



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Note to Editors: Photo opportunity available at a dedication ceremony to be held on March 30, 2007 at the German-American International School, 275 Elliott Dr., Menlo Park, CA**

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**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA SCHOOL IS WORLD'S FIRST TO OFFER  
GERMAN-LANGUAGE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM**

Program develops international mindedness in students;  
German-American International School is among an elite group of only six schools  
in California and 104 in the US authorized to offer the IB Primary Years Program (PYP)

**MENLO PARK, Calif., March 14, 2007 --** The German-American International School (GAIS) today announced it has been authorized as an IB World School by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, a recognized leader in the field of international education. GAIS is the first in the world to offer a German-language IB Primary Years Program for children aged 3-12.

“Following an exhaustive authorization process, we are thrilled to announce that GAIS is now officially an IB World School,” said Hans Peter Metzger, Head of School. “The International Baccalaureate is a world-renowned program and we are very proud of our new status in the global educational community. After nearly four years of implementing the program, GAIS students are very familiar with the IB curriculum and are already benefitting from its breadth and holistic approach to learning.”

Due in part to offering the IB over a traditional language program, the school's student population has grown more than 30 percent since 2004 to 215 students currently, drawing from a growing pool of families in the San Francisco bay area that value an international bilingual education. Many parents believe that an international educational model like that of the IB program helps to better prepare their children for today's global issues.

The IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. The IBO offers three programs of international education, including the PYP, the Middle Years Program for children aged 11-16, and the Diploma Program for children aged 16-19. GAIS has been authorized for the PYP, a transdisciplinary program designed to foster the development of the whole child, encompassing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic development.

In recent years, the IB program has gained increased recognition both in the US and internationally. Last year, *Newsweek* magazine published a list of "America's Best High Schools," in which six out of the top 10 schools and 39 of the top 100 public high schools in the United States were IB World Schools\*. In September of 2006, the US Department of Education awarded International Baccalaureate North America (IBNA) an Advanced Placement Incentive (API) Grant to boost participation of low-income students throughout the country in advanced courses and tests. In all, more than 1900 schools in 124 countries offer one or more IB programs.

### **About the Program**

At the heart of the PYP curriculum is a framework consisting of five essential elements that help guide teachers and students as they design curricular units for exploration and study. The five elements include:

- **Concepts:** Eight concepts are fundamental to the process of inquiry, including form, function, causation, change, connection, perspective, responsibility, reflection.
- **Skills:** Thinking, communicating, research, self-management and social skills.
- **Attitude:** The PYP and its curriculum focus on the development of positive attitudes in the children towards people, their environment and learning. The PYP encourages students to feel, value and demonstrate tolerance, respect, integrity, independence, enthusiasm, empathy, curiosity, creativity, cooperation, confidence, commitment, and appreciation.
- **Action:** Students are encouraged to reflect, make informed choices and to take action that will help their peers, school staff and the wider community. In this way the students demonstrate a deeper learning through service and positive action.
- **Knowledge:** considered to be a holistic understanding of ideas, not merely the acquisition of facts and skills, knowledge is developed through inquiries into six transdisciplinary themes of global significance: Who we are, Where we are in space and time, How we express ourselves, How the world works, How we organize ourselves, and Sharing the planet. Additionally, the

six themes are supported and balanced by six subject areas: Language, Social Studies, Mathematics, Arts, Science and Technology, and Personal, Social and Physical Education.

What is especially noteworthy about the IB program is how it tends to become an all-embracing school philosophy rather than merely a set of individual, unrelated courses. From the teaching staff to the students, all are challenged to approach their work with a deeper engagement with the core values of the PYP as it relates to the classroom, school, locality and the wider world.

Rather than working through a check-list of subjects to learn and master, teachers at GAIS teach through the prism of “units of inquiry” and a process of discovery so that kids are challenged to approach new material with a questioning mind -- “What do I want to find out about this topic?” - - giving the classroom an investigative feel. Students are then encouraged to take their knowledge to the next level and actually apply what they have learned: gathering the information, analyzing it, reflecting on it and then producing something in conclusion, such as a solution, a final report or a presentation to the rest of the school. This helps them to develop from a very early age the important critical thinking skills that will also serve in the long run to increase their retention levels.

An example from the GAIS kindergarten helps to demonstrate this point. The class recently was presented with a challenge when the children were told a story about another school that had no paper for doing their homework and no money to buy supplies. After proposing to donate paper and money to the school, the children quickly realized that their charitable approach was only a short-term solution because the money and donated paper would eventually run out and the school would be back to nothing. Applying knowledge from a just completed unit on materials, they decided it would be better if they could make their own paper instead out of recycled materials and share the recipe with the other school. This led to much research with the help of the teachers about paper-making, lots of discussion about the best ingredients (sawdust, cardboard, newspaper, etc), followed by a series of experiments resulting in a beautiful colored paper that they wrote their recipe on and sent off to the other school. Little Einsteins in the making.

### **About the German-American International School**

Founded in 1988, the German-American International School of Menlo Park is an independent, private non-profit school including programs ranging from German immersion preschool to bilingual (German/English) elementary and middle school through the eighth grade. The school's

curriculum is designed to satisfy both California State and German foreign school guidelines, as well as the IBO program. The school is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Featuring small class sizes (averaging 10-15 children per classroom) and an experienced, highly-educated teaching staff, the school's hallmark is its very high standard of academic instruction in a nurturing multicultural environment with down-to-earth appeal. The school is based on the belief that children can reach their fullest potential if they are able to develop a positive self-image. To further this goal, the school offers a learning environment that fosters the development of a creative and critical mind. Multicultural traditions are discussed and observed throughout the year, placing an emphasis on international awareness. Private tours of the school are welcome and may be scheduled by calling 650-324-8617.

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\* The *Newsweek* list of "America's Best High Schools" is based on an index created by education writer Jay Mathews of the *Washington Post*. A copy of the *Newsweek* article is available at:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12532678/site/newsweek/>