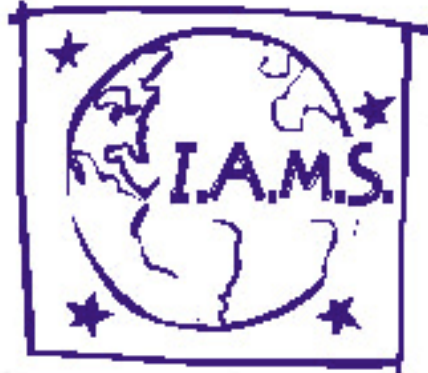


ESCUELA  
**InterAmericana**

Two Languages★One School



Dos Idiomas★Una Escuela

# School Handbook



FAMILIAS EN LA ESCUELA  
Escuela Inter-Americana

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# Introduction

Welcome to Inter-American Magnet School (IAMS), where the motto is “One School, Two Languages.” Parent volunteers from Familias en la Escuela (FELE), the parent advisory council for IAMS, created this handbook with input from school faculty and administration. The Parent Handbook is intended to help IAMS parents/guardians better understand the mission, history, and educational philosophy of the school, as well as explaining the school’s magnet status and day-to-day school routines, policies, and procedures. The success of each IAMS student requires consistent effort and collaboration between teaching faculty, school administrators, parents, and students.

This handbook will evolve along with the school. As you read, please make note of any information that was unclear or left out and send those notes to FELE. As changes are made, FELE will send updated pages out to families so please keep the handbook in an easily accessible place. We wish you and your family many happy and fruitful years at Inter-American Magnet School.

## Overview

### **SCHOOL HISTORY**

IAMS was created because two north side mothers dreamed of a bilingual, multicultural school where children from varied backgrounds would be taught in English and Spanish. But Adela Coronado-Greeley and Janet Nolan didn’t just dream, they took their idea to the community and then to the Board of Education. The Board agreed to support a bilingual preschool where Spanish-speaking children could prepare for kindergarten. In September 1975 the preschool opened in the old Bartelme School in Rogers Park. Janet and Addy Tellez were the teachers and a single bus provided transportation for the students. At the end of the year the Board considered dropping the program, but instead, the Parent Advisory Council, headed by Adela, persuaded Board members to expand the program and add a kindergarten class. In 1977 the Board extended the program to first grade and the program moved to the LeMoyne School at 851 W. Waveland.

As the school grew, parents/guardians lobbied for the school to have its own site. In 1983, that effort paid off and the school moved to a building at 919 W. Barry. Two years later the first class of eighth graders graduated from IAMS. In 2006 the school moved back to the LeMoyne building after a \$7 million renovation by the Board. The school now provides bilingual and multicultural education for students in pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The tradition of parental activism continues and IAMS families are deeply involved in every aspect of school life.

### **SCHOOL MISSION**

IAMS students benefit from excellent academic instruction and the opportunity to develop a high level of linguistic proficiency in both English and Spanish. This nurturing environment engenders compassion, self-pride, enthusiasm for learning, and independent thinking. IAMS students develop a sense of responsibility for their local and global communities and actively seek to use their talents to promote positive social change.

#### **IAMS strives to:**

- Promote academic excellence through dual-language and multicultural education;
- Develop student fluency, literacy, and workplace communication skills in both English and Spanish;
- Affirm the values of each student’s own culture while providing understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of other cultures;
- Demonstrate social consciousness in a pluralistic world;
- Integrate the study of the peoples of the Americas and their cultural and scientific contributions into all subject areas;
- Foster a caring, cooperative, and accepting school climate that fosters the social, affective, and cognitive development of each child;
- Include parents/guardians as active partners in the education of their children.

## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

IAMS is committed to promoting academic excellence through dual-language and multicultural education and developing student fluency, literacy, and workplace communication skills in both English and Spanish. IAMS is also focused on creating a generation of learners who demonstrate greater cognitive flexibility, are better problem solvers, and have a deeper understanding of and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.

Starting in preschool, IAMS adheres to an “additive bilingual” model that respects and reinforces each child’s first or dominant language in addition to supporting the simultaneous acquisition of a second language. This methodology is backed by research of best practices in dual-language instruction. From pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade 80 percent of the curriculum is presented in Spanish; in 4<sup>th</sup> grade 70 percent of instruction is in Spanish, in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades 60 percent of instruction is in Spanish, and in grades 7-8 instruction is split at 50 percent for each language.

## **DUAL-LANGUAGE PROGRAM**

Inter-American Magnet School subscribes to a number of basic principles that lead to a successful dual-language program.

- Students are challenged with a high-level academic curriculum
- Language arts education is integrated into the academic curriculum.
- There is a separate time for instruction in each language.
- Each classroom is roughly split between students who are dominant in English and those that are dominant in Spanish.
- Students are motivated to use the second language in meaningful situations.

IAMS is a dual-language Spanish-English immersion school within the Chicago Public School (CPS) system. The curriculum, however, is aligned to CPS and Illinois state standards. These learning standards are integrated into lesson plans and grade-appropriate goals are set and measured for students from pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. While IAMS does not “teach to the test,” IAMS faculty realizes the importance of academic performance and fully participates in CPS training and professional development.

Parent support and reinforcement of the complete school experience is critical to each child’s success. Homework is an integral part of the academic rigor at IAMS and parent support is needed for student success. Parents/guardians do not need to speak Spanish for their children to progress at IAMS. However, parents/guardians can encourage Spanish language use outside of school and support the learning process in several ways.

- Subscribe to Spanish-language children's magazines (check with the IAMS librarian)
- Encourage children to regularly visit the school library and check out Spanish language books to read at home.
- Buy, rent, or borrow Spanish-language music, films, and programs.
- Watch Spanish-language television.
- Utilize Spanish-speaking babysitters.
- Host Spanish-speaking students from other countries.
- Participate in Hispanic cultural activities.
- Organize play dates with Spanish-speaking IAMS families.
- Develop pen-pal relationships with Spanish-speaking children in other countries.
- Take trips to Spanish-speaking countries.
- Send children to Spanish-language camps.
- Monolingual parents/guardians should also realize that the acquisition of a second language requires extra time and effort. They should be ready to support and even learn with their children. A list of various online resources related to Illinois learning standards, dual-language learning, Spanish-language, and English as a second language are available on the IAMS website (<http://www.iamschicago.com/>).

## **CHICAGO PUBLIC MAGNET SCHOOLS**

Chicago public magnet schools specialize in a specific subject area, such as math/science, fine arts, world language, or humanities. These schools accept students from throughout the city and reflect diverse racial/ethnic (15-35% white and 65-85% minority) and socioeconomic backgrounds. A magnet school's curriculum emphasizes a particular programmatic theme, which is integrated school-wide. The focus of Inter-American Magnet School is its dual-language program.

Students from throughout the city may enroll, based on a citywide application. There are no testing admission requirements though IAMS does conduct a language survey to help ensure the program admits both English-dominant and Spanish-dominant students. Bilingual and Spanish-dominant students will be interviewed to assess level of Spanish-language skills. If there are more applicants than available seats, students are selected through a computerized lottery. There are three types of lotteries.

**Sibling:** for students who have brothers or sisters in the same household who already attend the school to which they are applying. As many as 45% of all entering students may be accepted through the sibling lottery.

**Proximity:** for students who live within a 1.5 mile radius of an elementary magnet school. A magnet school may accept up to 30 percent of its population from students who live within these limits. Proximity lotteries will only be conducted at magnet schools that have not achieved the 30 percent requirement.

