



**SOUTH SIDE
MIDDLE SCHOOL**



Rockville Centre Public Schools

MYP Guide for Parents



Middle Years
Programme

“A Tradition of Caring.”

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South Side Middle School and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP)

The MYP emphasizes intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and the real world. It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding and global engagement - qualities that are essential for life in the 21st century.

South Side Middle School is an IB World School* offering the Middle Years Programme. IB World Schools share a common philosophy: a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that South Side Middle School believes is important for our students.

**Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP) or the Career-related Programme (CP). For further information about the IB and its programmes, visit <http://www.ibo.org>*

IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate 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 organization works with school, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and life-long learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB Learner Profile Attributes

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

Inquirers

They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable

They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers

They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators

They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded

They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring

They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers/Courageous

They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced

They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective

They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

South Side Middle School

Mission Statement

South Side Middle School is a learning environment that provides students with opportunities to move toward the goal of being independent learners and thinkers. Our goal is to provide experiences to help students understand their unique aptitudes and interests and be able to adjust to their rapidly changing environment, while meeting their unique physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs.

We strive to create a climate that enables students to develop a sense of self-worth, and have compassion and respect for others by valuing individual differences. We facilitate a caring learning environment where students feel safe, important and engaged. Our students demonstrate responsible global citizenship, and are cognizant of their place within the school community.

In this success-oriented environment, we provide opportunities for exploration and risk-taking. The structure of the school day is designed to permit students to reach the standards established by the New York State Board of Regents, while adhering to the Next Generation Learning Standards and embracing the framework of the IB Middle Years Programme. Our vision is to create life-long learners who seek to attain balance in all that they do.

What is the IB Middle Years Programme?

The MYP is designed for students aged 11-16. It provides a framework of learning that encourages students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers. The MYP emphasizes intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and the real world. The MYP fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understandings and global engagement – essential qualities for young people who are to become global leaders.

As an IB candidate school offering the MYP, South Side Middle School (SSMS) implements the MYP Year 1-3 model:

Year 1 = 6th grade

Year 2 = 7th grade

Year 3 = 8th grade

In MYP classrooms, students are the center of learning. They are drawing connections between all subject areas, learning is explicitly linked to the world around them, participation in a foreign language is required, and a variety of formal and informal assessments are used to inform teaching and learning. MYP learning experiences infuse global points of view wherever possible in order to promote understanding of other cultures, an awareness of the human condition and an understanding that there is a commonality of human experience.

The MYP curriculum framework comprises eight subject groups, providing a broad and balanced education for early adolescents. Students take the following **MYP core courses**:

Arts = Art 6 & 7 and Studio in Art 8; Music 6 & 7, Studio in Music 8 and all Ensembles

Design = Home and Careers 6, Technology 7 & 8, Creative Living 8, CORE Creative Living 8 and Food Science 8

Individuals and Societies = Social Studies 6, 7 & 8

Language Acquisition = French 6, 7 & 8 and Spanish 6, 7 & 8

Language and Literature = English Language Arts 6, 7 & 8

Mathematics = Math 6 & 7 and Algebra 8

Physical and Health Education = Physical Education 6, 7 & 8, Health 7 & 8 and Health Plus

Sciences = Science 6 & 7 and Earth Science 8

A unique feature of the MYP is that it extends the traditional curriculum to include immersion in four themes: Approaches to Teaching, Approaches to Learning, Global Contexts and Concepts. All MYP units are framed through inquiry and concept-based learning experiences that infuse the tenants of constructivism and elements of differentiation in order to foster enduring understandings. In addition, each MYP Year 3 (8th grade) students also have

the opportunity to participate in a Community Project endeavor inspired by previous service learning and volunteer experiences.

What are the advantages of an IB education?

- IB World Schools are subject to a strict accreditation process monitored by the IB, ensuring that school provide a high-quality education.
- IB teaching methods and curricula are research-based and draw from the best educational practices from systems around the world.
- IB teachers are required to participate in many professional development opportunities to continually promote their awareness of current educational practices and new thinking. SSMS's teachers regularly participate in MYP-related professional development workshops as well as IB-recognized workshops and conferences.
- IB programmes are recognized internationally and ease the educational transition of mobile students so that their education is not adversely affected if their families relocate.

Are all students included in the IB MYP?

