

**THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAM  
IN THE UPPER ST. CLAIR SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**



*1. What is the difference between the PYP and the USC Traditional Program?*

Both the PYP and the Traditional Program are built upon the same USC core curriculum in reading, math, science and social studies. The differences emerge through the four cornerstones of the PYP program, which are inquiry, the learner profile, international-mindedness, and action.

**Inquiry** – This method of teaching strives to improve questioning techniques, curiosity, independent work habits, cooperation, control over material covered, and interest in classroom units of study. Building on the USC School District curriculum, staff members collaborate to develop the units of inquiry (planners). These units are organized under six transdisciplinary themes: Who We Are; Where We Are in Place and Time; How We Express Ourselves; How the World Works; How We Organize Ourselves; and How We Share the Planet. Students are given a voice, generating their own wonderings and pursuing an investigation of the answers. These units extend the existing key concepts of the USC curriculum into more global perspectives. An example from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade connects with the Science curriculum. The study of land and water leads students to an exploration of erosion and its effects, as well as water conservation efforts around the world. To help parents and students alike see progress, each child maintains a portfolio of artifacts and personal reflections. These are shared annually.

**Learner Profile** - This element of the PYP focuses on academic attributes in an attempt to build lifelong learners, who are always seeking new knowledge to better themselves and others, and students who do more than is expected. These 10 terms capture the habits of good learners, which we want our children to recognize in themselves and in others. The Learner Profile terms are: inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, caring, open-minded, balanced, reflective. Through classroom conversations, as well as selected portfolio artifacts, students have a chance to reflect on their growth and set goals.

**Action** – This aspect of PYP reaches out into the school, community and world to make a difference—one child and one deed at a time. Each unit of inquiry includes an action component. The culminating activity of the Primary Years Program occurs in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The Inquiry Exhibition provides an opportunity for students to work collaboratively to conduct in-depth research of a real-life problem under the direct supervision of a faculty mentor and lead teacher. Students present their findings through visual displays, spoken expertise, and written summaries. It is an opportunity for the children to share their knowledge of all aspects of the PYP program. This celebration is open to the community. Throughout the year, all students participate in cross grade level get-togethers. Addressing building-wide

topics, these get-togethers foster community and a sense of responsibility for one another.

**International-mindedness** – This component broadens the students’ openness to the world around them and helps them develop an appreciation for the interconnectedness of our world. To facilitate this, teachers offer opportunities for students to inquire into human commonalities through the transdisciplinary themes. The goal is for students to gain intercultural understanding. Sustained inquiry is incorporated into lessons, designed by teachers, through the use of literary genre, annual country investigations, utilization of technology resources, and is often driven by the students’ own curiosity as well as their family heritage. We provide instruction first in our own national identity –our own language, literature, history and cultural heritage. Thereby, students gain the knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills and dispositions, to contribute to and make a difference in their own lives, their communities, and the wider world.

*2. How is transportation provided if my child enrolls in PYP at Streams, and I live in Baker or Eisenhower areas?* Students are picked up at their neighborhood bus stop and transported to their neighborhood school. From there they are transferred to a bus for shuttling to Streams. All students arrive in time for the 8:15 start of the school day. At the end of the day, students are transported from Streams directly to their neighborhood bus stop. There is no afternoon stop at Baker or Eisenhower schools.

*3. How is transportation provided if my child lives in a Streams neighborhood and elects the traditional program at Baker?* Your child will ride their neighborhood bus to Streams and then be transferred to the shuttle bus to Baker, arriving in time for the 8:15 start of the school day. At the end of the day students are transported from Baker directly to their neighborhood bus stops with no stop at Streams.

*4. Is the PYP for gifted learners or more rigorous?* No, the intention of the PYP is to engage all types of learners. The Units of Inquiry are designed to accommodate all learning styles and abilities. Students with special needs, Service Agreements, or IEP’s receive services as specified in their agreements. Additional rigor does become a natural extension of the program during the latter year of the Middle Years Program, as well as during the Diploma Program.

*5. If I don’t elect to enroll in Kindergarten, can I join the program later (elementary or middle school)?* Availability is contingent upon space and enrollment numbers across all district buildings. A waiting list is maintained for students who are interested in joining the program in later years. Students can join the IB continuum at any grade from 5 through 10 for the Middle Years Program and/or at grade 11 for the Diploma Program.

6. *Is there a waiting list?* Yes, there is currently a waiting list. This waiting list is maintained each year. The school district examines enrollment each year and makes decisions about the waiting list based on enrollment.

7. *How do you fit this in with the existing curriculum?* “Fitting everything in” is a universal challenge in education! Teachers are masters at weaving together elements of the Common Core, state and national standards, local USC standards, and elements of the PYP. This is accomplished through collaboration, careful planning, and a clear focus on student learning targets.

### **Now I am ready to make a choice for my child. What are the next steps?**

1. If you have decided on the program for your child, complete the appropriate application form, available in the Kindergarten registration packet or on the district website, and forward it to Dr. Lindsay Klousnitzer, Principal and PYP Head of School, at Streams Elementary School.

*Updated 9/2021*



Customizing Learning,  
Nurturing Potential...  
**Delivering Excellence**