



A PARENT GUIDE

To the



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAM

Franklin Academy Palm Beach Gardens

Because, the future is not what it used to be.

What is an International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program (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 is;

- 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 this mean at Franklin Academy?

- It means our students will be taught *WHY* they should know something and how it connects to other subjects and the world around them.
- It means high quality teaching and learning, challenging instruction and international knowledge.
- It means that teachers will create a standards based program of inquiry (POI) around six transdisciplinary themes.
- It means that in addition to maintaining a very clear, purposeful and aggressive focus on literacy and mathematics, we will also work diligently to prepare our students for the 21st century.

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

- Through teaching and modeling the “Learner Profile.” Regardless of the IB school your child may visit, these characteristics or “Learner Profile” remain the same—foundational to the IB PYP learning experience.
- According to the IB PYP, an “internationally minded” person is someone who demonstrates the attributes of the “Learner Profile.”



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 Franklin, we will focus on moving students toward becoming people who reflect the characteristics 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?
 - **Inquirer** -- I am curious and know how to discover answers to many of my questions. I love to learn!
 - **Thinkers** -- I use my thinking skills to make good choices and solve problems.
 - **Communicators** -- I understand and share ideas in more than one language.
 - **Risk-takers** -- I try new things, love to explore, and confidently share my



experiences.

- **Knowledgeable** -- I explore big ideas that are important. I know and can do a lot of important things.
- **Principled** -- I am fair and honest. I can make good decisions about what is right and wrong for me.
- **Caring** -- I am concerned about other people's needs and feelings. I believe it is important to help others.
- **Open-Minded** -- I am comfortable with differences. I welcome and respect other people's points of views and ways of doing things.
- **Balanced** -- To be healthy, it is important for me to balance the needs of my mind and body.
- **Reflective** -- I think about and discuss my learning, skills, and products.

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

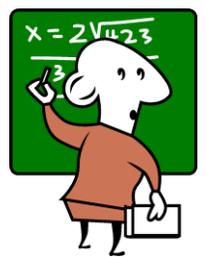
- **Appreciation** -- Seeing and being thankful for the wonder and beauty of our world.
- **Commitment** -- Being responsible for my learning, showing self-discipline, and perseverance. Sticking with a difficult task until it is completed.
- **Confidence** -- Knowing I can do it! Having courage to take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

What does "attitude" look like?

- Attitude is an outwards 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.
- The Difference Maker

So, what will my child be learning at Franklin Academy?

- Literacy standards which seek to strengthen students' ability to read, write, listen and speak.



- Mathematics and increasing student abilities to use mathematical processes to solve problems.
- **With the IB PYP at FA-PBG, 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 they 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 interconnected and can be applied across all subjects and applied to real life.
- A transdisciplinary concept stretches across math, science, English, geography and ties it all together; it is not isolated to one subject.
 - For example, the idea of change affects math, science, English, geography -- 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 8 fundamental concepts expressed as key questions, to propel the process of inquiry. These universal concepts drive the research units—called UNITS OF INQUIRY (have you heard of this before?!)— but they also have relevance within and across all subject areas (transdisciplinary). The 8 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 HAYES students to feel, value, and demonstrate.
4. **ACTION**
 - Our HAYES 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**
 - The PYP recognizes that it is inappropriate and challenging to dictate what every child should know in an international environment and community. 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 Kindergarten through grade 4. 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. The units of inquiry are:

- 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

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 (i.e. math, English, geography, etc.) and apply to real life and the world around us.

And, how will FA-PBG implement these Units of Inquiry?

- These themes or Units of Inquiry, will 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.

What resources will FA-PBG use, if there are no textbooks/workbooks?

- We will have a wide variety of resources available:
 - We will use a benchmark literacy program that provides a leveled, balanced literacy approach allowing teachers to deliver instruction at each student’s unique, instructional reading level.
 - For Math class, FA-PBG will continue to use the Ready Curriculum (Curriculum Associates). This is a thoroughly researched, highly recommended program that has proven results. With this math program, students learn foundational concepts that apply to real life. This program also provides continuity between each grade level.

Why not use textbooks/workbooks? It seems more systematic?

- Because the IB PYP philosophy believes that students learn best through authentic inquiry. While there is certainly a place in the curriculum for textbooks and workbooks, FA-PBG will use a wide range of resources that best cater to our students’ individual needs and learning styles. The IB PYP also recognizes that it is not knowledge alone that makes a learner successful, but the skills and attitudes they develop along the way.

How are students at FA-PBG tested?

- Students at FA-PBG are assessed in a variety of ways, including tests, exams, projects, oral presentations and written reports. We also administer norm referenced assessments.
- Assessments in IB PYP are “criterion referenced.” This means students are scored against standards, not against each other (or at the teacher’s whim).
- At FA-PBG, 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 FA-PBG, we believe that assessment is the continuation of the learning process. It is NOT simply assessment of learning, but it is also assessment for learning. The point is that our students at FA-PBG are able to apply their learning to the world around them. 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.

What is the homework load like? How much homework should a child have outside of school?

- This is not a program that just loads on a lot of homework. This is a big misconception that many people have of the IB program. Keeping in mind that each child is different, the homework assigned is not overwhelming AND kids still have time for a variety of after school activities. Long-term and large projects are given ample time and warning to complete.

How can parents help students with schoolwork?

- Follow up daily with your child to see what homework they have. 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. Example: Many parents will make a trip with their child to a museum for history or cultural tasks, or help them create posters for presentations. Most parents will find pleasure or pride in helping their child grow in this way, as they together to do larger projects.

How can you, as a PARENT, get involved?

- Continue to volunteer in your child's classroom, the library, at lunch, etc.
- Provide communication between yourself and school that is regular, two-way, meaningful, and supportive of the students and school
- Participate as a full partner in decisions that impact your child and family.
- Read everything that comes home with your child.
- Attend every parent and family event that is planned during the year.
- Portfolios are a part of documenting student growth and reflections over the course of the students' primary school years. 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 FA-PBG! We need your support and assistance to make our school the great place that it is!

In summary, why is the PYP the best model for elementary school?

PYP TOP TEN

1. The structure that is used to organize and support local curriculum, when used with integrity, assures a higher level of rigor and organization both horizontally and vertically; more than what would be found in non IB schools.
2. Its research base is exhaustive, comprehensive and interconnected.
3. The Program of Inquiry provides a high level of vertical articulation between grade levels and assures a consistency of educational programming for all students..
4. The PYP planner requires that key concepts, attitudes and the learner profile be formally written into the Program of Inquiry. This means that they are taught all day – everyday.
5. The best preparation that kids can have for the MYP program is the PYP program. No other educational system will prepare them better for the 21st century than the DP program. Achieving a DP diploma is the most advanced and sophisticated education a child can receive. The PYP is the beginning of that process.
6. In its purest form, it has a strong globally minded, international plan. The international perspective is something that is purposeful and planned for.
7. It focuses on inquiry and using a constructivist approach which is best practice. Non IB schools could only do this in segments.
8. The PYP planner assures that a significant amount of higher level, critical thinking is done.
9. The POI is a tool to organize curriculum and provides for a higher level of vertical articulation or coordination between grade levels.
10. The learner profile provides a common framework and vision for what we want students to be when they leave our school.

