

International Education

Lawton Chiles Middle Academy - May 2011

MISSION STATEMENT & ALIGNMENT

Our mission is to guide each student to attain extraordinary achievement and a continuous desire to learn in an ever-changing global environment.

The mission statement for our school aligns closely with the IB mission as both address the goal of students achieving and learning. These are separate items to demonstrate that in addition to increasing students' knowledge we also want to help them achieve in other areas of their lives, addressing the whole student rather than just the learner. In this way we integrate the IB learner profile throughout the school. Another component shared by both missions refers to the global world in which we live. One of our goals at L.C.M.A. is to help students become aware of this world, its peoples and their cultures.

INTEGRATION OF MYP FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Communication

Communication is an integral component of education at L.C.M.A. As stated in our school language policy, we expect "all community members to develop and refine the skills necessary to effectively communicate in a global environment". This expectation encompasses verbal and non-verbal communication. Parents, community members, administrators, teachers and students work together to exemplify the learner profile definition of a communicator: *someone who can understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes*. To accomplish this we have developed a set of universal expectations for students' written work applicable to all subject area. Each teacher posts these expectations, thereby helping all teachers become language teachers. Furthermore, students take a full year of Language A and Language B for each year of middle school. Eighth grade students, and hopefully some seventh grade students in the years to come, are able to earn high school credit for their Language B course.

Holistic Learning

While students take part in eight different subject areas throughout the day, all of these areas are linked by overlapping subject matter and real-world connections. Teachers and students highlight and discuss these connections regularly. Seeing subject areas as interrelated rather than isolated is made easier by our school's areas of interaction leaders. They are the science and the math teachers of gifted. As resource teachers they work together to develop lessons with classroom teachers and assist in implementing and evaluating these lessons. Students make connections between subjects as the resource teachers and their classroom teacher lead them through real-world learning activities incorporating science, math, the arts, Language A and other subject areas.

The areas of interaction serve as an important tool to assist students in making connections in their learning. As they explore various authentic issues from around the globe they draw on knowledge and skills from a variety of subject areas. Teachers refer to their classroom displays of the areas of interaction throughout their teaching. Incorporating the areas of interaction compels students to view these issues from differing perspectives and points of view. To encourage this holistic approach to learning, community members also frequently visit and share professional experiences, relating concepts, skills and attitudes of their workplaces with those of the classroom.

Intercultural Awareness

We recognize that the IB's definition of international-mindedness is more than the superficial activities in which a school might engage in order to "do global". However, as a school we pair some of these learning experiences together with those that are in-depth and lead students to analyze, create and reflect. When these two levels of experiences are combined learning for all students is enhanced. We find that they help us in developing an overall atmosphere and school culture that leads stakeholders, even compels them, to consider that we are just one small part of a global society, to consider the similarities and differences between our culture and others, and to consider the perceptions and attitudes of people around the world.

Throughout the year, students engage in many activities related to internationalism, many of which are embedded within the curriculum of our subject areas. Obvious connections include the study of various cultures in humanities and through literature studies in Language A and reading classes. However, in addition to these examples, teachers share less obvious global connections as they use inquiry-based teaching to discover the backgrounds of famous contributors in the fields of science and math, expecting students to identify cultures and attitudes of that time period and guiding them in predicting how their contributions and findings were received by the people of that time and place. We provide opportunities that enhance the curriculum such as bringing in acrobats to perform and educate our students about the customs, language and culture of China. We also have a guest speaker program

established so that parents who immigrated to the United States or who lived in another country can come to speak to our students. We have suggestions and guidelines for creating a presentation posted on our website. In an effort to help all our stakeholders become reflective, after parents speak they reflect on their experiences and turn their notes and self-reflection in to the coordinator or classroom teacher. We make those notes available to the families that have requested copies so they can discuss them with their families, and we use the reflection to help us improve our program.

Our hallways reflect our international mindset as each of the signs is printed in Spanish and Chinese in addition to English. The cafeteria staff searches for international recipes and makes side dishes and salads from a variety of countries. They include the dishes along with the name, a description and the country of origin on the salad bar for all students to see and taste. Our library demonstrates evidence of our school's global perspective as it houses multicultural periodicals, books and online resources for students to peruse for research or leisure. We offer students books and magazines printed in other languages in addition to translated works. Our teachers and staff members have collaborated to create a multi-cultural mosaic consisting of individually decorated puzzle pieces representing the nations of their heritage.