

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [X] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Lynne Gibson  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name International Academy  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1020 East Square Lake Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Bloomfield Hills MI 48304-1957  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Oakland County

Telephone (248) 341-5905 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL http://www.iatoday.org E-mail lgibson@bloomfield.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Wanda Cook-Robinson E-mail Wanda.Cook-Robinson@oakland.k12.mi.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Oakland School District Tel. (248) 341-5901

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Dr. Theresa Rich  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 2 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools
- 10 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	0	0	0
<b>1</b>	0	0	0
<b>2</b>	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	205	202	407
<b>10</b>	179	209	388
<b>11</b>	174	215	389
<b>12 or higher</b>	162	205	367
<b>Total Students</b>	720	831	1551

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 44 % Asian
  - 4 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 49 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	21
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	1546
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1%  
20 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Languages spoken in the home include Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Georgian, German, Greek, Gujararti, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Malayalam, Marathi, Persian, Pilipino, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, and Urdu.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8%  
Total number students who qualify: 126

8. Students receiving special education services: 0 %  
1 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	5
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	84
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	19
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	98%	99%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	347
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	100%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The International Academy community, through the International Baccalaureate Program, instills cultural appreciation and global citizenship while promoting personal development and a passion for learning.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

The International Academy was created as a consortium school district in which 13 local school districts have invested in shares of the school. Each share is equivalent to five seats in each class filled by lottery in ninth grade. Students must meet the admission requirements of the school including an application, successful lottery draw by the home district and passing of the math placement and writing assignments. Students are able to take the placement assessments three times to gain entry into the school. Once enrolled at the school, all students are enrolled in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years and Diploma Programs.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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The International Academy (IA) is a tri-campus magnet high school that is available to high school students in Oakland County, Michigan and surrounding counties on a limited basis. The IA is dedicated to the mission of the International Baccalaureate to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. As an all-International Baccalaureate high school offering the Middle Years and Diploma Programs, the expectation is that every student graduates with an IB diploma; this sole focus and academic rigor attracts families. The tri-campus model allows students from across the large county to attend a campus close to their home. This allows the students to participate in extracurricular activities (athletics, marching band, etc.) at their home high school for a comprehensive high school experience.

As a tri-campus school, the International Academy is able to draw students from across Oakland County. Two of the campuses (West and East) also pull from surrounding counties including Wayne County in which Detroit is located. The cultural community of Oakland is diverse racially, ethnically, socioeconomically and religiously. Though each sending district in the consortium has a limited number of seats, the candidate pool for each district represents the diversity of each community. The students at each campus mirrors the cultural population of the surrounding area.

The student body is a diverse population that represents many national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Approximately 50% of the students have a parent that was born outside of the United States. India, Pakistan, Germany, France, Syria, Korea and China are some of the countries represented by the parent body. There were 347 students that were with either full International Baccalaureate Diploma or course candidates in the graduating class of 2017. Three hundred forty-seven spoke English and one hundred twenty-three identified a second language spoken in their home. These numbers are representative of the entire International Academy community.

The International Academy (IA) opened its doors in August 1996 to 135 freshmen. The process to create the school, however, began with an idea in the fall of 1992. The IA was envisioned as a school that would provide a world-class secondary educational experience utilizing the International Baccalaureate curriculum. To provide focus and direction, a comprehensive school organizational plan was adopted in the spring of 1994.

An agreement binding 11 Oakland County Districts together as co-owners was achieved in the fall of 1995 and the IA received the commitment of Oakland Schools, the intermediate school district, to assist the lower funded consortium districts in meeting the International Academy's per student cost. The districts also signed a "Letter of Understanding" that governs the function of the school including but not limited to calendar, school day, teaching conditions and the enrollment process.

Since opening the Okma Campus in August 1996, the International Academy has grown into a four-year high school with over 1500 enrolled students across three campuses. The IA is proud to be the first International Baccalaureate diploma public high school in North America and the second largest International Baccalaureate diploma granting school in the world. The IA leads the state in M-STEP, ACT and SAT scores and is consistently ranked by multiple sources including The Washington Post, US News and World Report and Newsweek as one of the top high schools in the United States. Additionally, the IA exceeds national and international norms in International Baccalaureate diploma acquisition rates. Over 90% of students regularly earn the full International Baccalaureate diploma, while the world average is 79%. IA students matriculate to the world's most selective universities and experience a successful transition to university expectations.