SSMS's MYP Year 1-3 model is completely inclusive for all SSMS students in each year of the programme. In most cases, the MYP requires school-wide implementation and therefore encompasses all students. All SSMS teachers teach in MYP classrooms and are required to participate in collaborative planning and reflection to make their teaching practices consistent and to foster a holistic approach to education. A growing body of evidence suggests a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement.

Have studies been done on the impact of the MYP?

The IB places great value on external validation of its programmes, curricula and professional development. A recent study found that MYP students in a US public school district were more likely to achieve a proficient or advanced performance level on state Mathematics and Science assessments than their counterparts in five comparison schools. Additional studies on programme impact, quality assurance, programme development and assessment research are available at www.ibo.org/research.

Are their external assessments in the MYP like in the Diploma Programme at South Side High School?

No. There are no external IB assessments in SSMS's MYP Year 1-3 model.

What does assessment in the MYP look like?

To measure what students have learned and to monitor their progress, IB teachers use a range of assessment strategies including formative assessments that provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to develop their teaching and by students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and target areas that need improvement.

Teachers use summative assessments which are internationally benchmarked for middle school students and are criteria-related. This means students are measured against a set of agreed upon learning outcomes rather than graded on a “bell curve” as in norm-referenced assessments.

SSMS’s MYP Year 1-3 model uses the prescribed, subject-specific MYP rubrics benchmarked for Year 1 and 3, the Community Project rubric for Year 3 and Phase 1-6 rubrics for Language Acquisition.

In what respects are the IB and the Next Generation Learning Standards (NGLS) similar?

The IB and NGLS are both focused on setting high standards that seek to challenge and engage students, promote deeper learning and develop critical-thinking skills. In fact, the IB standards were one of five international benchmarks used to compare against NGLS in an influential study conducted by the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC). NGLS and IB share a mutual emphasis on career and college readiness. Neither the IB nor the NGLS is a curriculum. A curriculum is the detailed plan for day-to-day teaching. Curriculum decisions, including which textbooks and programmes to use are made by the school or district, not by the IB or the NGLS.

How do the IB programmes and NGLS differ?

The effectiveness of IB programmes has been validated by research and by over forty-years of practical experience teaching and assessing student work. IB standards and practices are *not* learning outcomes; they provide a set criteria that present specific approaches to teaching and learning. They focus on *how* learning occurs.

The NGLS *are* learning outcomes that specific skills and knowledge that must be acquired by grade level. The NGLS focus on *what outcomes* should be reached.

The IB emphasizes student-centered learning, focusing on the social, emotional and academic needs of the *whole* child. An IB education incorporates and understanding and appreciation of other cultures and points of view, and a world language competency – precisely the skills in demand by the current global economy.

Will SSMS have difficulty implementing the NGLS because of the MYP?

SSMS teachers use NGLS in addition to MYP objectives and criteria to guide unit planning and the crafting of meaningful and relevant learning experiences and valid assessments. Feedback from teachers tells that IB World Schools have an advantage when implementing the NGLS. NGLS represents a shift in teaching from covering a wide breadth of content to a greater focus on depth of understanding and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning. These very characteristics define what makes an IB education so effective. All SSMS teachers are IB/MYP teachers who receive specialized and ongoing training to teach in MYP classrooms which prepare them to incorporate the NGLS into their instruction.

What are MYP criterion-related assessments?

Criterion-related assessments are used to determine whether each individual student has achieved the desired results of a specific skill or concept in a given task or learning scenario through performance. SSMS uses MYP subject-specific assessment which supports individual student learning journeys and lends itself to differentiation. SSMS's assessment practices are concerned with finding out how much a student knows before instruction begins and after it has finished. SSMS is invested in the student's personal learning journey. SSMS uses MYP year 1 criteria for 6th grade assessments and MYP Year 3 for 8th grade assessments. The assessments for 7th grade (MYP Year 2) are an age-appropriate combination of MYP Year 1 and 3 criteria used at the discretion of the subject-area teachers. There are four MYP criteria for each subject. Annually, in every year of SSMS's MYP model, all four criteria will be assessed in each subject and all supporting criteria strands will be assessed at least twice.

SSMS believes in the strength of criterion-related assessments as they encourage individually meaningful and relevant learning while providing performance feedback. Scoring can be expressed as a percentage or an achievement level with MYP qualifiers and boundaries. Student achievement is reported for the purpose of informing students and parents of individual skill development and how the items presented for evidencing achievement performance parallel in difficulty.

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