**General:** for all students who are not included in the sibling or proximity lotteries.

IAMS offers a half-day, state-sponsored pre-kindergarten program for four-year-old children. Students are selected for available spaces through a computerized lottery. School bus transportation is provided only to K-8 students who live between 1.5 and 6 miles from the school.

# Curricula & Assessment

Like teachers at all CPS schools, Inter-American Magnet School teachers are certified to teach by the Illinois State Board of Education. Additionally, all IAMS classroom teachers are fully bilingual in Spanish and English. Many IAMS teachers also have a bilingual certificate and/or English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. All of the middle schools teachers have or will soon have endorsements in their specialty areas as well.

## **PRESCHOOL FOR ALL**

Preschool for All is an opportunity to provide a strong foundation for children's social, emotional, and cognitive learning. Based on the Illinois Early Learning Standards, the preschool experience is guided by recent brain and educational research and includes developmentally appropriate play and social interaction. Parent involvement is encouraged.

CPS, with funding from the Illinois State Board of Education, provides a grants-based fund for qualifying schools to offer a high quality preschool program called Preschool For All (PFA). Since 2007, IAMS has offered two half-day PFA preschool classrooms for four year olds. Children are accepted into the PFA program through the CPS lottery system. Each preschool class offers a morning program and an afternoon program to serve approximately 80 children per year. Preschool resources are available online at the IAMS website (<http://www.iamschicago.com/>).

### **The PFA program:**

- Is guided by established early learning standards;
- Has a teacher/student ratio of 1/10 with the total class size not exceeding 20 children;
- Employs a teacher with a state certification in early childhood education and a qualified teaching assistant;
- Uses an approved, research based curriculum;
- Provides a 2.5-hour-a-day program that follows the school calendar;
- Encourages family involvement and participation;
- Provides additional supports and professional development for its funded partners and staff;
- Includes preschool students in the CPS longitudinal data collection system.

## **STUDY OF THE AMERICAS CURRICULUM**

IAMS uses a Study of the Americas curriculum that adopts a prescribed focus area for each academic year. One of the goals of the program is to provide varying historical perspectives, giving students a broad base of cultural understanding and enabling them to become discriminating learners. Focus areas as well as associated projects and field trips are outlined in the table below.

Preschool	Myself –students learn about themselves
Kindergarten	Families Around the World – students learn about families and different lifestyles/celebrations
First Grade	Native Americans – students study Native American culture and related science topics
Second Grade	Central America and the Caribbean – students study the culture of early inhabitants of the region, focusing on Cuba and Puerto Rico as well as the journey of African-Americans from Africa
Third Grade	The Incas – students study Incan history from pre-Columbian times to the Spanish conquest and explore this impressive civilization, integrating social studies, language arts, math, and science; the study culminates with a presentation and an Inca Market (proceeds from the market go to the charity, Heifer International, to buy llamas for families in need in Peru)
Fourth Grade	The Mayas - students study the Mayan civilization, integrating social studies, language arts, math, and science; the study includes building a rainforest in the classroom
Fifth Grade	The Aztecs – students study the Aztec civilization and encounters between Spaniards and indigenous peoples; United States immigration is also studied; Aztec Market school event (proceeds are given to an appropriate non-profit); overnight trip to Cahokia Mounds, St. Louis, and Springfield to gain a deeper understanding about North American civilization and

the life of Abraham Lincoln

Sixth Grade	History of Latin America, Asia, and Africa – students explore historical and contemporary connections between the United States and these areas, examining themes of social justice; overnight trip to Indiana Dunes to study biodiversity, develop an appreciation for the environment, and become familiar with field research
Seventh Grade	Early U.S. History – students study Native American civilization, the American Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution and take the U.S. Constitution test
Eighth Grade	Modern U.S. History – students study history from the Civil War through the twentieth century, look at contemporary issues related to Latinos in the United States, and take the Illinois Constitution test; overnight trip to Washington D.C. to get hands-on knowledge of our country's democratic heritage

### **SUSTAINABLE LIFE CURRICULUM**

As mentioned, fifth-grade IAMS students learn about the rich Aztec culture. They study art, architecture, urban design, music, dance, food, traditions, and sustainable practices, such as the chinampa farming system, which allowed the Aztecs to thrive in their environment. The chinampa system uses a network of raised, floating farming beds built by layering and intertwining trees, roots, mud, and reeds. The system, still used throughout Mexico, allows food to be grown year-round and creates an ecological balance between drought and flood seasons.

In November 2007, IAMS parent Carmen Vidal-Hallett and several fifth-grade teachers started the Sustainable Life curriculum to connect gardening to Latino culture and values and to increase awareness of and respect for sustainable interactions between humans and the natural world. The first component of the curriculum was the creation of an outdoor sustainable garden on school grounds. The effort received support from parents, community members, and organizations, including permaculture architect Jody Luna, gardener Andre Bispo de Jesus, Partners of America, the Chicago Cubs, the Organic School Project, the local Jewish Council for Youth Services (JCYS), and Wolff Landscape Architecture. The garden has received numerous awards and is Greencorps-certified to receive free seeds and plants every season.

With guidance and expertise from various team members, the students planned, designed, and constructed a chinampa garden in the spirit of the sustainability-minded Aztec civilization they had studied. The students received indoor planting lessons and were taught architectural principles. The students learned how to incorporate native plants and permaculture concepts into their garden design. The students also learned about the importance of garden maintenance, recycling, and nutrition.

The entire school site was carefully planned to position the different components in the most appropriate areas. The chinampa vegetable garden was constructed on the south side of the school for the best sun exposure. The IAMS chinampas are “floating” raised beds constructed using salvaged bricks from a demolition site across the street from the school. The water around the beds is symbolized by a “river” made of blue stones. Vegetables include the “three sisters” (corn, beans, squash), which symbolize the sustainable way of living of Native Americans, another culture fifth-grade students study. Other vegetables include broccoli, Swiss chard, collard greens, tomatoes, peppers, and various herbs. The landscaping includes student-selected native plants and flowers that are appropriate for areas with partial sun, are colorful, and will attract wild life, birds, and insects studied in the science curriculum. A separate rain garden was installed next to a gutter that collects rain from the west entry canopy. The gutter was rerouted into the garden and the plants absorb the rain and alleviate the local sewer storm management, resolving the problem of ice on the west steps and demonstrating rainwater conservation and reuse. Future components of the Sustainable Life curriculum will be organized by IAMS teachers, administration, FELE, and the Local School Council (LSC), helping our students become dual-language, environmentally conscious leaders.

### **EVERYDAY MATHEMATICS CURRICULUM**

Everyday Mathematics (<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu>), taught in Spanish at IAMS, is a comprehensive pre-K through fifth-grade curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. Everyday Mathematics focuses on real-life problem solving, balances between whole-class and self-directed learning, emphasizes communication, facilitates school-family cooperation, and uses technology appropriately.

The authors of Everyday Mathematics believe it is important to help parents/guardians become actively involved in children's mathematical education. Below are just a few suggestions for learning about the mathematics the children are studying and how you can help reinforce math learning at home.

- A Home Link or Study Link homework assignment is included with almost every lesson in the program (parents/guardians can order these resources in English). Periodically, homework assignments include a letter to parents/guardians explaining various aspects of the program. Be sure to read these letters and discuss what's happening in math class with children. Whenever possible, work with children on their Home and Study Links. If there is something unfamiliar to you in these assignments, encourage children to "teach" you about what they are learning in class. If an assignment is confusing or difficult for you or your child, jot a note to the teacher explaining your difficulties on the Home or Study Link.
- Encourage children to teach you the math games they are learning in school and play these games whenever you have an opportunity. You might even enjoy inventing some of your own math games together!
- If children need additional basic fact practice, ask the teacher to send home a set of fact triangles and spend a little time each day practicing fact families.
- Many teachers set aside special days for math activities like Explorations, Games Days, and Projects. If possible, volunteer to help in the classroom on these days.
- Whenever you find yourself using math in your daily lives, discuss math's usefulness in real-life situations. Encourage children to experiment with and use everyday math tools like rulers, tape measures, measuring cups and spoons, clocks, and calculators.