Within the two programs, the Middle Year and Diploma Programs, students are challenged academically in classes through both depth and breadth of content and with the application of learning skills that are interdisciplinary in nature. Students also complete the Personal Project in tenth grade - a 20-week independent project-based learning requirement - as well as a 4,000 word independently researched essay and approximately 150 hours of time outside of school spent on creative, active or service based

experiences. The school incorporates service learning into the curriculum and has two days within the school year dedicated to service and community building activities.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

Many students and families are attracted to the well-defined course requirements applied to all International Academy students. Mathematics, literature, social studies, and the sciences are core curricular components in each and every year. The program of study is particularly defined at the ninth and tenth grade levels. This uniform approach to the core curricular areas in ninth and tenth grade provides students with strong foundations for the IB Diploma Program courses in eleventh and twelfth grade. All courses in ninth and tenth grade are taught at the honors level.

All students at the IA take a sequenced program of study. The program of study is listed below for the core courses. Ninth grade students take: World Literature, Speech, World History, Economics, Biology, and Integrated Math 2 or Math 3. Tenth-grade students take: American Literature, American History, Chemistry, Physics, and Integrated Math 3 or Math Standard Level (pre-calculus). Eleventh-grade students begin a two-year course of study in: literature, history, science (Biology, Chemistry or Physics), and mathematics (Math Studies, Math SL or Math HL) and if not taking an arts course, students must take another science, language or Economics DP course. Students complete one semester of the Theory of Knowledge course. Twelfth grade students continue the two-year course of study in: literature, history, science (Biology, Chemistry or Physics), mathematics (Math Studies, Math SL or Math HL) and if not taking an arts course students must take another science, language or Economics DP course. Students also complete one semester of the Theory of Knowledge course. The foundational skills for each of the core areas are addressed in the approaches to learning that are embedded in the International Baccalaureate curriculum. The approaches to learning skills allow students to meet the different criteria in each of the content areas. The criteria specifically addressed in each core curricular areas are detailed below. At each level, students are assessed using detailed, comprehensive rubrics that include both content knowledge as well as approaches to learning skills.

Throughout the literature program students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of individual literary works, an understanding of the ways in which cultural values are expressed in literature, an awareness of the significance of the context in which a work is written and received and be able to substantiate and justify ideas with relevant examples. Students are challenged to analyze, synthesize and evaluate literature and to express ideas clearly and fluently in both written and oral communication.

The mathematics sequence begins with Integrated Math 2 which incorporates all five strands of mathematics and is generally comparable to a Geometry course (10th grade) at a comprehensive high school. Problem-solving is central to learning mathematics and involves the acquisition of mathematical skills and concepts in a wide range of situations, including non-routine, open-ended and real-world problems. Depending on the four-year course of study, students will enter college having successfully completed Math Studies (pre-calculus), Math SL (calculus 1) or Math HL (calculus 2).

Individuals and societies is the IB subject group for social sciences/history/civics. Over the four years at the IA, students will engage in four years of history with one semester of economics. Students may opt to take the two-year DP Economics course in junior and senior year as well. The aims of the social science curriculum includes the study of the human experience within physical, economic and social environments including the history and development of social and cultural institutions. At the core, the IA encourage students to engage with multiple perspectives and to appreciate the complex nature of historical concepts, issues, events and developments to help make the world a better and more peaceful place by promoting international-mindedness through the study of social sciences from more than one region of the world.

The science curriculum in ninth and tenth grade is the same for every student: biology (9th), physics and chemistry (10th). For eleventh and twelfth grades, students select at least one science to take for the next two-years as required by the IB curriculum. Students have the option of taking a second DP science course in lieu of a DP Arts course. Through studying biology, chemistry or physics, students should become aware of how scientists work and communicate with each other. While the scientific method may take on a wide

variety of forms, it is the emphasis on a practical approach through experimental work that characterizes these subjects. The aim of the IA science program is to enable students to: appreciate scientific study and creativity within a global context, acquire a body of knowledge, methods and techniques that characterize science and technology, develop an ability to analyze, evaluate and synthesize scientific information, develop and apply 21st century communication skills in the study of science and become critically aware, as global citizens, of the ethical implications of using science and technology.

Since the first graduating class in 2000, over 99% of students have matriculated to four-year colleges. On average, students are granted 17 college credits based upon their IB Diploma scores. The average ACT score for students is 29.9 which places the school average in the 93% percentile for this nationally norm-referenced standardized test.

