

# Portland Family February 2011



## The data is in and we, the United States,

did not rank in the top ten in reading, science or math. Of course, we are nowhere near the bottom either. But the fact remains that, according to those who calculate and rank student achievement globally, we have experienced a slide.

And yet, every day in schools and homes across America, parents and teachers are teaching, and students are learning and excelling. The question is: What are they learning and how? The beauty of our system is that, while not perfect, it is full of educators who are in love with learning, who are not afraid to innovate, and are committed to providing a first rate education.

For some families, the neighborhood school is the best place to be. It is close to home, surrounded by community and invested in by the people who live nearby. Neighborhood schools create deep and strong bonds, sometimes generation after generation.

For others, with a particular interest, talent, difference or desire, a magnet, option or private school can best meet their needs.

While school choice is not equally available everywhere, in most districts there are some options available. Whether you favor the arts, foreign languages, science and technology, alternative structures, or prefer the autodidactic approach, there are schools and resources, both public and private, offering a quality education.

Now, all you have to do is choose.

## Citizens of the World

**The Portland French School** offers an integrated French-American curriculum for students from pre-K through eighth grade. The primary school is based on the French system of three learning cycles, and the middle school curriculum is taught using the International Baccalaureate (IB) approach. Students also have an opportunity to learn a third language, either Chinese or Spanish. [www.portlandfrenchschool.org](http://www.portlandfrenchschool.org)

**The International School** offers the IB program for primary grades, and is the first school in the Pacific Northwest region to do so. The International School offers a multilingual education, offering Spanish, Japanese and Chinese, for students from pre-K through fifth grade. In their fifth grade year, students participate in a capstone study abroad program in a

# Getting Schooled

By Tammy Ellingson

"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth."

- Aristotle



country where their acquired second language is spoken. [www.intlschool.org](http://www.intlschool.org)

The International School of Beaverton, an IB program that offers both the Middle Years and Diploma programs, serves students in grades 6-12 in the Beaverton School District. Students have the opportunity to study Spanish, Chinese and Japanese. The curriculum teaches critical thinking and encourages a broader world view. [www.beaverton.k12.or.us/isb](http://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/isb)

The IB approach to education is becoming more available in public schools across the Portland metro region, with high schools like Lincoln, Cleveland, Hillsboro, Tigard, Tualatin, Gresham and more participating. Check out your local school district website to see which schools offer the IB program. Currently, there are at least 18 IB schools within the metro area.



Apply Yourself

Beaverton's Terra Nova High School emphasizes individualized learning plans and the Big Picture Learning model. Students, guided by a mentor, participate in internships, sometimes up to two days a week, giving them a hands-on approach to their education. Students also run a small organic farm, operating as a CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) enterprise. [www.terranova.nwresd.org](http://www.terranova.nwresd.org)

## Life as Art

In Beaverton, the Arts and Communication Magnet Academy (ACMA) offers programs in communication, as well as performing and visual arts, for grades 6-12. The school is a member of the International Network of Schools for the Advancement of Arts Education. ACMA is also the home of Dance West, the school's pre-professional dance company. During the summer months, students from all districts can participate in their Summer Academy offerings such as filmmaking, dance and musical theater. [www.beaverton.k12.or.us/acma](http://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/acma)

The Northwest Academy is an independently operated, private academy for students in grades 6-12 who are both academically minded and creative. The school's instructional philosophy is based on Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence theory, and is staffed by accomplished professionals in every field. [www.nwacademy.org](http://www.nwacademy.org)

Portland Public Schools' Bockman Arts Magnet Elementary and da Vinci Arts Middle School also integrate the arts into their academic curricula.

The New Urban High School is a magnet school in the North Clackamas district that is guided by creating connections. From small learning communities, to service projects and senior internships, the focus is on connecting with, and contributing to, both the school and the community at large. [www.nclack.k12.or.us](http://www.nclack.k12.or.us)

The Odyssey Program at Hayhurst Elementary School is a focus option for K-8 students in the Portland Public School District. In an Odyssey school, students actively participate in their learning through experiences and exploration. It's a living history approach to learning, featuring team-based learning groups and multi-age classrooms. [www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/hayhurst](http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/hayhurst)

