



Robbinsdale Middle School/Robbinsdale Cooper High School: Partner Schools delivering the 5-year *International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program*



Robbinsdale Middle School
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Principal: Tom Henderlite

Principal: Mike Favor

Robbinsdale Middle School, grades 6-8, is a public school located in Robbinsdale Area School District #281, a suburban district northwest of Minneapolis, Minnesota. It partner high school for grades 9 and 10 is Robbinsdale Cooper.

The Middle Years Program, the first authorized in the state of Minnesota, was originally authorized at Sandburg Middle, which closed in 2009. Once an IB program within a school, Robbinsdale Middle is now a full-school program, with an Honors strand at each grade level. The RMS school population is approximately 1400 students; 57% report as minority and approximately 58% qualify for free or reduced lunch, an economic indicator of poverty.

Robbinsdale Middle has dedicated itself to diverse, progressive and inclusive learning programs. Over the past decade, larger populations of immigrant and refugee families have moved to the northwest suburbs. As a result, RMS has proudly and confidently reflected an increasingly diverse student population with an ever-growing English Language Learner (ELL) program. Students from 59 countries (first or second generation) are currently represented in the school. Seventy-seven international flags are a testimony to the countries of students who have attended RMS. The school's progressive curricula and dedicated staff have embraced the changing student demographic.

Since 1999, the original site has hosted and implemented the district's *International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program [IBMYP]* whose curriculum, objectives and philosophy comply with the highest international educational standards. The program was authorized in 2004.

There are two levels to the MYP at RMS: Honors IBMYP, for highly motivated students, and IBMYP. Both programs offer the full range of IB philosophy and practice.

Change in reputation because of MYP: *Robbinsdale Middle and Cooper High were looking for a challenging and balanced academic program that would attract and maintain capable students. MYP has contributed to stabilizing and enriching its diverse population and offering new opportunities for student development.*

Change in school culture because of IB: *MYP is an international program; consequently, it promotes cultural awareness and appreciation, tolerance of differences, strong communication skills, content knowledge and multiple perspectives of world issues and events, and setting and achieving high personal and academic standards. Teachers who instruct MYP students report that “the blinders have come off” both students and teachers. The program contributes significantly to the entire school through curriculum development and integration, teaching practices, a human rights curriculum, community service, and assessment practices.*

How are IB students engaged in the life of the school? *MYP students are among the most involved students in both schools, taking part in every club, activity, organization and sport. They also have a rich extra-curricular and after-school life, participating in private music lessons, civic organizations, volunteering, plays, contests, and so on.*



From where do students come to attend the program? *Students come from all nine elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools (for the 9-10 classes) in the Robbinsdale district, and from private and public schools in other metro districts on an open enrollment basis, as space allows. Once they come, they tend to stay for the duration of the program.*

Parent Involvement? *Like their students, IB parents tend to be positive and productive contributors to the school culture. There is an MYP Parent Advisory Group (PAC) at both schools that meets monthly with the coordinators to share ideas and suggestions for the program. They run parent nights to inform and give/gather support for program activities and policies; they plan and host events, such as the Global Café*

that highlights a different country's foods each month and fundraisers. They are strong advocates for the program at all levels.

Do you have an application process? *We currently use an application process for the more rigorous Honors MYP. Any student may also complete a short-form application to join one or more honors classes during the year to see how they might feel doing a full honors program. Our intention is to engage all students in rigorous courses. In the 2011/12 school year, Cooper High will welcome its first entire ninth grade school-wide MYP, and the following year, the entire 9th and 10th grades will be IBMYP!*

IBMYP at Robbinsdale Middle and Cooper High has achieved its original aims and more. The two schools have now steadily drawn and retained students who care strongly about their educational opportunities. This attitude and a general level of strong achievement have raised the bar for both schools' populations. Students are motivated, thorough learners with a sense of direction. While “normal” in all ways important to kids, these students nonetheless take personal responsibility and understand the value of “rising to the occasion” as concerns their futures. The reputation of the program has attracted families who have high academic expectations and actively participate in the education process at all levels.

For further information regarding Robbinsdale Cooper High School's *IB Diploma Program* (grades 11 and 12), please contact Holly Lewis, IB Coordinator at CHS: holly_lewis@rdale.org 763-504-8684.