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**International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program Comes To Washington D.C. Schools**

**By Stacy Andell**

Shepard Elementary School Immersion Program

Washington D.C. Schools are eager to begin a new language immersion program at the primary school level. Beginning in August of 2006, pre - Kindergarten students of various foreign language backgrounds will join the new language immersion program. In particular, French and Spanish speaking children are needed to start this two way immersion experience. Students participating in the program will receive either French - English or Spanish - English content classes taught by teachers fluent in the target language. Children born in late 2001 and early 2002 and speak a foreign language are encouraged to enroll.

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.

How Shepard Became an IB World School

In order to teach the Primary Years Program, Shepard had to go through several stages to ensure that the curriculum would reflect an international standard. Washington D.C. schools first entered the Consideration Phase, as they conducted research into the ability for schools like Shepard to meet the

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rigorous requirements for admission to the program. The district conducted an in -depth analysis of the philosophy and curriculum as well as identifying the resources that would be needed to implement the Primary Years Program.

During the Candidate Phase, the school goes through all the necessary procedures for implementing the new program. This involves training teachers to use the new curriculum as well as gathering the resources necessary to deliver the program. Shepard Elementary School then must implement the program for a full school year in order to complete this phase. The Washington D.C. school district will assist Shepard in beginning the program in August of 2006. This trial phase will determine how well Washington D.C. schools are able to handle the rigorous demands of this international school system.

At the end of the trial phase, scheduled for August of 2007 for Shepard Elementary School, a delegation from the International Baccalaureate Organization visits the school. During this visit, the

delegation members decide if the school has shown success in implementing the curriculum. If the school does well, the school becomes authorized to offer the program and attains the internationally recognized status of International Baccalaureate World School. The IBO will continue to visit and monitor the school's progress every five years.

### Teacher Training

The teachers at Shepard Elementary received special training in order to meet the demands of the internationally recognized curriculum. Before becoming authorized to teach the program, the principal, administrative staff, and the teachers all undergo training of some sort. Some teachers attend IBO workshops. Many of the teachers in the Washington D.C. school district attended school based training organized by the IBO. Teachers are also encouraged to keep up - to - date using IBO's online curriculum center in addition to attending conferences and workshops.

Shepard Elementary has taken the first steps to bring Washington D.C. public education to an international level by entering these first phases of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program.

Stacy Andell is a staff writer for Schools K-12, providing free, in-depth reports on all U.S. public and private K-12 schools. Stacy has a nose for research and writes stimulating news and views on school issues. For more on Washington D.C. schools visit

<http://www.schoolsk-12.com/Washington-DC/Washington/index.html>

## **Seattle Schools Participate In Washington Assessment Of Student Learning**

**By Stacy Andell**

Washington Assessment of Student Learning is Enacted for the 2006-2007 School Year

## International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program Comes To Washington D.C. Schools

The class of 2008 in all Seattle Schools will be required to pass the 10th–grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning, this will be the way that most students will earn the Certificate of Academic Achievement, one of the four new statewide graduation requirements. The Washington Assessment of Student Learning report will indicate a student's performance in reading, writing and math with science being in a separate report. Most students in the Seattle Schools will, of course, be very successful on the three sections on their first try but for those students who may have difficulty meeting the standards, there will be opportunities for them to receive assistance. These programs will help the students in the Seattle Schools achieve scores on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning while furthering their education.

### Seattle Schools Establishes Programs to Aid Students on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning

The Summer College is a ground–breaking collaboration between Seattle Schools, three Seattle Community Colleges and the City of Seattle. The Summer College is designed to offer those students who need remedial help for high school students. The Summer College program will last five weeks and will be conducted on the campuses of the three community colleges. This will not only give the students the help they need but provide an early introduction to life on a college campus. Those students who have scored Level 2 or below on at least one section of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning will be eligible for the program.

A second program created by the Seattle Schools in order to offer assistance to students is the Extended Learning Summer Semester. These programs are intended to provide students with the opportunity to improve their reading, mathematics, and writing skills before retaking the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. A for credit program will be offered for ninth and tenth graders during the summer at Ingraham, Franklin and West Seattle high schools. These courses will not only be offered in math and reading but also in social studies, language arts, science and health. Students will need to be referred by their high school counselor before they can participate in this program. This is a solid program but may not suit all students.

There are several other programs that are being developed by the Seattle Schools for the 2006–2007 school year. All of the high schools in the Seattle Schools system are adding some kind of student assistance to help them do their best on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. Several high schools have added a seventh class period that will be used for help or remedial work. Tutoring sessions in math and literacy and classroom tutors have been set up at most high schools. Seattle Schools are instituting intensive instructional periods, Evening School programs, Contract Learning and the Digital Learning Commons in an effort to provide programs that appeal to students' different learning styles and schedules.

Stacy Andell is a staff writer for Schools K–12, providing free, in–depth reports on all U.S. public and private K–12 schools. For more on Seattle schools visit

<http://www.schoolsk-12.com/Washington/Seattle/index.html>



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