledge, which are used to organize the 6 Units of Inquiry, taught from early childhood through grade 5. These Units of Inquiry provide the framework (as opposed to a text book curriculum) for a wide variety of resources to be explored in order to accomplish the objectives within each Unit of Inquiry:
 - Who We Are
 - Where We Are in Place and Time
 - How We Express Ourselves
 - How the World Works
 - How We Organize Ourselves
 - Sharing the Planet
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So, what actually is a “Unit of Inquiry”?

A Unit of Inquiry usually lasts for 6-8 weeks and the objective is to cover all 6 themes throughout the year. For example, during the Unit of Inquiry “Sharing the Planet” students may spend 6 weeks looking at the resources we have in the world and how various countries use and share and dispose of these resources. Students will answer questions like: How do these resources connect people around the world? Or, how are these resources changing and what does that mean for people? These concepts and questions move across all school subjects and apply to real life and the world around us.



How does COOK implement these Units of Inquiry?

These themes or Units of Inquiry, provide a framework on which our teachers build students’ knowledge. With the IB PYP, the priority is not on using a set of textbooks, but rather the emphasis is on a wide variety of resources from which teachers and students extract knowledge, develop understanding, and explore ways of applying that to real life.



How are students at COOK tested?

Students at COOK IB SCHOOL are assessed in a variety of ways, including written tests, exams, projects, oral presentations and written reports. Assessment in IB PYP is “criterion referenced.” This means students are scored against Standards and using a rubric, not against each other. Teachers will give the students a rubric on larger assignments that explains to the students what is expected of them. The rubric states what the criteria are for the assignment (in a paper, for instance) and what the score will be for addressing or not addressing each point in that criteria. The rubric allows students to take ownership of their effort and learning.



Please tell me what is a RUBRIC?

A rubric defines what are the standards or requirements that need to be accomplished in order to achieve the overall target or goal.



Explain to me a little more about how my child will be assessed at COOK?

At COOK, each Unit of Inquiry allows students opportunities to demonstrate that learning is taking place—that there are shifts, if you will, in their understanding. This may look different across all subject areas—however, this shift in understanding is not always best demonstrated through a piece of written work or a traditional exam. Students may be asked to put together a final project, draw, act out a performance, do a presentation, or some other way to show what they have learned. The goal is for our students to demonstrate that learning has taken place by showing what they understand and how they are applying that understanding to real life and the world around them. Authentic learning cannot always be demonstrated through traditional tests or exams. At COOK, we believe that assessment is the continuation of the learning process. It is NOT assessment of learning, but it is assessment **for** learning.

The IB views assessment as needing to be authentic, essential, rich, engaging, and feasible—it should incorporate students in the process of evaluating their learning. “Formative” assessment is interwoven into the daily lessons and learning—this ongoing process of “checking in” between teachers and students, helps both teachers and students find out what they already know, in order to plan for the next stage of learning. “Formative” assessment and teaching are directly linked; effective learning cannot take place without one or the other. “Summative” assessment takes place at the end of the teaching and learning process—this is the time that students have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and application of what has been learned.



How can parents help students with schoolwork?

Follow up daily with your child to see what homework they have. Help reinforce at home the program requirements that the student fills out their School Agenda or Planner each and every day, then use this to check for assignments each evening at home. Help your student schedule time so they don't feel overwhelmed. Realize that you will probably help them with (not do) some of their larger projects. Most parents will find pleasure or pride in helping their child grow in this way, as they together to do larger projects.



How can I, as a PARENT, get involved?

- Volunteer in your child's classroom, the library, in the computer lab, at lunch, etc.
- Provide communication between yourself and school that is regular, 2-way, and meaningful.
- Participate as a full partner in decisions that impact your child and family.
- Portfolios are a part of documenting student growth and reflections over the course of the student's elementary career. Ask your child to see his/hers often when visiting the school.
- Collaboration with the community, through partnerships, which are mutually beneficial to our school and the community.
- You are always welcome at Cook! We need your support and assistance to make our school the great place that it is!

In the end, here is a summary of what the IB PYP is:

*"The whole art of teaching is only the awakening of the natural curiosity of young minds."
—Anatole France*

*"I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think."
—Socrates*

This means that at Cook, with the IB PYP, our students in all grades have the opportunity to own their learning. Our teachers do not "cover" a subject or "give" a lesson. At Cook, our students take the lesson or learning process—they do it, make it, and experience it. Our students ask questions and learn how to find the answers to those questions and apply to their lives and the world around them. With the IB PYP, Cook students see how things are connected in a real way, rather than simply being fragmented into school subjects.

So, in the end, what makes the IB PYP so effective at COOK?

We are a truly committed to becoming an international community and we are committed to the IB philosophy that students need to be at the center of real life learning by using their natural curiosity. The IB PYP model fits well with our goals, at COOK, to guide our students to be internationally minded with a passion for life-long learning.