### CONNECTED MATH PROGRAM

Students in grades 6-9, use the Connected Math program (<http://Phschool.com/com>) developed by Michigan State University. The goal of this middle-school program is to help students develop the knowledge and skills "in the use of the vocabulary, forms of representation, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods of the discipline of mathematics, including the ability to define and solve problems with reason, insight, inventiveness and proficiency." Eighth-grade students also have the opportunity to take algebra.

### CPS ASSESSMENT

All Chicago public schools are required to administer standardized exams. It is extremely important for students to be in attendance on test days. Information on exact test dates will be sent home with students. Below you will find the list of standardized exams. Exam results are sent home to parents/guardians, usually within a few weeks although ISAT results may not be available until June.

TEST NAME	SKILLS ASSESSED	GRADES TESTED	TEST DATE(S)
Algebra Exit Exam	Algebra skills (used to determine if student receives high-school credit for algebra)	8	May
ACCESS	Assessing Communication and Comprehension in English from State to State	ESL K-8	Jan.
Benchmark	Reading/Math	3-8	Oct. / Jan.
DIBELs	Dynamic Indicator of Basic Literacy	K-2	Sep./Jan./May
Explore	Preparedness for high school/college	8	Sep. or Oct.
ISAT: Illinois State Achievement Test	Illinois Standard Achievement Test	3-8	Mar.
Learning First	Reading assessment	3-8	Oct./Jan./Mar.
Writing Assessment	Writing ability (used to determine promotion from 8 <sup>th</sup> grade)	7, 8	Feb.

# Special Education

Inter-American Magnet School parents/guardians who have concerns about the conduct or educational needs of their children should first consider scheduling a parent/teacher conference. A child's teacher is a key person who can begin the process for School-Based Problem Solving (SBPS)/Response to Intervention (RTI) or a special educational services Case Study Evaluation or an evaluation for a Section 504 plan. These options are described below.

Students that are having difficulty in the classroom are not necessarily suffering from a specific learning disability. The goal of SBPS/RTI is to provide each child with the extra help he or she may need to reach the targeted academic level of a grade. SBPS/RTI is a step-by-step process, with each step lasting several weeks to ensure sufficient time for success. The SBPS/RTI plan includes parent contact and notices, home interventions such as audio books in English and Spanish, and possible participation in an after-school program. The SBPS/RTI process also allows teachers and staff to try academic and/or behavioral interventions in the classroom before referring a child for a special educational services evaluation. SBPS/RTI supports may include:

- Assessing student performance using classroom-based materials and data driven testing;
- Establishing and delivering classroom intervention;
- Translating effective teaching strategies into the regular instruction program;
- Involving teachers, parents, and key personnel in collaborative decision-making.

Please note that at any time during the SBPS/RTI process families may request in writing a special education case study evaluation to determine if the child requires special educational services.

For those students who qualify for special educational services, because they have a disability such as specific learning disability, hearing impairment, speech and language problems, serious emotional disturbances, other health impairment and require specialized instruction, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law and the Illinois School Code, controls the procedural requirements. For each child an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed. Children must be evaluated within 60 days of the date a special education case study evaluation is requested. In Illinois, all children receiving special education services are entitled to receive a "free, appropriate, public education" until age 22.

## **INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN (IEP)**

An IEP plan is developed for an individual child who is determined to have special educational needs, such as a specific learning disability, speech delay, occupational and physical therapy needs, social work service needs, a one to one aide. By law, a child's educational plan is modified to accommodate the child's unique learning requirements. Approaches may range from placing the child in a self-contained classroom with a special education teacher to having the child use the special education classroom for some subjects and attend general education classes for other subjects or receive special educational services/ supports in the general education setting. Related services may include, but are not limited to speech, social work, or physical/ occupational therapies, transportation, and assistive technology.

## **LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)**

IDEA mandates that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schools, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment should occur only when the severity of the disability of the child is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. This is commonly referred to as the least restrictive environment (LRE) mandate.

## **SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT**

A Section 504 Plan is developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary school receives accommodations (for example, taking medication during the school day) that will ensure the child's access to the learning environment. Students with 504 Plans do not require specialized instruction, but, like the IEP, a 504 Plan should be updated annually to ensure that the student is receiving the most effective accommodations for his/her specific circumstances, which may include but are not limited to asthma, diabetes, and seizure disorders. Children who receive IEPs should have accommodations listed in their IEP and do not require a separate Section 504 plan.

## **PARENT RESOURCES**

The following entities provide information to and/or advocacy for parents who are seeking to access appropriate Special Education services for their child. The website links for each entity below are available on the IAMS website as well as links to special education statutes (<http://www.iamschicago.com/>).

**Family Resource Center on Disabilities**, 312.939.3513

**Equip for Equality**, 312.341.0022 or 800.537.2632

**Access Living**, 312.640.2100 or 800.613.8549

**DePaul Law School Special Education Advocacy Clinic**, 312.362.8701

**Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago** (if child is in foster care), 312.341.1070

## **STUDENTS – EDUCATORS – PARENTS COMMITTEE (SEP)**

If a child is identified as having a learning disability, another resource for parents/guardians is SEP (Students – Educators – Parents Committee). SEP is a parent organization that provides education to the IAMS community on special education and advocates for respect, support, and appropriate education for IAMS children with special needs. Through SEP, IAMS parents/guardians have a support system that meets on a monthly basis to discuss concerns or issues and share ideas on how to best help their children succeed academically. The group also helps parents/guardians understand IEPs and the IEP process.

# Academic Enrichment/After-School Programs

Inter-American Magnet School students have one academic enrichment class each day of the week, including computers, physical education, music, art, and library. In addition, IAMS participates in several academic enrichment programs.

The administration applies for grants to participate in CPS-funded after-school programs. These programs typically begin in the fall, run for 20 weeks, and are provided for students in grades 3-8. Fliers describing available programs are distributed at the beginning of each school year.

## **BOOK CLUBS**

The IAMS library, in collaboration with the Chicago Public Library, hosts three book clubs (5th grade, 6th grade, and 7th/8th grades). The book clubs meet monthly from September-February during the 50-minute lunch and recess period in the tradition of a "working lunch." Students choose the books they read as a group from the 20 nominees for the annual Rebecca Caudill Readers' Book Award, Illinois's Children's Choice Award (<http://www.rcyrba.org>); in February they vote for their favorite books.

## **BATTLE OF THE BOOKS**

This library program is hosted annually by the Chicago Public Schools Department of Libraries and Information. Students read books from a list of 20 and compete against teams from other schools in two levels (4th-6th and 7th-8th) by answering questions about the books at an annual citywide competition in April.

## **HANDS ON STANZAS**

This dynamic program from the Poetry Center of Chicago enhances literacy through poetry. Once a week for 20 weeks, Chicago poets guide IAMS 4th graders as they read and discuss the work of published poets and as they write and present their own poetry. At the close of the program, students may have their work published in an anthology of student work, participate in school-wide projects, and present their poetry to the public at cultural venues across the city. IAMS student poems are accessible from the Poetry Center website: <http://www.poetrycenter.org> (Hands on Stanzas > Blog > Inter-American Magnet School).

