



Barack Obama Academy of International Studies

515 N. Highland Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-529-5980 | Fax: 412-622-5983

September, 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to introduce myself, in case we haven't met, as well as provide you with the framework and expectations for my IB MYP Visual Arts classes. My name is Ms. Faith DeMark and I am your child's art teacher at Pittsburgh Obama. I look forward to working with your child and guiding him/her through the new experience of learning in a rigorous, academically focused arts classroom. I have seen the results and know well the expansive possibilities that the IB MYP curriculum offers our students. I take my job seriously; I feel that visual arts is an essential part of every child's education as it provides learners with a language to express thoughts and feelings in new ways, supports and builds skills learned in other core content areas, and helps your child develop strong critical thinking skills.

As part of the IB, the arts are core curriculum and are equally emphasized. My expectations for your child are very high both academically and behaviorally; I will do my part and work hard to guide, inspire, encourage, support, and assist your child to help ensure his/her success. Your child will study and practice drawing, painting, collage, and sculpture, as they fit into our curriculum and as our resources allow. Students will examine contemporary and historical works of art as well as current events and a variety of art-making techniques and art genres.

Your child will be required to purchase and maintain a sketchbook, which we now call the Arts Process Journal (APJ). I will be selling hard bound sketchbooks for \$5.00 in my classroom. The APJ is a written record of the work each student has completed during class time and at home. This document will contain the research and planning and clearly show a progression of the creative process as your student moves through each project and the curriculum. Homework for my class will be assigned weekly and will include drawing exercises, readings, and written responses. The expectation is that every student should complete work inside his/her Arts Process Journal at least five days a week (even if some days they are less involved entries).

The Pittsburgh Public Schools standardized grading guidelines for my visual arts class are as follows:

The theoretical portion of your child's grade (40%) will be focused on the APJ and summative assessments. The assessment of the APJ will include research notes, project ideas and planning, his/her own thoughts and commentary, evaluations, and reflections that connect with the IB program's Global Contexts.

For production activities, your child will be expected to meet specific objectives and will be graded based on how thoroughly s/he has met the given objectives as well as quality of craftsmanship and completion of projects.

The practical portion of the grade (40%) will assess the art product for these projects.

The participation portion of your child's grade (15%) will evaluate your child's daily participation in group discussions, art-making activities, and take into consideration your child's attitude and his/her willing to work with other students.

The assessments portion of the grade (5%) reflects your child's formative assessments such as quizzes, quick writes or exit slips.

Please note that late work will only be accepted for one week after the due date. There is no extra credit work available to students at any time.





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As you know, Pittsburgh Obama 6-12 is an IB Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) structured school. Within the regular curriculum and grading procedures, your child will be assessed according to the IB MYP Arts Assessment Criteria in the following ways:

Criterion A: Knowing and Understanding of art content and processes will be assessed through self and teacher assessment rubrics, artist statements, formative assessments on content material such as warm-up activities and exit tickets, and summative assessments at the close of a unit.

Criterion B: Developing Skills of art-making techniques will be observed and assessed according to an IB rubric as well as formative assessments such as APJ planning and explorations of materials.

Criterion C: Thinking Creatively will be monitored through student self-assessment reflections at the close of major projects, End of Project Reflection essays, and graded critical response assignments.

Criterion D: Responding will be observed and assessed through student participation in production activities and group discussions along with the personal commentary and insight that students include in APJ's, End of Project Reflection essays, and artist statements.

Please remind your child to use his/her in-class time efficiently. Your child's grade in art will largely reflect his/her effort and progress. My philosophy and teaching approach emphasize the importance of engagement in the artistic process over the value of the final product. Your child does **NOT** have to be a "good artist" to be an excellent IB MYP student of art. If a student works hard, they will succeed in my class!

I expect your child to come to art class on time and ready to work. I demand that your child treat everyone in my classroom with respect. I also expect your child to follow the rules and procedures of the art room, which has been clearly outlined to all students and posted in my classroom. Please don't hesitate to contact me by telephone at the school at (412) 529-2091, by cell phone at (412)401-9825, or by email at fdemark1@pghboe.net with any questions, comments, or concerns. If you are experiencing a financial hardship that will make it impossible for your child to purchase an APJ (sketchbook), please call, email, or write a note and send it in with your child so that we can make arrangements to get your child the materials s/he needs. I look forward to hearing from you and working with your child this 2016-2017 school year.

All the Best,

Ms. Faith DeMark
IB MYP Visual Arts Teacher

Approved: Ms. Aisha Robinson, Director