



Contact:

Emily Morgan

communications@norwalkps.org

203-854-4007 office

Naramake Elementary School, Nathan Hale Middle School and Roton Middle School Achieve Prestigious IB Authorization

Norwalk, Conn. (July 16, 2025) - Norwalk Public Schools proudly announces that Naramake Elementary School, Nathan Hale Middle School and Roton Middle School have been officially authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization to offer its continuum of international education through two of its challenging, high quality educational programmes.

“This is a monumental achievement and one that will be remembered as a cornerstone in the legacy of each school. What an incredible moment for Naramake, Nathan Hale and Roton,” said Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools. “This is exactly what it looks like when dedication, excellence, and vision come together in perfect harmony. This is a victory for every student, staff member, and family in these school communities.”

Naramake Elementary School received authorization to offer the Primary Years Programme (PYP) geared toward children ages 3-12 that nurtures and develops young students as caring, active participants in a lifelong journey of learning through an inquiry-based, transdisciplinary curriculum framework that builds conceptual understanding.

The PYP’s emphasis on concept-driven learning and global-mindedness strongly aligns with the district’s Portrait of a Graduate, which outlines the essential skills and competencies Norwalk students need to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Through this alignment, Naramake students are not only gaining the academic foundation necessary for the next grade level but developing the adaptability, curiosity, and resilience required for lifelong success.

“At Naramake, we are developing key thinking, research, communication, social and self-management skills through collaborative projects designed to solve inquiry-based questions or problems derived from student curiosity,” said Principal Jane Wilkins. “Our students will leave elementary school with the knowledge, skills, and mindset they need to thrive in middle school and beyond.”

Leading the school’s IB implementation has been Alissa Helgesen, whose guidance and deep



understanding of the PYP model were instrumental in preparing staff and bringing the vision to life. Wilkins praised Helgesen's leadership and also commended Naramake's teachers and staff for their creativity, flexibility, and commitment to student success throughout the transition.

"A sincere thank you as well to Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella and the Norwalk Board of Education for believing in our school's vision and supporting us every step of the way," Wilkins said.

Nathan Hale and Roton received authorization to offer the Middle Years Programme (MYP), a rigorous and globally recognized educational framework for students in grades 6 through 10. The MYP is a challenging framework that encourages students to make practical connections between their studies and the real world, fostering critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and personal growth.

The MYP at both middle schools starts in grade 6 and continues through grade 8. Students can then apply through the NPS High School Choice Lottery to continue the MYP in grade 9 at Brien McMahon High School, which is also an authorized MYP school. If accepted, students could continue the MYP through grade 10 before applying again for Brien McMahon's IB Diploma Programme (DP) or Career-related Programme (CP).

"This marks one of the greatest accomplishments in NHMS's history over the past twenty years, and our entire team is truly thrilled," said James Crouch, Principal of Nathan Hale Middle School. "I am simply overflowing with excitement for our staff, students, and community. This milestone is a testament to what we can achieve when we work together."

Principal Crouch acknowledged the extraordinary efforts of Donald Mundt, NHMS math coach, and Stephanie Peckham, Dean of Students, whose leadership and commitment were instrumental in achieving the school's IB authorization. He also expressed sincere gratitude to Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella and the Central Office team for their support throughout the candidacy process.

For Roton Middle School, Principal Ed Singleton reflected on the years of hard work, dedication and collective effort that led to the school's official authorization as an IB MYP school. This accomplishment places Roton among a distinguished group of schools around the world recognized for delivering a high-quality, internationally focused education.

"It shows that our teachers, staff, and leadership are committed to excellence, constantly striving to enhance our educational practices and provide the best possible experience for our students. It also highlights the incredible support we receive from our parents and the enthusiastic engagement of our students," Singleton said. "It truly sets our students apart,



preparing them with the skills and mindset needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

These developments bring Norwalk Public Schools closer to offering a comprehensive K-12 IB continuum, positioning students for global citizenship and academic success from their earliest years through graduation.

About International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a global leader in international education—developing inquiring, knowledgeable, confident, and caring young people. Our programmes empower school-aged students to take ownership in their own learning and help them develop future-ready skills to make a difference and thrive in a world that changes fast.

About Norwalk Public Schools

At Norwalk Public Schools, our mission is to provide an excellent and equitable education so that all students graduate future-ready as civically responsible, globally engaged and positive contributors to an ever-changing and diverse world. Reflecting our diverse community, NPS families speak 59 different languages and represent 70 different countries.

Serving nearly 12,000 students, Norwalk Public Schools consists of four high schools, four middle schools, 13 elementary schools and one inclusive pre-school. NPS high school programs offer International Baccalaureate diploma and career programs; a renowned global studies magnet school; pathways in healthcare, marine science and digital media; and the opportunity to earn an industry recognized associate's degree along with a high school diploma. PreK through middle school students can take advantage of magnet programs focused on language, character, marine science, college and career readiness, and visual and performing arts. NPS also prides itself on its neighborhood schools, which build community and offer their own unique educational opportunities.