The International Academy hosts visits from admissions counselors and encourages participation in panels, scholarship opportunities, and post-secondary school visits. Counselors meet with each junior and their family as part of the college readiness program. The IA offers the ACT, PSAT and M-Step and enrichments such as time management are available. Each student must complete a career mentorship before graduation.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

As the IB curriculum is meant to develop well-rounded students with a balanced curriculum that includes equal emphasis on courses outside the four core curricular areas defined in the previous section. In addition to the core courses listed above, all students at the IA also follow the IB programs of study that include five years of World Language, a minimum of two years of arts classes, one full-year of physical and health education as well as successful completion of the Personal Project, Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge course and Creativity, Activity, Service experiences.

Ninth grade students take: Modern World Language (French, German or Spanish), World Language and Culture (one semester), Music Ensemble or Visual Arts, and Physical and Health Education (one semester). Tenth-grade students take: Modern World Language, Music Ensemble or Visual Arts, Physical and Health Education (one semester) and Personal Project (one semester). Eleventh-grade students begin a two-year course of study in: World Language, World Language and Culture (one semester), and arts (Music Theory or Visual Arts) or another science, language or Economics DP course. Students also complete one semester of the Theory of Knowledge course as well as begin the Extended Essay and participate in Creativity, Activity or Service experiences. Twelfth-grade students continue the two-year course of study in: World Language, arts (Music Theory or Visual Arts) or another science, language or Economics DP course. Students also complete one semester of the Theory of Knowledge course as well as complete the Extended Essay and Creativity, Activity or Service experiences including a collaborative service project.

The arts program incorporates performing arts (Band, Orchestra, Choir) and visual arts. All ninth and tenth-grade students participate in an arts course for two years. Regardless if the class is performance or visual arts, the aims of the arts are to encourage and enable students to: create and present art; develop skills specific to the discipline; engage in a process of creative exploration and (self-)discovery and understand the relationship between art and its contexts.

The Adventure Challenge course is the name of the physical and health education course at the IA. This course focuses on the development of the whole student and extends far beyond the traditional physical education course with an emphasis solely on athletic performance. Through a series of activities and challenges the course encourages and enables students to: use inquiry to explore physical and health education concepts; achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle; collaborate and communicate effectively; build positive relationships and demonstrate social responsibility; and reflect on their learning experiences.

The IB places specific emphasis on learning a second language to the extent that a student is almost bilingual. Through the study of a second language, students uncover culture, identity, language structure and commonalities between the people of the world. The modern world language programs aim to: develop international-mindedness through the study of languages, cultures, and ideas and issues of global significance; enable students to communicate in the language they have studied in a range of contexts and

for a variety of purposes; and encourage, through the study of texts and through social interaction, an awareness and appreciation of a variety of perspectives of people from diverse cultures.

Research, analytic writing and exposure to and understanding of multiple perspectives are inherent in the IB curriculum. The media center is the heart and pulse of the IA and an integral part of every course. As a curriculum, the media specialists begin in ninth grade with push-in lessons that examine research methods, databases, sourcing and citing of information. Throughout the rest of the years, the media center supports technology integration and research through mini-lessons, obtaining materials and exposure to vetted electronic resources. The librarians explain academic honesty as it relates to acknowledging and building upon the work of others. Students have access to both print and online sources as well as the ability to connect to larger libraries to access information for all research assignments. Students demonstrate their understanding of the research process in tenth grade with the independent project-based Personal Project. The Extended Essay serves as the capstone project for all students and allows them to demonstrate their research and analytic talents as well as contribute to the global body of knowledge.

Lastly, service learning is embedded in the curriculum and offered as an extension or enrichment to the student experience. Students are encouraged to engage with the local community - through clubs, service, outreach - and the global community when possible. In ninth and tenth grade, these experiences can be within a class or through a day of service. As students enter the full Diploma program in junior year, these experiences are expressly part of the CAS, or Creativity, Activity and Service experiences. Students record and reflect upon their personal growth through these experiences as part of the core Diploma program requirements.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

The International Academy supports all students by adhering to the inclusive arrangements as outlined by local, state and federal guidelines, including English Language Learners and students receiving services and supports through a Section 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan.

Outside of formal documentation, teachers provide modifications on an as needed basis. Understanding that students experience emotional, physical and social barriers at times throughout their high school careers and lives, the International Academy strives to provide a safe environment that meets the needs of students and help develop lifelong skills. Modifications to class requirements can be informal, course specific and short-term or develop into formal long-term, school-wide changes that support students.

