

Draft of resolution to create task force to explore possible IB authorization for ANCS

The draft of the ANCS strategic plan update includes an objective to strengthen our partnership with our neighborhood high school, Maynard Jackson High School (MJHS), in order to improve the educational outcomes for ANCS students as they matriculate to high school. As a part of this process, it seems logical to explore whether it would make sense for ANCS to go through the authorization process of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme:

- ∞ MJHS offers an IB diploma, a rigorous high school diploma that many ANCS graduates may pursue.
- ∞ One of the other charter middle schools in the area (Wesley International Academy) is an IB authorized school and it is also under consideration to make the recently combined King Middle School and Coan Middle School an IB authorized school in the future. With potentially multiple IB middle schools feeding into MJHS, there could be an opportunity to partner more closely with other schools using the IB programme.

There are many similarities between the IB programme and the ANCS experience as it stands currently—a curriculum framework that fosters student inquiry and critical thinking, a focus on community and the study of other cultures. However, there are still many questions to be answered before a decision can be made about whether ANCS should go through the IB authorization process, such as:

- ∞ What would be the benefits to students of an IB programme while at ANCS? What would the costs—financial and otherwise—be?
- ∞ What—if anything—about the ANCS experience would change for students and/or teachers by becoming IB authorized?
- ∞ If ANCS were to become IB authorized, what are the advantages to ANCS students if they attend an IB programme in high school? If ANCS did *not* become IB authorized, would there be any disadvantages to students who go on to the IB programme at MJHS or elsewhere?
- ∞ If ANCS were to become IB authorized, would authorization be focused on the middle school grades at ANCS or should it also include the elementary school grades?

To explore these questions and others, I recommend to the board that we form an IB exploratory task force to be chaired by our Middle Campus Principal, Dr. Cathey Goodgame. Dr. Goodgame is herself IB-certified and has experience working in a school district that offers the IB programme. I would work with Dr. Goodgame and Lara Zelski to identify other faculty members and invited parents/community members to form this task force and shape its work. Ultimately, the goal would be for the task force to bring to the board a fully vetted recommendation no later than February 2015 as to whether ANCS should pursue IB authorization.