

Frequently Asked Questions regarding North Woods and IB learning

1) What is IB?

IB (International Baccalaureate) is an international education which focuses on learners, develops effective approaches to teaching and learning, works within global contexts, and explores significant content. IB learners strive to become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.

2) What is the Primary Years Program (PYP)?

The Primary Years Program focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer in the classroom and in the outside world. It consists of six transdisciplinary units: Who We Are, Where We Are In Place and Time, How We Express Ourselves, How the World Works, How We Organize Ourselves, and Sharing the Planet. Each of the six transdisciplinary units are taught at each grade level but with a different descriptor which provides for different learning experiences at all levels. Teachers use their unit descriptor to create their central idea and lines of inquiry for each unit.

3) What makes North Woods International different from other schools in the district when it comes to IB?

We focus on inquiry teaching and learning. What is inquiry learning? Inquiry learning is active learning that starts with a provocation (something to get the students engaged in the learning) - by posing a question, problem, or scenario. It triggers curiosity in the students. We follow the inquiry cycle (tuning in, finding out, sorting out, going further, making connections, and taking action). Teachers are the facilitators who gently guide students' inquiry process toward the big picture. We also teach the students the 10 Learner Profile Attributes (caring, knowledgeable, thinkers, inquirers, risk-takers, principled, balanced, open-minded, communicators, and reflective). We have an attribute of the month in which we focus on that attribute school wide. The attributes are also focused on throughout the units in each grade level. Another thing that sets North Woods apart from other schools in our district is that all students receive Spanish instruction. We use the school district curriculum but teach it throughout the six transdisciplinary units.

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- 4) Will it be hard for my student to make the switch if we didn't start at North Woods in kindergarten? Will my student struggle with the new form of learning?

Students do not have to start at North Woods International in kindergarten to benefit from IB. All students who join North Woods throughout their elementary career would be immersed in the inquiry in their classroom. The IB Learner Profile attributes are used in classrooms throughout the school year. Students will learn right along with the rest of their classmates.

- 5) What is the Learner Profile?

The Learner Profile consists of 10 attributes (caring, inquirers, communicators, knowledgeable, thinkers, principled, open-minded, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective). One attribute from the Learner Profile is taught monthly each year school wide and they are also taught and incorporated throughout the transdisciplinary units at each grade level.

- 6) How or why is IB good for students?

IB is good for students because it allows students to work through an inquiry based learning approach. We teach and instill the learner profile attributes in each student. As well as the teachers, strive to live out the attributes throughout their lives. It also provides students with an international perspective.

- 7) What curriculum is used?

North Woods follows the same district curriculum as every other elementary school just that we teach it through inquiry based learning. We have progress reports that come home during the 1st and 3rd quarter at parent teacher conferences. We send home standards based report cards at the end of 2nd and 4th quarters. Students also reflect on how they feel they are doing in regards to the learner profile attributes each quarter. Spanish has a proficient assessment that teachers fill out to show parents how their child is doing with the Spanish language.