Students encountering barriers can be identified through numerous means. Families and students can identify concerns/obstacles to teachers, counselors and/or administration. Teachers can also identify students of concern through the Building Intervention Team (BIT) that has been established on each campus. The BIT consists of counselors, teachers and administrators and meets bi-weekly to discuss students and identify structures of support. Additional support such as social workers, school psychologists, special education teachers and occupational therapists are employed from the consortium districts as needed.

Instructional methods in each course are consistently reviewed by individual teachers and departments to provide activities and assessments that meet the academic, social, physical and emotional needs of students. Activities are designed to engage numerous learning styles and differentiation strategies are engaged throughout the curriculum. As every class is 90 minutes, teachers have the time to engage students in a variety of instructional methods within each class period. Class discussions and activities actively seek multiple perspectives. Students are encouraged to share personal responses to prompts, reflect upon how their learning has changed their perspective and identify areas of challenge. IA students participate in project based learning experiences such as the Personal Project and CAS Project. The Personal Project is a culminating MYP project focused on a student's personal interests in which the student creates a product and demonstrates their development of learning skills including critical thinking, reflection, research, technology, and organization. In the CAS Project, students combine components of the IB's CAS Program (Creativity, Activity, and Service) to meet a real-world need by challenging themselves to take action. Throughout the curriculum, an emphasis is placed on embedding service learning opportunities and making interdisciplinary connections. For the 2017-18 school year, a position was created with the intent of

building service learning more robustly into the school's mission and vision to encourage caring and responsible global leaders. This includes building capacity among teachers to embrace action from content learning, creating school-sponsored opportunities for students to complete service, and conducting conversations with students and families about the value of community engagement.

The International Academy has continued to maintain a high level of student achievement through a focus on high quality instruction, a commitment to implementing the IB curriculum with fidelity, and by nurturing a supportive and inclusive environment for all members of the community. In addition to a rigorous hiring process, the IA employs graduate assistants for each department at each campus. The graduate assistants work alongside classroom teachers assisting with classroom instruction, small group support and grading. If a classroom teacher is out for illness or professional development, the graduate assistants are able to step into the classroom so that instruction can continue.

Across all disciplines, curriculum units are reviewed and improved upon on an annual basis and a clearly defined scope and sequence is set. IA teachers utilize a broad range of assessment strategies throughout each course and teachers use comprehensive rubrics to assess student learning and student performance on both the course rubrics and on the final Diploma Program assessments is routinely reviewed. The IB programs emphasize the importance of communication in all subject areas and this is reflected in school assessment criteria. Throughout the International Academy program, students have opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of content and ability to apply skills learned through many non-traditional assessment methods such as portfolios, performance, and projects.

IA teachers utilize a broad range of assessment strategies throughout each course. The IB programs emphasize the importance of communication in all subject areas and this is reflected in school assessment criteria. Whether working individually or in groups, written and verbal communication is a key component for most assessments at the school and students are expected to communicate their understanding and opinions in all subject areas. Assessment data is compared to Middle Years Program and Diploma Program international norms in order to determine student progress toward being able to attain an IB Diploma at the completion of twelfth grade. IA teachers regularly meet as departments to review student work, moderate grades, and create common assessments. Staff turnover is managed with extensive interviewing and background research to ensure new staff members are an appropriate fit for the rigorous demands of teaching in an IB school. Teachers are supported through a peer-led mentoring program and participate in regular professional learning experiences.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

The process of engaging and motivating students begins with the onboarding of new students as they complete their 8th grade studies. Numerous opportunities are provided to potential students to help them understand how the International Academy differs from other public high schools in the area. These opportunities include evening information sessions, days for potential students to visit the school and shadow a 9th grade student, a welcome reception for all new students in the June before school begins. In the week before 9th grade begin they attend a new student orientation run by eleventh and twelfth grade students who are formally chosen to mentor incoming students. At this beginning point students are regularly reminded of the importance of the IB Learner Profile in governing desired student characteristics for the school. This emphasis on the IB Learner Profile encourages students to explore the numerous extra-curricular options provided by the school to enhance their social and emotional growth. Ninth grade teachers meet regularly to discuss the specific needs of the students and address them through a team approach, with each teacher adhering to the same guidelines.

