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Media Contact: Rachel Sonnentag, O'Connor Connective,
rachel@oconnorconnective.com, (920) 288-2980

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**CURRICULUM TAKES GLOBAL APPROACH
AT HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL
SCHOOL APPROVED AS "IB WORLD SCHOOL"
FOR MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME**

GREEN BAY, Wis. — The Green Bay Area Catholic Education school system (GRACE) announced today that Holy Family School, one of nine schools in the system, received approval to educate as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School for the Middle Years Programme (MYP). Holy Family joins a network of over 4,200 schools in 108 countries and 1.2 million students worldwide by garnering status as an IB World School.

“This academic distinction is most impressive,” GRACE President Kim Desotell shared. “Holy Family sought the curriculum model of IB after much research and exploration. Offering this model of education provides an exceptional learning environment for our students and parents at Holy Family.”

At the core of the program, IB prepares students to live, learn and work in a global society. In approaching learning from a collaborative view, students understand the interconnectedness of the world and their role in it. Students learn through inquiry-based approaches and become active learners in their education.

“It encourages students to become creative and reflective thinkers through the use of inquiry-based learning approaches,” said Tiffany Green, Holy Family IB coordinator and teacher.

Holy Family spent three years as an IB MYP Candidate School. Teachers completed extensive training, the coordinators conducted significant research, and parents were engaged through meetings and information sessions.

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Final approval came after a successful authorization team visit in April 2017.

“The IB approval process is significant,” Holy Family Principal Allison Moseng said. “The Holy Family teachers, staff and IB coordinators committed to this progressive learning model so we can provide an education where our students will thrive in both the classroom setting, and in applying what they learn to our community.”

Unique Teaching and Learning Model

The IB program is centered around inquiry, action and reflection within a model that is focused on community integration and global impact. There are four programs in which schools can participate. Holy Family is approved as a Middle Years Programme (MYP), where the focus is on how students make connections between their studies and the world in which they live. All Holy Family students in grades 6-8 will participate in the IB MYP.

“The program is unique because of its rigorous academic and personal standards,” Green said. “Using IB’s mission, we focus our classroom experience around how education can help build a better world.”

The IB MYP is structured around three primary focuses: the IB Learner Profile, subject groups and Approaches to Learning (ATL).

The IB Learner Profile

The IB program uses the IB Learner Profile, 10 attributes that are valued by the organization, to guide all aspects of teaching and learning. It’s the IB mission statement in action. IB learners strive to become: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.

“The IB Learner Profile is the foundation,” Green said. “It’s learner-centered. We develop these attributes first, and everything else follows. We are successful when we see these 10 attributes achieved by our students.”

Subject Groups

The curriculum consists of eight subject groups: language acquisition, language and literature, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical and health education, and design.

The sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade teachers at Holy Family are trained to teach in one or more subject groups. The IB philosophy encourages overlapping subject groups so students can see connection across learning categories.

Approaches to Learning (ATL)

The students develop soft skills through Approaches to Learning (ATL), where they learn how to learn, developing specific abilities in the areas of thinking skills, social skills, communication skills, research skills and self-management.

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“The IB program is inquiry-based learning,” said Cheryl Smet, Holy Family teacher. “The students are involved in their learning. They aren’t just given information and expected to repeat it back. They are active learners in their education.”

Smet, in addition to her teaching role, served as the school’s first IB coordinator and led Holy Family through the candidacy phase. She was instrumental in Holy Family’s approval and implementation processes.

Community Project Applies Classroom Education to Real World

In addition to the learner profile, subject groups and ATL, students complete an independent community project during their third year in the program. Students can work individually, in pairs or in small groups of three. Each student or student group works with a coach on the project.

Students decide what they want to learn about and focus their project based on their interests and passions. The students become active in a community of their choice and apply what they learn in the classroom to their local or global community.

“We complete a lot of service at Holy Family,” Smet said. “The community project ties the curriculum into the students’ service. It’s helping the students see the whole picture.”

The students present their project to the school, parents and community. Parents have responded favorably to this project and appreciate the opportunity for their children to connect what they learn in the classroom with the community.

More Than Challenging Academics

The program is more than academics; the education received through IB is holistic and focused on developing the whole person, inclusive of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development and well-being. The program prepares students for lifelong learning.

For Holy Family, an important curricular element is faith. There are many IB schools worldwide that are faith-based. The Holy Family curriculum still integrates the Catholic faith into all elements of teaching and learning.

“We are globally aware, relevant and current in education models while having our faith as our foundation,” Green said. “It’s an added benefit to our unique program at Holy Family.”

IB Program Prepares Students for High School and College

The IB program further prepares students for success in advanced education, including high school and college.

Many Holy Family students attend Notre Dame Academy. Notre Dame is an IB Diploma

Program School. The preparation in the IB MYP at Holy Family provides a seamless transition into the Notre Dame IB Diploma Program. Students have the skills needed to thrive in an inquiry-based learning environment and have an appreciation of the IB culture.

“The Holy Family students are learning skills and strategies that prepare them for the educational philosophy offered at Notre Dame,” said Matt Schultz, Notre Dame IB coordinator and interim principal. “Students who learn in the IB Middle Years Programme will have an easy transition to Notre Dame’s IB Diploma Program. These students are already accustomed to the inquiry-based style of learning.”

Additionally, many colleges and universities look favorably on the IB education model and may give credit for completed IB Diploma Programs at the high school level.

For students who may not be pursuing an IB high school, the IB MYP still prepares them to excel in advanced learning by developing skillsets that are desirable and applicable in all settings.

“At Holy Family School, we are intentional in providing opportunities for our students to succeed at all levels—in the classroom, in advanced education settings, in our community and in their future.” Moseng said. “The IB Middle Years Programme helps us educate with that goal in mind. This is an exciting time for Holy Family School.”

About Holy Family School

Grounded in Catholic faith, the Holy Family School community educates students to reach their academic potential while inspiring a passion to be active, lifelong learners. Through Catholic teaching and global awareness, students learn the great importance of being compassionate, loving and understanding citizens. To learn more, visit www.holyfamilygreenbay.com.

About International Baccalaureate (IB)

The International Baccalaureate (IB) mission is a simple idea—by educating students, a better world is created. IB, a nonprofit educational foundation formed in 1968, aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end, the foundation works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

About GRACE

GRACE stands for Green Bay Area Catholic Education and is a nine-school system that

provides excellence in early childhood through eighth-grade education and serves the 23 Catholic parishes within the Greater Green Bay community. GRACE schools range in offerings and locations, and each has its own distinct history, focus and parish connections. GRACE is among the largest Catholic school systems in the state of Wisconsin. To learn more, visit www.gracesystem.org.

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