## **YOUNG AUTHORS SCHOOL COMPETITION**

IAMS values value writing and supporting emergent writers. In grades K-5 teachers devote class time to developing ideas for stories for the Young Authors Competition, but it is a family decision to submit on official entry. Two authors or one author and one illustrator may write student books. Submissions may be in Spanish or English and are made in the form of a book and may be narrative, informational, or poetry. IAMS teachers then select the best three submissions from each grade-level. Those submissions are judged at either the primary (K-2) or intermediate level (3-5). Students from each level may be selected to submit their work to the area competition.

## **SCIENCE FAIR**

Middle school IAMS students may participate in the CPS Student Science Fair. Community members judge science projects. Younger students participate at the school and area level; older students may go on to present at the city science fair and beyond.

## **SPANISH STARS**

Spanish Stars is a program organized by FELE that recognizes students for speaking Spanish in many daily situations (classroom, recess, lunch, etc). Teachers and staff nominate students monthly who receive a special prize from FELE.

## **CHICAGO CHILDREN'S CHOIR**

The Chicago Children's Choir is a multicultural, multi-racial choral music education organization founded in 1956. The choir provides a program to IAMS students in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade in lieu of weekly music class.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS PROGRAM**

The CPS Sports Department believes that student participation in athletics has positive effects on school performance and adolescent development; fosters success later in life; and promotes physical development and fitness. The IAMS mascot is the Puma. Sports teams are coached by teachers and/or parent volunteers so the availability of programs varies from year to year with the exception of basketball, which is always available for both boys and girls each year. Information regarding sports will be sent out to parents/guardians of students in grades 6-8 during the school year. IAMS students must be in good academic standing (grades no lower than Cs) and have no serious misconduct reports. Student eligibility status will be verified by the sports director and each student's teacher.

## **SAFETY PATROLS**

IAMS middle-school students are eligible to assist with bus patrol, color guard during school assemblies, and act as hallway and door monitors.

## **YEARBOOK COMMITTEE**

IAMS 8<sup>th</sup> grade students may take part in the yearbook committee from January to March each year to take photographs, organize pictures, and publish the yearbook.

## **TUITION-BASED AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

IAMS also offers several fee- or tuition-based after-school programs.

**Arts in the School:** Each year, FELE's Arts in the School Committee organizes after-school programs such as art, guitar, and flamenco dance classes. A fee is charged to cover the cost of the programming and the classes typically run for several weeks during a semester. Fliers are distributed during the school year with specific information about student age requirements, class format, and program calendar and cost.

**La Escuelita:** This afternoon preschool program for IAMS morning pre-k students is provided by the Jewish Council for Youth Services (JCYS). Students enrolled in this program are picked up from their classrooms and taken to another IAMS classroom. There, they eat lunch (provided by parent/guardian or the school cafeteria). After lunch, the bilingual staff provides age-appropriate educational activities such as storytelling, singing, music, arts & crafts, games, playground time, group time, and rest time. At 3:15 pm students are transferred to the JCYS Lakeview Family Center (957 W. Grace); pickup may be scheduled there anytime between 3:30 - 6:00 pm. For more information call JCYS at 773.281.2533.

**JCYS After-School Program:** This program is available for students in grades K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and offers a safe, fun, nurturing place for children to participate in games, art activities, sports, and study time. While not a tutoring program, staff is on hand to supervise homework and help with questions. Parents/guardians can sign up for a schedule of three, four, or five days each week. JCYS Lakeview Family Center also provides activities during early dismissal days and CPS non-attendance days, including holidays and winter and spring breaks (additional fees apply). For more information call 773-281-2533.

# Classroom Information

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Inter-American Magnet School students receive a list of school supplies needed (mandatory and voluntary items) for the next grade level at the end of the current school year. Pre-k parents/guardians receive school-supply lists in the mail prior to the start of the school year. Throughout the year teachers post a wish list of additional items outside their classrooms.

## SCHEDULES/HOMEWORK

Teachers will send home a classroom schedule and home/school expectations during the first week of school.

**General:** Homework is an integral part of a child's learning experience. Assignments will reflect the school's bilingual curriculum. Information about each grade's curriculum is provided to parents/guardians at the fall Open Houses.

**IAMS recommends** that families purchase a Spanish dictionary, an English dictionary, and a Spanish-English/English-Spanish dictionary to keep at home. Parents/guardians who need further language assistance may ask a teacher to pair them with either a Spanish-dominant or English-dominant family. Parents/guardians are encouraged to support their children's efforts by keeping aware of the current school curriculum and establishing a regular time and place to work on homework.

**CPS guidelines** for homework are listed below.

Kindergarten 15 minutes/day

Grades 1, 2, 3 30 minutes/day

Grades 4, 5, 6 45 minutes/day

Grades 7, 8 90 minutes/day

**Homework Folder (Grades Pre-K – 2):** To help ensure that important information reaches parents, IAMS will send notices, letters, calendars, etc., with the students' homework, in a folder. Please make a special effort to check your child's folder each day for school news and communications from your child's teacher.

**Agenda Notebook (Grades 3-8):** Children in Grades 3-8 will receive an "Inter-American Agenda Notebook." Students will write down their homework, and parents/guardians are asked to sign-off at the bottom of each page daily. A \$5.00 fee is charged for the Notebook and for any replacements.

## GRADES

### Grading Scale (Grades Pre-K/Kindergarten)

W Well Developed  
P Partially Developed  
B Beginning to be Developed  
I Not Yet Introduced

### Grading Scale (Grades 1-3)

C Consistently  
O Often  
S Sometimes  
I Is Beginning to Develop  
N Not Evident  
/ Not Applicable

### Grading Scale (Grades 4-8)

A	Exceeds standards	90-100
B	Above standards	80-89
C	Meets standards	70-79
D	Below standards	60-69
F	Does not meet standards	50 or below

## GRADEBOOK PARENT PORTAL

The CPS Gradebook Parent Portal (officially rolled out by CPS in 2009-2010) is a unique web-based tool that allows parents/guardians to securely view their children's grades and attendance online register to receive email or text notifications when a student is absent or their grades drop below a specified threshold. Parents/Guardians may also view course syllabi, upcoming assignments, and class descriptions and communicate directly with teachers. Please note that since IAMS grade scales for 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> grades do not coincide with CPS, accurate grade information will not be available through the CPS Gradebook Parent Portal for those grades. To start, parents/guardians will need a student's CPS ID number as well as a unique school-issued personal identification number (PIN); IAMS will send this information to IAMS families. If you lose or do not receive your child's information, please contact the school to obtain your PIN. For directions on how to set up an account, go to <http://www.cps.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/ParentPortalOrientation.pdf>.

### **FIRSTCLASS EMAIL AND COLLABORATION SYSTEM**

This electronic communication tool allows CPS administrators, teachers, and students in grades 5-8, to communicate securely online. Key features include email, moderated instant messaging, online calendars, contact management, file storage, workgroup collaboration, and document sharing. For more information, visit <https://fc.cps.edu>.

### **BOOKS**

**Textbooks:** All textbooks are the property of IAMS. Students will be charged \$5-\$30 for damaged or lost books.

**Library Books:** Students may borrow books from classroom libraries and the school library. Students are responsible for keeping the books in good condition and will be asked to replace lost or damaged books.