The school's most well defined extra-curricular programs include theater, Science Olympiad, forensics, Model United Nations, and FIRST Robotics. We have active honor societies including national, second language, art and music. Large numbers of students participate in cultural programs such as the Indian American Student Association and Black Student Association. These student groups provide regular outreach to share knowledge about the experiences and traditions of the different demographic backgrounds. This includes an active LGBTQ club to reinforce the explicitly stated message that the International Academy is a supportive environment for all students.

At the center of the education IA provides as an IB World School are the attributes of an IB learner. These attributes invite students to be communicators, researchers, and demonstrate a caring commitment to their local and more global community. Students are ultimately learning lifelong skills.

In addition to the courses necessary for earning an IB Diploma, students become architects of their own learning. Students can formally engage with topics they select which are also globally relevant. Examples of this student-directed learning include the MYP Personal Project, the MYP Language and Communication Course, the Creativity, Activity, and Service program, and the 4,000-word Extended Essay.

Numerous efforts are taken by the school community to reinforce the value of our teaching staff. Most importantly, nearly all school improvement initiatives are determined with a joint decision making process by teachers and administration. Staff meetings, department chair meetings, PTO meetings, and department meetings occur monthly to ensure two-way communication between administration and teaching staff. Teachers are encouraged to engage in annual professional development which is often financially supported by the school. Additionally, the school PTO annually raises funds to support needed teaching resources and teacher professional development, in addition to regular staff lunches and dinners provided by the school's PTO as sincere signs of teacher appreciation.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

The International Academy uses various methods to continually engage families in the school community. Many of these are regular routines employed by the school such as a weekly message home sent via email to all families every Friday afternoon, a monthly "coffee with the counselors" meeting, a monthly PTO meeting attended by school administration, and quarterly "principal's dialogue" meetings. The school holds a formal back to school night in August, and holds teacher conferences every October to allow parents to meet the teachers in an in-person format.

School climate surveys have been used as part of IB accreditation review cycles as well as AdvancEd review cycles to formally survey both students, parent/guardians, and staff regarding their perceived

strengths and weakness of the school. Feedback from these survey cycles and from anecdotal interactions with families have increased the emphasis on quality and timely communication with the larger school community.

Frequent communication with families is a professional expectation at the school. All parent inquiries to staff are returned within a 24-hour time frame, and staff is encouraged to communicate constructive feedback to families on a regular basis.

Student academic progress is available in an online grade book used by all teachers. The school creates eight formal progress reports annually to send to families. Any student receiving below a 70% in any class at the school receives formal communication home to families. Students are required to have a passing test average for all classes, and eleventh and twelfth grade students must maintain at least a 70% in their Diploma Program courses in order to be eligible for the IB exams.

Through service outreach and club or academic extensions, students engage with our local community. This includes regular service to local shelters and food pantries, an adopt-a-road program, and volunteering in underserved areas of the Detroit Metropolitan region in addition to service-oriented clubs such as BuildOn, Key Club, and religiously affiliated groups. Students participate in competitions and contests which support their learning in real-life scenarios which includes mock trial, EuroChallenge, Model United Nations, and Investment clubs.

The school administration communicates regularly with the current 13 districts in the IA consortium to share practices and provide opportunities for student growth and support across the county.

### **3. Professional Development:**

The school provides a minimum of 30 hours of professional development to the teaching staff which are embedded in the annual school calendar. As an IB school, many professional development hours are dedicated to training staff on the requirements, expectations, and philosophy of the Middle Years and Diploma programs. In addition to the IB focus, annual professional development engages teachers in topics of cultures of thinking, pedagogy, student emotional support, student safety, interdisciplinary learning, restorative practices, and supporting the college admission process. Professional learning builds on the expertise of current staff members and experts in the field to share knowledge.

A significant part of professional learning in the last three years is devoted to a district-wide initiative called Global Champions. Global Champions is designed to remove barriers of all kinds in the school community and through Restorative Practices, Healing Racism and Global Champions, staff continues to build a more inclusive and equitable experience for the International Academy. There are ten members of the Global Education team including several parents and an outside consultant who work to build these initiatives into the school community.

The IA staff stays relevant with the most current research and practices on instructional pedagogy through professional development opportunities. Within the school, teachers participate in and reflect on Instructional Rounds formally and informally to learn from the instructional practices of master teachers. Over the past two years the IA teaching staff has engaged in numerous nationally recognized pedagogical development programs. Specifically, large percentages of the IA's teachers have completed formal training in teaching research around the Cultures of Thinking from Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero and from the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP).

