Dear Parent or Guardian,

I would like to welcome your child to an exciting, new school year at Pittsburgh Barack Obama Academy of International Studies 6-12. As part of the Science team, I am corresponding with you to provide important information regarding the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) CAS Biology 1 and PSP Biology 1 courses for Grade 9. This is a challenging and demanding course that will focus on the Four Major Themes of Biology:

**Theme 1: Biological systems utilize free energy and molecular building blocks to grow, to reproduce and to maintain dynamic homeostasis.**

**Theme 2: Living systems store, retrieve, transmit and respond to information essential to life processes.**

**Theme 3: The process of evolution drives the diversity and unity of life.**

**Theme 4: Biological systems interact, and these systems and their interactions possess complex properties.**

These four themes and their essential knowledge components will be the thrust of our work across several units of study in the CAS Biology I and PSP Biology 1 curricula. The following topics will be taught for student understanding:

- Characteristics of Life
- Genetics
- Evolution
- Survey of Life
- Ecology
- Human Body Systems

Additionally, the CAS Biology 1 and PSP Biology 1 courses will continually incorporate the IBMYP’s 5 Areas of Interaction (Approaches to Learning, Community and Service, Human Ingenuity, Environments, and Health and Social Education) within the framework of unit lessons to ensure your child is fully prepared to participate in the global community at-large. Students will also be given formative assessments throughout lessons to monitor their learning progress. Summative assessments will follow at the end of each unit. Science learning objectives specific to IBMYP will be assessed using the IBMYP assessment criteria listed below:

**Criterion A. Knowing and Understanding** – Students develop scientific knowledge (facts, ideas, concepts, processes, laws, principles, models and theories) and apply it to solve problems and express scientifically supported judgments.
Criterion B, Inquiring and Designing – Intellectual and practical skills are developed through designing, analysing and performing scientific investigations. Although the scientific method involves a wide variety of approaches, the MYP emphasizes experimental work and scientific inquiry.

Criterion C, Processing and Evaluating – Students collect, process and interpret qualitative and/or quantitative data, and explain conclusions that have been appropriately reached. MYP sciences helps students to develop analytical thinking skills, which they can use to evaluate the method and discuss possible improvements or extensions.

Criterion D, Reflecting on the Impact of Science – Students gain global understanding of science by evaluating the implications of scientific developments and their applications to a specific problem or issue. A variety of communication modes will be applied in order to demonstrate understanding. Students are expected to become aware of the importance of documenting the work of others when communicating in science. Students must reflect on the implications of using science, interacting with one of the following factors: moral, ethical, social, economic, political, cultural or environmental, as appropriate to the task. The student’s chosen factor may be interrelated with other factors.

CLASSROOM RULES:

1. Be safe at all times - SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT!
2. Be on time for class
3. Be prepared to learn
4. Be respectful
5. Follow directions
6. Always do your best
7. The 5 Ps: Prompt, Prepared, Productive, Polite, Positive

DAILY REQUIREMENTS FOR CLASS:

1. Notebook
2. Binder/Notebooks
3. Agenda book
4. Pencil or pen
5. Appropriate textbook
6. Completed homework/assignments

PROCEDURES/EXPECTATIONS:

1. All school rules and policies must be followed in classroom.
2. Students are expected to be on time.
3. Absolutely no cell phone usage at any time.
4. Absolutely no food or drinks are permitted in the classroom.
5. Act as a young adult in class with proper respect for teacher, and other students.
6. Assignments must be handed in at or before deadline.
6. Students are responsible for seeing me for missed assignments after any absences.
7. Students are expected to be organized and be responsible.
8. Extra credit work will not be given.
9. Homework will generally be assigned four nights each week.

**BASIC DISCIPLINE POLICY:**

1. If learning or teaching is disrupted in the classroom, a verbal reminder or teacher/student conference will be arranged.
2. If this does not remedy the problem, a phone call to parents will be made.
3. If disruptive behavior persists, a written referral will be submitted.
4. Any serious infraction of school policies/rules will result in a written referral.

**EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT/GRADING POLICY:**

1. All assignments are expected to be submitted on time. Science work submitted after a deadline will result in a reduction in grade, and/or will be assigned a zero grade.
2. Extra credit is not available.
3. Rubrics devised via IBMYP and PPS standards will be used to evaluate assignments and assessments.
4. Students will also be given formative assessments throughout lessons to monitor their learning progress. Summative assessments will follow at the end of each unit.

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**Category 1: Classwork (25%)**

- Cooperative group summaries
- Group and class discussions and activities
- Lab sessions
- Pre and post-lab evaluations

**Category 2: Writing (20%)**

- Daily Notes
- Hypotheses
- Readers Writer’s Section
- Lab Reports
- Summary, multi paragraph, and note taking Write Tools work
Category 3: Homework (10%)

- Section/Chapter assessment questions
- Writing summaries

Category 4: Assessments (25%)

- Quizzes
- Curriculum-Based Assessments
- Chapter and Unit tests
- Semester Exams
- Culminating projects
- Presentations

Category 5: Participation (20)

- Warm-ups
- Participation in group and class discussions
- Lab session participation
- Presentations

I hope you find this letter both helpful and informative. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly via email at hludwick1@pghboe.net or via phone at 412-529-6345. I look forward to a great year and the opportunity to work with you and your child during the 2016-2017 school year.

Sincerely,
Mr. Henry Ludwick III

Approved: _____________________
Dr. Wayne N. Walters, Principal
Please complete this form and return it with your child. Thank You.
I have read the policies, expectations and grading guidelines listed in the letter and I understand the expectations for Biology. I agree to take a “no excuses” stance concerning these areas.

Student Name______________________ Student Signature______________________

Parent/guardian Signature ________________________ E-mail____________________

Phone Number(s) {Day} ______________________ {Evening}____________________

Date_____________________

We are an equal rights and opportunity school district. | Parent Hotline: 412-529-7920 | www.pps.k12.pa.us