### **NUTRITION/SCHOOL MEALS**

Developing good eating habits is essential for children. Candy, soda, and junk foods for lunch are not healthy for children and often make it difficult for them to focus on learning activities. Students are encouraged to bring healthy and nutritious meals to school or to purchase meals at school. At IAMS, both breakfast and hot lunch are served in the cafeteria. Monthly food menus are distributed to IAMS students.

**Meal costs and hours:** Breakfast is free and lunch costs \$1.85; milk only is \$.35. Reduced price and free meals are provided for families who meet federal guidelines (see Section 11); the reduced price is \$.30 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch. Breakfast is served from 8:15 – 8:55 am and is purchased in the cafeteria. Lunch is served to all IAMS students between 11:10 am – 12:55 pm. Lunch money is collected daily, monthly or annually and lunch tickets are distributed to the students. Adult visitors may purchase lunch for \$3.00.

**Salad Bar:** Twice a week, IAMS students have the opportunity to choose to build their own salads at lunch.

### **RECESS**

IAMS students have recess every day. All children are expected to go outside except during inclement weather (rain or extreme temperatures). Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather each day. The school provides balls and play equipment so please do not allow students to bring playthings from home. Indoor recess activities include grade-appropriate games.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Notices will be sent home announcing all field trips. Teachers will provide information about transportation, lunch, and fees. Verbal permission is not allowed; the school must have a signed permission slip signed by a parent/guardian in order for the child to participate.

Parents/guardians are invited to assist as chaperones. Please note your availability on your child's permission slip so that teachers can plan accordingly. If you can, please consider contributing a little extra to help families who are unable to pay the fee.

# School Events

FELE maintains an online school calendar on the Inter-American Magnet School website (<http://iamschicago.com>). In addition, monthly paper calendars are distributed by the IAMS office. Classroom celebrations are scheduled at the discretion of each teacher. You will receive specific information during the September Open Houses. IAMS also holds numerous school events and celebrations as described below.

## **OPEN HOUSE**

During the first weeks of school, IAMS holds an open house in all of the classrooms for parents to meet the teachers and learn about the curriculum and the class schedule and procedures for the school year.

## **DÍA DEL NIÑO (DAY OF THE CHILD)**

This annual carnival event is organized by the Bilingual Advisory Committee and mimics the annual Mexican celebration (April 30) when adults honor children and childhood. The event is held during an extended lunch/recess time in the last week of May and features face painting, food, prizes, and a talent show.

## **FAMILY MATH NIGHT**

This annual event for all grades includes math and computer games for children and speakers for IAMS parents/guardians about math resources and curriculum.

## **FAMILY READING NIGHT**

Twice a year, IAMS holds a family reading night for pre-K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. These nights typically include a theme for the evening, such as caring for the earth or sharing. The event begins with a live Spanish performance of a children's book addressing the night's theme by 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Participating families then move to a classroom for a public reading of English and Spanish books chosen for the night. Children are encouraged to come to the event in their pajamas. Reading Nights are often scheduled during Scholastic Book Fair weeks.

## **FAMILY SCIENCE NIGHT**

At this annual celebration, students in pre-K to grade 5 have the opportunity to conduct science experiments and make observations while students in grades 6-8 show off their science fair projects.

## **FIESTA CULTURAL**

This annual FELE fundraising event celebrates Hispanic heritage and culture.

- Live music and dance performances
- Food court selling delicious food from the Caribbean, Latin American, South America, and Spain
- Silent auction with a focus on goods and services from Latino countries donated by parents/guardians and community businesses
- Children's art activities
- Marketplace featuring products made by local artists and vendors

## **FELE FIESTA SOCIAL**

This annual event is held on a weekend afternoon for new and returning IAMS students and their families.

## **GRADUATION**

IAMS holds cap-and-gown graduation ceremonies for students finishing kindergarten and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The kindergarten graduation includes a slideshow of the year's events and songs by the graduates. Students must meet CPS promotion criteria in order to graduate. The criteria can be reviewed online or may be obtained from the IAMS office.

**HIGH SCHOOL FAIR**

Held in late September, this fair held at IAMS features representatives from approximately 20 public, magnet, selective, international baccalaureate, and private high schools in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. Please contact the counseling department (773.534.5914) directly for the year's complete list of schools.

**SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIRS**

The IAMS library program hosts two five-day book fairs, scheduled to coincide with fall and spring report card pick-up days. The book fairs provide a valuable opportunity for families to contribute to literacy at home by purchasing quality. Proceeds from the book fairs support book purchases for the school library and classroom libraries.

**WALK-A-THON/SCOOT-A-THON**

This annual FELE fundraising event has IAMS students collecting pledges from family, friends, and neighbors for the number of laps he/she walks around the school on the day of the walk-a-thon. Pre-K students participate in a scoot-a-thon in the gym.

**STUDENT AND CLASS PORTRAITS**

Students are photographed twice a year, in the fall and spring; fliers with the exact dates will be sent home with students.

# Paperwork, Polices & Codes

Inter-American Magnet School has a number of forms, contracts, and surveys that parents/guardians need to fill out at the beginning of each school year. Descriptions of the paperwork requirements are listed below.

## PAPERWORK

**Enrollment Form:** This form formally enrolls a student in IAMS.

**Medical Forms:** Medical requirements are regulated by the Chicago Public School Board of Education. Students are required to submit medical forms before beginning pre-K, kindergarten, 1st grade, and 5th grade. Students who do not comply with the medical requirements may be excluded from school. Required medical forms are listed below.

**Health/Physical:** requires a physical examination by a doctor and age appropriate immunizations

**Dental:** requires a physical examination by a dentist before entry to pre-K

**Emergency Information Form:** It is imperative that the IAMS school office has an up-to-date student emergency information form on file. These forms require addresses, phone numbers, and names of parents/guardians or guardians. Please include your home phone number as well as a work number, cell phone number, and/or pager number. The names of two individuals who can be called if you cannot be reached in the event of an accident, illness, or other emergency are also required. Parents/guardians should notify the school office immediately if there are any changes in this information.

**Lunch Applications:** Every IAMS student must submit a lunch application for free or reduced lunch. Parents/guardians not interested in applying for free or reduced lunch must write their child's name and "not interested" on the application, sign the form, and return it to school. Completion of the lunch application does not guarantee any student a free or reduced lunch but failure to complete and return this form can cause the school to lose financial resources.

**Home Language Survey:** This survey asks parents/guardians to indicate what language is primarily spoken at home.

**Dual-Language Contract:** IAMS asks parents/guardians to sign the dual-language contract, which informs you that your child is enrolled in a dual-language program and provides information about the delivery of classroom instruction.

**Video/Photo Release Form:** IAMS asks parents/guardians to sign a video/photo release form for each child attending the school. This form gives your consent to have both your child's voice or image recorded and allows him or her to be interviewed by the Chicago Board of Education or the news media.

**Locker Contract:** This form needs to be filled out by students and parents/guardians in middle school (grades 6-8). Every student has the opportunity to use a locker. In order to use a locker, each student must return this contract with a \$10 deposit. Students may not vandalize (put stickers, write, draw, etc.) on their assigned lockers. "Individual locker searches may be conducted by school officials at any time, for any reason." (CPS Policy)

## ILLNESS/MEDICATION

Your child's health is of utmost importance to us. If you discover your child is sick (fever, two or more vomiting or diarrhea episodes, rash, etc.), please refrain from bringing the sick child to school. Children should not attend school if Tylenol® or other fever reduction medicine is necessary to keep them fever free. Your child should be symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

**Infectious Diseases:** Please contact the school, especially if your child has a condition that is very contagious (i.e. – chicken pox, strep throat, lice, etc.). Please refer to the description of contagious diseases and adhere to the rules listed below to keep our entire school community healthy and prevent the spread of infection and illnesses.

