
PYP NEWS

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Primary Years Program

Handley IB World School

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IBO Mission Statement

The IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization) 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, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Handley School Mission Statement

The Program for Creative and Academically Talented at Handley School is committed to the development of principled young people to become inquiring and compassionate life-long learners. The staff is committed to providing rigorous transdisciplinary curriculum experiences through guided inquiry that promote intercultural understanding and global-mindedness.

Inquiry-based education in the PYP

Inquiry, as the leading pedagogical approach of the PYP, is recognized as allowing students to be actively involved in their own learning and to take responsibility for that learning. An extensive study of the literature, combined with practical experience, has led the PYP to the position it now holds, which is one of commitment to structured, purposeful inquiry that engages students actively in their own learning. It is recognized that while there is a role for drill and practice in the classroom,

teaching to the fullest extent possible about central ideas that are concept based leads to the most substantial and enduring learning. Inquiry, interpreted in the broadest sense, is the process initiated by the students or the teacher that moves the students from their current level of understanding to a new and deeper level of understanding. This can mean:

- Exploring, wondering, questioning
- Experimenting with possibilities
- Making predictions and acting purposefully to see what happens
- Collecting data and reporting findings
- Clarifying existing ideas and reappraising perceptions of events
- Deepening understanding through the application of a concept
- Making and testing theories
- Researching and seeking information
- Taking and defending a position
- Solving problems in a variety of ways

An explicit expectation of the PYP is that successful inquiry will lead to responsible action initiated by the students as a result of the learning process. This action may extend the students' learning, or it may have a wider social impact. Both inquiry and action will clearly look different within each age range and from one age range to the next.

One of the best ways that parents can encourage their children to be inquirers is to model their own inquisitiveness by sharing those experiences, circumstances, objects, and ideas that they find fascinating and lead to the desire to find answers. Keep an "I wonder" family journal at home.

Units of Inquiry

Kindergarten

Kindergarten's latest inquiry has been under the Transdisciplinary theme of *How We Express Ourselves*. Their central idea is "People use rhythm and rhyme to express ideas and feelings in unique ways." Students have been using word family patterns to learn to read new words, learning nursery rhymes, making rhyme books, and exploring rhythm patterns in music. They will be writing original rhymes as well.

First grade

First grade is concluding their unit of inquiry on weather, under the theme of *How the World Works*. They studied weather tools and even made their own barometers. They have been weather watchers every day, investigating and recording weather conditions. They have also inquired about weather in different countries and done oral presentations about their findings. Guest speaker, TV 5 weatherman Darrin Bradley, talked to the first graders about how he predicts the weather using weather tools.

Second grade

Second grade is finishing a unit on the role of imagination in expressing ideas, under the theme, *How We Express Ourselves*. They have had many varied experiences as they explored the use of imagination. They have practiced the comprehension strategy of visualization, using their imagination to make a picture of what the text is saying. They have studied the elements of the fantasy genre and will be writing an original fantasy. They have invited a mime group to visit on December 15.

Third grade

Third grade is also currently exploring the theme of *How We Express Ourselves*, studying different communication mediums. They have had a variety of guest speakers who have presented information on different topics. The speakers were:

Captain Ben Gibson—pilot

Jerry O'Donnell—radio broadcasting

Jessica Osborne—how blind people communicate

Dennis Arvanitis—Greek language

Nathalie Menendes—French language

Ann Russell-Lutenske—communication in theater

Jennifer Vandezande—radio

Joe Turner—radio science

Ann Branch--advertising

Third graders have also been investigating communication in other cultures, in particular, different meanings for non-verbal communication.

Fourth grade

Fourth grade's unit was under the theme of "*Where We Are in Place and Time* with the central idea of "Regions change over time." The students performed a musical production entitled "U.S. Geography". Through this play and their own research, students learned about the regions of the United States. SVSU students expanded this globally as they taught lessons on the regions of Africa.

Fifth Grade

Fifth graders have been studying a unit on settlement, under the transdisciplinary theme, *Where We Are in Place and Time*. The central idea is "Settlement and Movement can cause positive and/or negative impact on the lives of people." Students have been inquiring into their own family histories to discover why their families chose to settle in Saginaw. Each student made a quilt square depicting this information.

In November, fifth graders took a field trip to Bronner's. One of the things they saw there was a real Dickens Village. They will be creating their own version of a Dickens Village that will be on display in the gym for the Christmas Walk-about.

