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THE STAFF AT THE CENTER FOR Inquiry knew right away that their school would be a good fit with the International Baccalaureate Organization.

Teacher Beth Young couldn't help but notice that the first word in that organization's Primary Years Program profile was "inquirer."

"And we're inquiry-based," Young said, referring to the Indianapolis Public School program that has been located in Chatham Arch since 2000, in the Benjamin Harrison School 2 building.

The International Baccalaureate Organization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1968. It works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment.

The prospect of "creating internationally minded citizens" has Young very excited.

"The inquiry units should be focused globally," she said. "We have always stressed to kids that they can make a difference in the community – and that they would."

The partnership between the International Baccalaureate Organization actually began last year, with full involvement being a three-year process. Year two involves classroom implementation, which for the 280-some students of the Center for Inquiry will mean the opportunity to widen their horizons both academically and philosophically.

Specifically, it means that Spanish will now be taught to all students, at all grade levels, taking part in the International Baccalaureate Organization program. For students in kindergarten through sixth-grade, that means the Primary Years Program; for students in grades seven and eight, it means the Middle Years Program, which will be continued in grades 9 and 10 at Northwest High School.

THINKING (AND TEACHING) GLOBALLY

Center for Inquiry launches International Baccalaureate program for its students

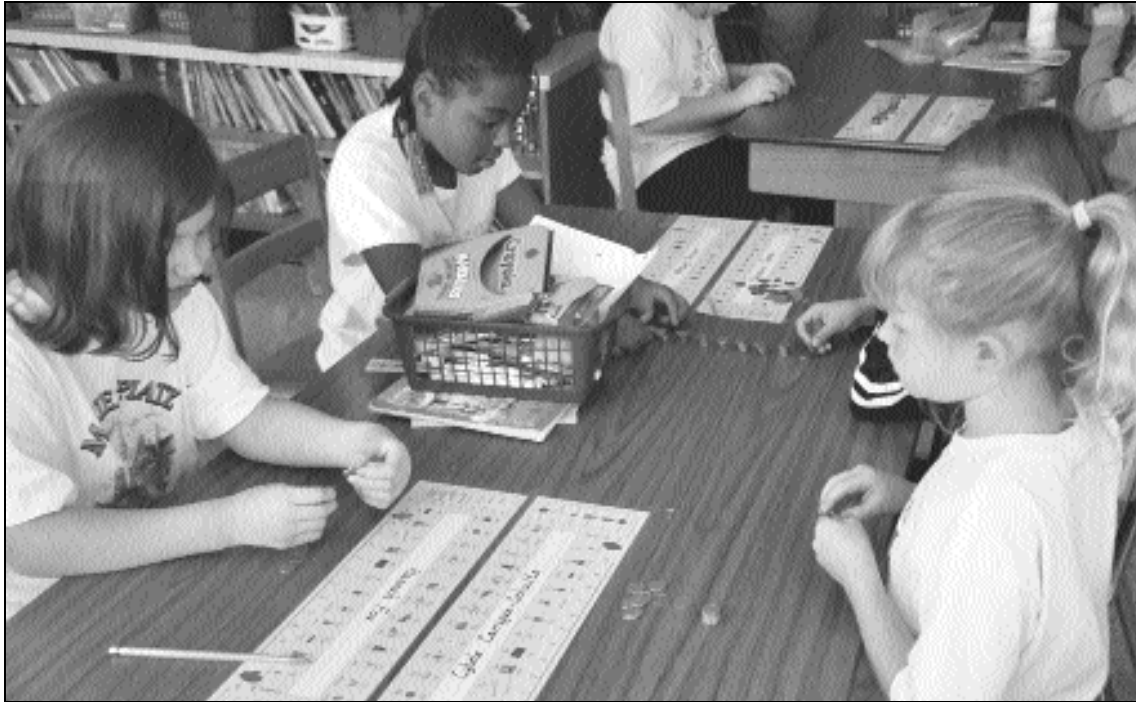
Northwest is also offering the Diploma Program in its grades 11 and 12.

The Center for Inquiry and Northwest are the only schools in Indiana involved in the International Baccalaureate program.

The Center for Inquiry is an IPS magnet program that began on the city's eastside in 1993 for 100 students in grades K-5. Its move downtown into its own building has been accompanied by steady growth and success. Student slots are filled by lottery, with no preferential treatment given even to faculty members' children.

Young and principal Chris Collier see the International Baccalaureate program as a perfect fit for the Center for Inquiry curriculum that includes a partnership with IUPUI. Everyone is considered a learner, teachers and students alike, and much of the program is literature-based. Textbooks are used only as resource materials.

In any subject area, Young said, "we look at what kids want to know about it. Their questions help us



Students at the Center for Inquiry, an IPS magnet school located in Chatham Arch, will gain a more global awareness through the school's participation in the International Baccalaureate program.

plan. That's the same with the Primary Years Program."

The Primary Years Program revolves around five essential elements – knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. The program works in several areas – language; social studies; mathematics; science and technology; arts; and personal, social and physical education.

Middle school students continue their study of Spanish, along with history and geography; biology, chemistry and physics; five branches of mathematics; visual and performing arts; physical education to include both health and fitness and team sports; and computer and design technology.

Acceptance into the International Baccalaureate Organization programs meant not only the ability to offer Spanish, but also a significant amount of new technology and teacher training for the Chatham Arch school.

Local educators value the program because they believe it will help them develop each child into an inquirer, thinker, communicator, risk-taker who is knowledgeable, principled, caring, open-minded, well-balanced and reflective.

When all the books have been gleaned and the tests taken, the ultimate question is, Young said, "What can



we do with this knowledge."

For students at the Center for Inquiry, the answer to that question can be found more than ever not on the map of the United States, but on a map of the world.

- Bill Brooks