- **Chicken Pox (Varicella):** A child who has chicken pox may return to school when ALL of the sores have dried and the child does not have a fever.

- **Head Lice:** A child who has lice will be excluded from school until 24 hours after a lice-killing shampoo has been properly applied and all nits (eggs) are removed. Parents/guardians must provide proof (empty bottle of shampoo) of properly treating the child. It is important to remember that once the shampoo has been applied, the parent must then comb out the child's hair to remove the dead nits and lice. A second application of the lice killing shampoo must be reapplied in 7-10 days after the initial treatment.
- **Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis):** A child may return to school 24 hours after treatment begins.
- **Strep Throat (Scarlet Fever):** A child may return to school 24 hours after medication has started and the child no longer has a fever.
- **Fifth Disease:** A child may return to school when the rash has disappeared and the child no longer has a fever.
- **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie Virus):** A child is contagious for 1 week after blisters appear and may return to school when all of the blisters are gone and the child no longer has a fever.
- **Impetigo:** A child may return to school after all sores are healed or can be covered with bandages or after the child has been treated with antibiotics for at least 24 hours.
- **Measles:** A child may return to school 5 days after the rash disappears.
- **Pertussis (Whooping Cough):** A child may return 5-7 days after antibiotic treatment has begun.
- **Ringworm (Scalp):** A child may return to school 24 hours after medical treatment begins.
- **Rubella (German Measles):** A child may return to school 5 days after rash disappears.
- **Scabies:** A child may return to school 24 hours after medical treatment begins.

**Illness at school:** if a student becomes ill at school, the classroom teacher will send the student to the office. IAMS has a full-time school nurse who will evaluate the child. If the child's condition requires him/her to be sent home, parents/guardians will be called and notified. If an early dismissal is necessary, the parent will be asked to pick up the child and complete an early dismissal form in the office. It is extremely important that you provide the school office with current emergency telephone numbers.

**Injuries/Medical Emergencies:** In case of a serious injury, the school will contact the parents/guardians or another person listed on the emergency contact form. Your child will be taken to the nearest hospital via ambulance. Although an IAMS staff member will stay with your child, hospital staff will not be able to treat the child until a parent/guardian arrives.

**Allergies:** IAMS does not have a written allergy policy for students. Please send a note to your child's teacher if she/he needs to be aware of particular allergic conditions.

**Medication:** Medication may not be taken in school unless special circumstances require it; in that case, doctor and CPS approval is required. Parents/guardians should contact the school nurse about any medical conditions that may require medication to be taken at school. Students with casts or crutches must have a note from a physician indicating that the student may attend school and list any restrictions on the child's activities.

## **SAFETY/EMERGENCIES**

Parents/guardians should familiarize themselves with all safety and security rules and procedures and emergency plans.

**Safety:** When exiting the school, particularly in the morning after drop off, please use the main exit, or door #1 on Waveland Avenue and do not let any unknown person in the building. Visitors are asked to sign in.

**Emergency Plans:** Every classroom in the school has emergency procedures posted. Parents/guardians should review these procedures and discuss them with children and/or teachers to be sure that students clearly understand the plans.

**Fire Drills & Disaster Drills:** Orderly procedures help students and teachers cope with emergencies. Please ask your child if he/she knows school procedures for fire drills and disaster drills. The Chicago Fire Department conducts fire drills every month. Tornado drill procedures will be posted in each classroom and will be rehearsed during the school year.

## **DISCIPLINE**

**Student Discipline Code of Conduct:** receive a copy of the Chicago Public School's Discipline Code at the beginning of each school year. It is also available online at <http://www.cps.edu>. Please read the code carefully. IAMS enforces the CPS discipline code.

When there are repeated occurrences of minor infractions or when a serious misbehavior occurs, students are referred to the school administration for consequences as detailed in the Student Code of Conduct. In such cases, a misconduct

report is prepared and maintained in the student's record. A copy of this report is provided to a parent/guardian. Consequences range from a student/parent conference to suspension and/or expulsion.

### **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

IAMS does not have an official dress code but parents/guardians are asked to help ensure that children are dressed appropriately for a safe and healthy learning environment. High heels, hats, and midriff shirts are not allowed in school. Spaghetti straps, baggy pants, and make-up are discouraged. For safety reasons, rubber-soled shoes are recommended at all times. On days when children have physical education, please make sure they wear or bring gym shoes.

### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

Students are not allowed to have cell phones unless a request is made by the parents/guardians and permission is granted by the school administration. These cell phones may only be used before and after school. If a child needs to use a phone during the day, there is a phone available in the school office. Students who do not adhere to the IAMS cell-phone policy will have their cell phones confiscated. Parents/guardians should be careful, too, to avoid use of cell phones when visiting student classrooms.

### **STUDENT FEES**

IAMS has no required registration or student fees. At the beginning of each year, however, families are asked to contribute to the FELE Discretionary Fund (FDF) to help teachers pay for classroom and school extras not covered by CPS. The suggested contribution is \$20 per child. This check should be made out to FELE but can be submitted to your child's teacher

### **STUDENT PROPERTY**

IAMS asks that students leave most personal belongings at home. The school prohibits certain items (see below) and is not responsible for any lost items.

**Prohibited Items:** Portable audio devices and electronic game devices are not allowed in school or on school buses. Skateboards, valuables, and collectables are also not permitted at school.

**Lost and Found:** Children are responsible for their personal property. Label ALL items that children bring to school (clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc.) to help insure that lost items can be identified and retrieved. The IAMS lost and found is located next to the security desk by door #1. If your child has lost an item, please check the lost-and-found container periodically. Please note that the lost-and-found container is emptied at the end of the second and fourth quarters and items are donated to charity.

### **STUDENT MESSAGES**

In order to prevent disruptions to classroom instruction, the school office can only deliver emergency messages to students while in class. If you need to make alternate transportation arrangements, please make sure your child is aware of the change before leaving home in the morning.

### **QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR SUGGESTIONS**

**Classroom:** Questions, concerns, and suggestions about a child's individual progress can be directed to the child's classroom teacher via a written note in the homework folder or via email. Each IAMS faculty and staff members' CPS email address is listed in the school directory distributed midway through the school year. Please arrange in-person meetings with teachers in advance. Once the school day begins, teachers are not available for drop-in visits.

**Administration:** If you are not able to come to a resolution about a classroom issue with your child's teacher, you may request a meeting with the principal.

**Suggestion box:** A suggestion box is also located outside the door of the Assistant Principal's office on the first floor near the east exit.

# School Operations

Inter-American Magnet School expects its students to demonstrate respect and cooperation with one another, the faculty, and the administration through actions and words. In addition, students are expected to respect school and community property and demonstrate responsible behavior at all times.

IAMS features a Leaders of Tomorrow Program for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, which recognizes students on a monthly basis. These student leaders demonstrate the traits listed below.

- Respect: Acknowledge and consider the wants, needs, and rights of other human beings.
- Integrity: Be true to your work, family, friends, and yourself and show your best even when no one is watching.
- Caring/Empathy: Demonstrate kindness and compassion for others.
- Self-discipline: Control for your own attitude and habits.
- Responsibility/Accountability: Take responsibility for your actions and words.
- Positive Attitude: Influence others positively through words and deeds.
- Pride: Show respect and appreciation for individual, family, school, and community traditions.

## QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES

**Progress Reports:** Mid-quarter progress reports are sent home four times a year with all students at approximately the 5th week of each quarter. Students who are in danger of failing to meet the promotion/grade level criteria will be provided a remediation plan. This procedure includes a parent conference and a mutual agreement regarding interventions strategies that will be used at home and school to prevent failure at the end of the quarter

**Report Card Pick Up:** Students receive report cards at the end of each quarter. Parents/guardians are to sign and return to the teacher. Parents/guardians or legal guardians are required pick up report cards and schedule a conference during the 1st and 3rd quarters. Report cards for 2nd and 4th quarter report cards are sent home individually with students. Preschool students are sent report cards during 2nd and 4th quarters. You may contact the teacher to schedule a conference.

## QUARTERLY AWARDS

Students are recognized each quarter for attendance and for their academic accomplishments and citizenship accomplishments.

**Perfect Attendance Award:** awarded to all students who have no unexcused absences and are not tardy for the entire quarter. Please note that early dismissals and/or late arrivals count as partial absences.

**Principal Honor Roll:** awarded to students who receive all As and no checks for poor study habits or inappropriate behavior.

**Honor Roll:** awarded to students who receive all As and Bs and no checks for poor study habits or inappropriate behavior.

**Citizenship Award:** awarded to students who received no checks for poor study habits or inappropriate behavior. Each year Kiwanis also selects three outstanding 8<sup>th</sup> graders to receive a special citizenship award.

## HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING

The IAMS counseling department provides information about area high schools and assists students in deciding which high school to attend. In addition to organizing the annual High School Fair, the IAMS counseling department maintains relationships with IAMS alumni who are frequently invited back to the school to discuss their particular high school experiences with current students. The counseling department also provides information about the Chicago Public High School Fair held at Navy Pier each fall (generally an October date) as well as individual school open houses and shadow opportunities. All students interested in attending a CPS magnet or selective enrollment high school or a private high school are required to sit for an entrance exam in January of their 8<sup>th</sup>-grade year.

## NON-ATTENDANCE DAYS

A school calendar listing official CPS holidays, vacation days, and faculty professional development days is distributed at the beginning of each school year.

**CPS Professional Development Days:** IAMS faculty members have CPS-scheduled professional development days. These days are listed on the monthly calendar sent home with students.

**Early Dismissal Days:** on these days IAMS faculty participate in in-house professional development to training to strengthen the school curriculum. The principal sends out a list of the early dismissal days at the beginning of each school year. On these days students are dismissed at 1:05 pm; school bus transportation is provided at this time. Please note that other public schools may follow a regular schedule on these days so be sure check the monthly calendar as well.

**Preschool In-Service:** Preschool staff has CPS-scheduled professional development days that may vary from the professional development days of other IAMS faculty. Please be sure check the monthly calendar for the list of dates.

## SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Please consult one of the resources below for information about unexpected school closings owing to weather, equipment failure, or other unforeseen circumstances. Some IAMS classrooms have instituted a phone tree program to contact parents/guardians regarding school closings or unexpected circumstances that may affect the school day.

### Telephone Numbers

IAMS	773.534.5490
R&D Bus Service	773.854.2100
CPS School Closing	773.553.1000

### Websites

IAMS	<a href="http://iamschicago.com">http://iamschicago.com</a>
CPS	<a href="http://cps.edu">http://cps.edu</a>
City of Chicago	<a href="http://cityofchicago.org">http://cityofchicago.org</a>
CPS Right Now!	<a href="http://cps.answerstv.com">http://cps.answerstv.com</a>

### TV Channels/Programs

English	Channels CBS, NBC, ABC, WGN, FOX
Spanish	Telemundo, Univision
CPS Right Now!	5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on channels 23 and 49
CPS Programming	Saturdays from 12 – 4 pm on channel 21

### Radio

English	WGN-AM 720, WBBM-AM 7800
Spanish	WSCB-AM 1240

## ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

Daily attendance is important to children's academic success. Please make sure your child attends school regularly, including on early dismissal days. The academic curriculum is sufficiently difficult that students need each day of classroom instruction to meet grade level expectations for promotion. School personnel are strongly committed to achieving a high rate of student attendance and closely monitor student attendance. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child's attendance is problematic may be considered a truancy case.

## **SCHOOL ABSENCES**

If a student must be absent from school, please contact the school at 773.534.5490 between the hours of 8:00 - 8:45 am. Please report the child's name, room number, and bus route number, if applicable. If a child is absent and no parent call is received, a personal phone call will be made by IAMS staff to inquire about the absence using the numbers listed in your emergency contact form. Upon return from a school absence, students are required to bring a note signed by a parent indicating the date(s) of and reason for the absence. Under CPS Policy, a child with 9 or more unexcused absences does not meet promotion criteria and may be required to attend summer school or repeat the current grade.

We encourage parents/guardians to make every effort to plan vacations as well as medical and dental appointments during non-attendance days. Attendance is not only critical for your child's education, but is one of the criteria by which IAMS is judged under the No Child Left Behind federal law. Attendance rates also influence our state-funded budget. CPS classifies four reasons as excused absences (see below). Every other type of absence is considered an unexcused absence.

- Student illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Family emergency
- Observance of a religious holiday

## **TARDINESS**

To maximize and respect teaching/learning time, we expect students to arrive at school on time. Students are expected to arrive at school by when the arrival bell rings. Students who arrive after the bell rings must obtain a tardy slip from the school security guard. Parents/guardians of students who are experiencing difficulty with punctuality will be contacted. For safety reasons, the doors to our building are closed after the bell rings. Students arriving late are disruptive to the entire class so please make sure children arrive on time.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL REQUESTS**

If there is a valid reason, other than illness, for your child to be dismissed before the end of the day, you must follow the procedure listed below. Under no circumstances are students permitted to leave school grounds during the school day without a parent or legal guardian. A student's attendance is affected by an early dismissal. A student is marked absent for a full day if the dismissal occurs before 11:30 am. Dismissals after 11:30am will result in a half-day absence.

- Parent/guardian must report to the office.
- Parent/guardian will complete an early dismissal form, explaining the nature of the early departure; include child's bus route number, if applicable.
- Office staff will locate the child and have him/her report to the school office.

