



## 2011 STATE RECOGNITION AWARDS

### PROGRAM AWARD #1

For contributing to a significant and positive impact on student learning

### **Middle Years Program, International Baccalaureate Organization**

Discovery Middle School, Christine Olsen, Principal  
Vancouver Public Schools

The Middle Years Programme is the 'middle program' of the International Baccalaureate Organization. It is an educational framework that requires students to study in eight subject areas: English, Humanities (Social Studies), Math, Physical Education, Foreign Language, Science, Arts, and Technology. State and district curriculum requirements are the basis of each subject area's content.

Over the past four years, the process of candidacy and eventual authorization of Discovery as an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) school has led to a school-wide transformation. Situated in the high poverty urban core of Vancouver, many Discovery students faced significant challenges in achieving school success. With the context of international education, teachers, students and parents are able to draw confidently on a recognizable common education framework, a consistent structure of aims and values and an overarching concept of how to develop international-mindedness.

The process began with focused study and extensive training for all staff at Discovery. Administrators and teachers participated in three tiers of training through the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) as a part of the school candidacy. Eventually capacity was developed within the staff at Discovery to continue and sustain professional development using internal resources and expertise.

Working in Professional Learning Communities, Discovery teachers, under the expert leadership of principal Chris Olsen, redefined the school culture and established both high expectations and meaningful learning connections that were evident to all students. Using the MYP Areas of Interaction, teachers designed instruction units with clear Learning Targets and Essential Questions in all areas of academic study. These units of study embed formative assessment to ensure that students understand what they need to learn and how they are progressing toward established targets. The Areas of Interaction has supported students in making meaningful connections across content areas, as well as understanding the purpose and application of learning, which has increased relevance and achievement.