



September 2011

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Mrs. Ellen Vargo, and I will be teaching your child Communications this year. As part of the Language A team, I would like to welcome you and your child to a new school year at the International Baccalaureate 6-10. In the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP), Language A consists of Reading and Language Arts classes. As a teacher in this subject area, I would like to share important information to help make this a successful academic year. We want our students to enjoy their year in Language A.

Students will be engaged in various types of literature from the Elements of Literature reader and novels which are assigned throughout the year. Reading strategies will be provided to strengthen the students' ability to increase fluency and comprehension. Some areas we will focus on are word recognition/decoding, making personal connections, analyzing character and plot, making inferences, and becoming an independent reader.

Students will have formative assessments throughout the lesson, followed by a summative assessment at the end of each unit. Formative and summative assessments involve student participation and reflection to measure various aspects of their performance. Students will also practice grammar and writing skills by using the Houghton Mifflin English book and writing several essays.

Language A Assessment Criteria

Criterion A – Content

Criterion B – Organization

Criterion C – Style and language usage

Daily requirements and tools for success:

- Agenda book
- Writing utensil (a blue or black ink pen or a sharpened pencil)
- DEAR time book for independent reading
- Completed homework or other required assignments
- Appropriate text book or novel
- Readers/Writers notebook and folder
- Any special supplies that may be needed for a particular project/assignment or for activities related to the IBMYP.



Barack Obama Academy of International Studies

129 Denniston Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15206
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Procedures and expectations:

- All school rules must be followed in the classroom
- Rules specific to the classroom, as designated by the teacher and posted in the classroom, must be followed
- Assignments must be completed in a timely manner
- All students must complete the Pittsburgh Public Schools portfolio
- Class time will include warm-up time, direct instruction, various activities and organizational time
- Homework will be assigned consistently. (4 times a week). Homework may not always be in written form and will cover a range of assignments that reinforce the skills taught in class.
- Students may expect to experience whole group instruction, small cooperative groups, partner work or individualized, differentiated instruction and a variety of class work assignments. Modifications will be made for students with Individualized Education Plans.

Evaluation, assessments and our grading policy:

Assignments should be submitted on time. Communications work will only be accepted until the last day of the week

- Rubrics devised from IBMYP and District standards will be used to evaluate assignments and tests.
- The Pittsburgh Public Schools grading scale will be used (90-100%-advanced {A}, 80-89%-above average {B}, 70-79%-proficient {C}, 60-69% {D} and below 59% {E}).
- Citizenship refers to work habits and class demeanor. Students are required to adhere to all school and classroom rules and will be evaluated accordingly using the standard scale (O-outstanding, S-satisfactory and U-unsatisfactory.)
- If learning or teaching is disrupted in the classroom, a verbal reminder will be given. If the reminder is ignored, a phone call will be made so that communication is kept open and the student's progress is supported. If all communications with student and parents fail and inappropriate behavior continues, a referral will be written. An immediate referral will be issued for physical fighting.
- Homework will be assigned four times a week, Monday through Thursday.
- Late work will be accepted for half credit. Extra credit assignments will not be given.
- In Communications class, the grading guidelines will be: Portfolio/Culminating Projects 20%; Classwork 35%; Speaking/Listening 15%; Assessment 20%; and Homework 10%.



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I hope this information will be helpful to you! I can always be reached at school via phone (412) 622-5980 or e-mail – evargol@pghboe.net. I encourage and welcome communication via the agenda book; if you have questions and concerns about progress or behavior, I would like to hear from you and the agenda book is an excellent way to communicate. In addition, I am available to speak with you during the regularly scheduled monthly parent conferences.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Ellen Vargo

I have read the policies, expectations and grading guidelines listed in the letter and I understand the expectations for Language A. I agree to take a “no excuses” stance concerning these areas.

Student name/section _____

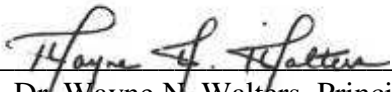
Student signature _____

Parent/guardian signature _____

E-mail _____

Phone number(s) {day} _____ {evening} _____

Date _____

Approved: 
Dr. Wayne N. Walters, Principal

