

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT @ VPS

Understanding the IB-program and Standards-based Learning



As we continue to develop the *International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program IB-PYP* at Valley Prep, it's helpful to visualize the program as a house being remodeled.

The basic **structure** of our school has remained more-or-less the same for the past six decades, namely a holistic approach to teaching children which endeavors to provide opportunities for students to experience a full-range of academic programs, including art, music, physical education, technology, drama, etc.

Within that holistic structure are various **"rooms."** Simply put, the IB-PYP consists of six rooms, each with a different **theme**, such as *How The World Works*, *Sharing the Planet*, and *Who We Are* (see below), that work cohesively to organize curricular content. Currently, our teachers have designed four of these rooms. By the end of the 2018-19 school year, all six rooms will be designed. Each room has a different design, or a different curricular emphasis. The *Who We Are*-room, for example, encourages students to explore various cultures, and better understand their own place in the world. The *How the World Works*-room inspires students to better understand the world around them, including the role of technology in our everyday lives.

As these six rooms continue to be designed, the teachers are simultaneously filling-up those rooms with the necessary **"furniture,"** representing the **written curriculum**. Some rooms emphasize the science curriculum, while others emphasize social studies. But all the rooms together must provide a comprehensive curriculum that covers all the necessary topics and skills in every subject-area. To better-ensure the arrangement of this "furniture" is done properly and nothing is left-out, the school is referencing various national and international **standards-based curriculums**, including the [Common Core Standards](#) and the [Next Generation Science Standards](#). While we want our Valley Prep "furniture" to be more intricate and well-crafted than other schools, it's important to ensure that beneath these intricate designs are standardized furniture-models which are found in all schools. Then, these standards must be clearly communicated to the students and parents.

The standardization of our curriculum is a critical step for Valley Prep. It better-allows the parents to **compare** the Valley Prep "product" with other schools; it better-allows teachers and administrators to **identify** which students are above or below standard ... and then provide them with the necessary **support**; and it better-allows administrators to hold teachers **accountable** for the standardized-requirements of the curriculum.

The IB-program and this standards-based approach to teaching & learning will also change the appearance of our **Report Cards** beginning in August 2018.

Click [HERE](#) to review Valley Prep's **Curriculum Development Plan** in more detail. And Click [HERE](#) for further information about **standards-based grading** and student-reporting at Valley Prep beginning in 2018-19.

This newest chapter in Valley Prep's long history began in 2015 with the establishment of our five-year-plan, [Vision 2020](#), focusing on the further development of the school's curriculum. As we look to the future, our end-game is the establishment of the **VPS-IB-Curriculum**, which will be unique among other public and private schools and will better-position our students for future success in the 21st century classroom and workforce.

Best regards

John Black, Head of School