Teachers are also supported in professional development outside of the annual school calendar as well. The school regularly sends teachers to IB trainings held across North America to provide them with opportunities to learn more about the expectations of the IB and to provide networking opportunities with other IB educators. Nineteen of our staff members are examiners, curriculum advisors, workshop leaders and site visitors for the IB, all of which provide unique professional development opportunities in Europe and North America.

The school also supports sending teachers to regular trainings across the state to enhance their practice and learn new strategies for supporting students. Conferences related to content and teaching practices and intensive workshops are encouraged and often supported by the PTO or conference budget when teachers are not grant recipients.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

The school leadership structure is unique due to tri-campus responsibilities. The Principal and IB Coordinator travel across the three campuses on a weekly basis. Each of the three campuses has a designated Associate Principal who reports to the Principal. This five person leadership team works collaboratively to set school goals, create a professional development calendar, evaluate the teaching staff, and ensure the school is in compliance with state law and IB requirements. The five administrators are further supported by a Service Learning Coordinator and Enrichment Coordinator who oversee these initiatives at all three campuses.

The unique student body allows the administrators to allocate most of their time to supporting students and staff in meeting the school's rigorous academic demands. Less time is dedicated to discipline than traditional public high schools in the area, and no time is dedicated to varsity athletic programs because students participate in athletics through their resident districts. All three building Associate Principals are actively engaged with their fiscal agents (Bloomfield Hills, Huron Valley, and Troy) by meeting regularly with other high school principals and district superintendents.

Most administrative policy decisions are guided by IB philosophy and by listening to the needs of the wider school community. Recent examples include an increased emphasis on mental and emotional health supports available to students and addressing school safety issues.

Another example is the use of time allotments in support of the IB programs. The school leadership team has consistently scheduled more time for the requirements of the IB program which are not fulfilled during regular class sessions. This includes scheduling time outside of classes for the MYP Personal Project, the Creativity, Activity, and Service requirements, and time for students to learn about the potential careers awaiting them when they complete their educations.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Reflection stands out as the key to success at the International Academy. Being reflective is one trait of the IB learner profile. The practice of reflection has weaved itself into the fabric of the IA and is what makes the school a place of rigor, perseverance, resilience, motivation, and mindfulness.

Reflection begins with the faculty and administration. Professional development and evaluation is based upon understanding and improving the craft of teaching. Through reflection and feedback, each teacher is challenged to improve their craft, share their successes with others and seek new solutions and learn from others. The administration reflects on how each initiative, experience and opportunity furthers the mission and vision of the school. Relationships within the community reflect the concepts of being internationally-minded and a global citizen. Each new experience or exposure deepens an understanding of place, perspective, identity, belief and/or value in the world.

Ultimately, the school's success is the students' ability to reflect throughout all parts of the learning process. As a culture of thinking, our students practice visible routines which encourage them to think deeply, articulate their thought process and develop a reflective nature. From this mindfulness as students, they learn the process of learning is beyond knowledge regurgitation. Building skills of self-management including being deeply reflective in turn support social and emotional well-being and the challenges of life beyond academia.

The school embraces a growth mindset, striving to embrace challenges with the intent of learning and offering many opportunities for exploration of new and personal understanding. Personal Project, Extended Essay, and Creative, Activity, Service explicitly offer opportunities for students to reflect before embarking, during their experience, and afterwards to invite growth. Students are reflective about issues both in the school as well as addressing the needs they deem significant in local and global communities.

Throughout the four years, reflection is scaffolded in academic subjects and social-emotional development. In ninth grade, students evaluate texts, sources, and issues with an analytical approach, guided by their teachers. In tenth grade, students are challenged by the Personal Project during which they choose their own topic and create a product with minimal guidance from staff. The student reflections at the end of their Personal Project provide the most insight into where they struggled in this largely self-directed project. Reflection throughout Adventure Challenge course challenges students to push themselves, support others, and gain perspective on the value of giving and receiving feedback as well as healthy communication.

In the Diploma Program, each subject requires written and oral assessments that allow for peer-to-peer and teacher-student reflection with the goal of improvement. The final step of the Extended Essay process is a student-guided conversation with their supervisor, reflecting on the experience of this significant task with specific reflection on the writing process over the final product. While participating in CAS, students reflect on their experiences with the intent of personal growth and enjoying what they have chosen to do.

Overall, the IA believes that asking students, teachers, parents and community members to reflect upon and take responsibility for their own development will ultimately make them more effective and resilient lifelong learners and global citizens.