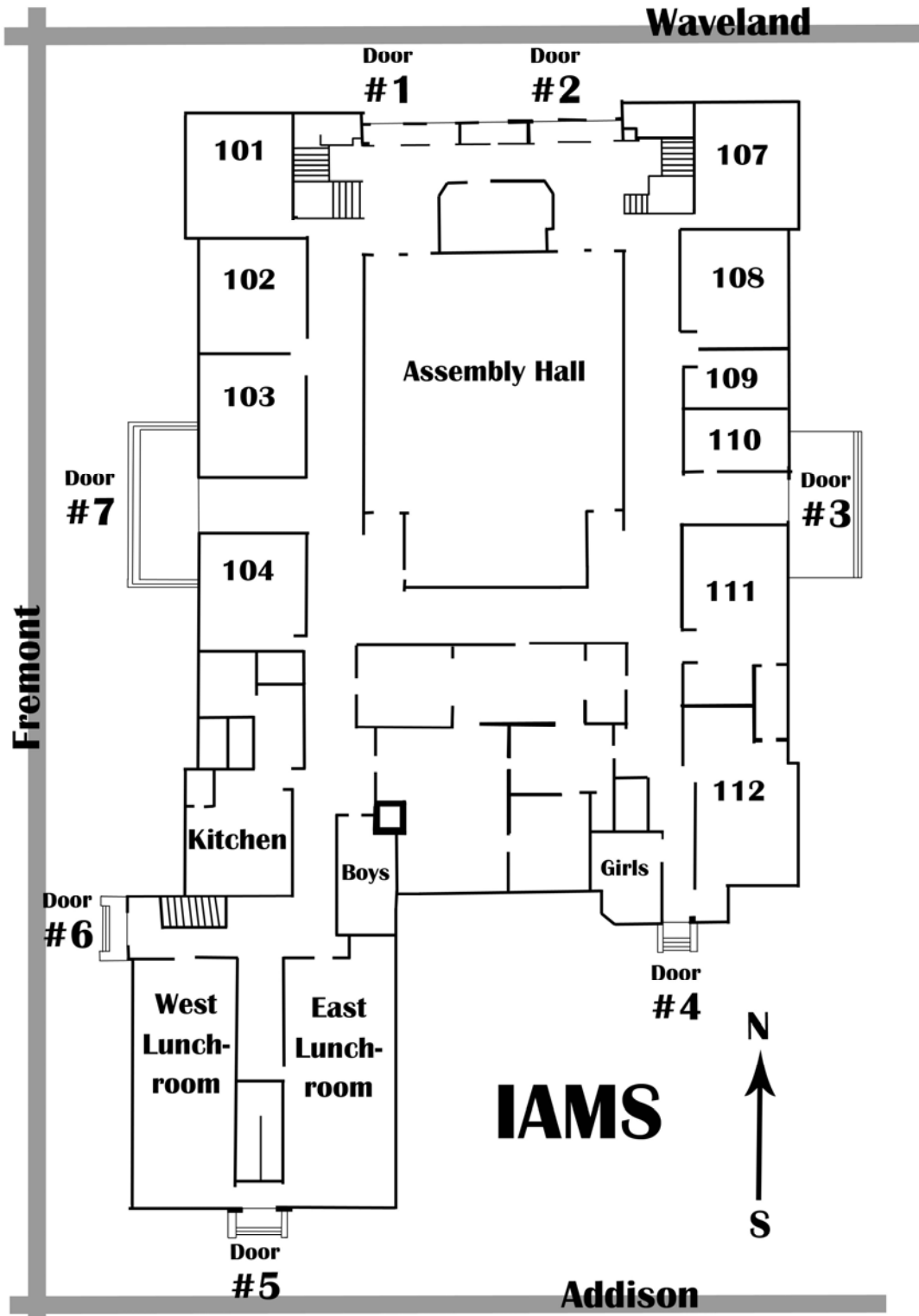
## **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL SCHEDULE**

IAMS has a longer daily school schedule to allow teachers to bank hours for their half-day professional development in-service trainings devoted to dual-language instruction. The school arrival and dismissal times and procedures may change from year to year. The office informs parents of this information in a separate information sheet distributed at the beginning of the school year.

**Arrival:** The arrival bell begins the day. Students may be dropped off at IAMS prior to the arrival bell, but the specific times and procedures will not be described in this handbook. . No student is allowed to be unsupervised in the school or on the playground. School staff take students out to the playground prior to the school day, weather permitting. At the bell, all children line up on the basketball court by room number. Classroom teachers meet the children and walk them to the classrooms.

**Dismissal:** The dismissal bell ends the day. Monitors escort all children to the buses or to the auditorium. In the principal's annual information sheet, parents who arrive early will be instructed where to wait for their children in the school building. Please do not interrupt teachers or wait outside their classrooms.

SCHOOL FLOOR PLAN



# Transportation

Inter-American Magnet School offers school bus transportation or parents/guardians may transport students to school. Information about CPS transportation is available online at:  
[http://www.cps.edu/Programs/Wellness\\_and\\_transportation/Pages/Transportation.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/Programs/Wellness_and_transportation/Pages/Transportation.aspx)

## **SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Under CPS policy, school bus service is available for children in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students who live between 1.5 and 6 miles from a magnet school. If you are unsure whether your child is eligible for bus service, please call the school. Bus service for IAMS students is provided by R&D Bus Service (773.854.2100). Bus service request forms are distributed in the spring for the following school year. Information regarding your child's bus route will be sent to you by R&D Bus Service in August. Children may ride the bus only in the morning and be picked up in the afternoon.

## **SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION RULES**

When riding a school bus, respect for other students, the bus driver, bus monitors, and school staff is expected at all times. School bus transportation is a privilege and unruly conduct is a risk to the safe operation of the bus. Parents should discuss bus conduct and safety rules with their children since failure to follow these rules will result in disciplinary action and transportation rights may be lost.

## **BUS ABSENCES**

Call IAMS (773.534.5490) and R&D Bus service (773.854.2100) if your child will be absent from school (be sure to give them your child's name and bus route number). School bus transportation service will be terminated if you child fails to arrive at the student pick-up location for three consecutive days.

Call IAMS immediately if you need to change bus routes as any changes take five days for approval. Students may change bus routes only in the following circumstances:

Your family moves to another location within 1.5 to 6 miles from IAMS.

A child participates in a qualifying after-school program or has an after-school childcare arrangement at another location.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN RULES**

Arrive at the bus stop 10 minutes before pick-up time; school bus drivers are NOT permitted to wait for students.

Ensure that bus monitors are present before leaving your children at a pick-up location.

## **STUDENT RULES**

When the bus arrives, stand well back from the curb or stopping point and wait there until the bus comes to a full stop.

- Always wear your seat belt.
- Be courteous and obedient to fellow students and the school bus driver.
- Never use the rear emergency exit unless directed by the driver or other authority.
- Prohibited Actions
- Putting your head or arms out of the bus windows
- Reaching through the window to take an item from a friend
- Throwing items into, out of, or inside of the bus
- Eating or drinking
- Possession of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol
- Possession of weapons, explosives, or any other dangerous articles
- Ignition of matches, lighters, etc.
- Use of obscene language, gestures or gang signs
- Fighting, yelling, or loud talking
- Harassment or intimidation of others
- Destruction or defacing of school bus or private property surrounding school bus stops

## TRANSPORTATION BY PARENT/GUARDIAN

If you drive your child to school, please help by not bringing children too early or picking them up late; children are not permitted to be at school unsupervised. Please either find street parking around the school or follow the Kiss N' Ride procedures listed below. PARENTS/GUARDIANS and VOLUNTEERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PARK IN THE STAFF PARKING LOT. The lot is not open for parking during regular school hours. Cars parked improperly in the staff lot may be towed.

If school bus transportation is not available based on where you live, you may be eligible to receive some reimbursement for the cost of public or private transportation. If you can answer, "Yes," to ALL of the questions below, you are eligible to file a claim for transportation reimbursement. Claim forms are available in the school office from February through June and must be submitted to the office in person (faxes not accepted) by the last day of school.

- Will your student be under the age of 21 at the close of the school year?
- Is your child a full-time student in any grade from kindergarten through 12?
- Does your child live more than 6 miles from school or live less than 1.5 miles from school but must be transported due to a serious safety hazard approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation?
- Does your child attend a school with Illinois compulsory attendance laws?
- Do you, as the parent/guardian, incur transportation expenses resulting from transporting your child to and from school?
- Did your child not have access to transportation to and from school provided entirely at public expense?
- Did you, as parent/guardian, reside within Illinois during the time period expenses were incurred?

## PRE-K DROP OFF & PICK UP

**Morning Sessions:** Arrival time is 9:00 am. Arrival procedures are listed in the previous section (also see Kiss N' Ride procedures below). Dismissal time is 11:30am. Teachers will escort students to door #7 on Fremont Avenue for parent pick up.

**Afternoon Sessions:** Arrival time is 12:30 pm. Please enter through door number #1 on Waveland Avenue and walk students to the auditorium. Teachers will pick children up from the auditorium and escort them to their classrooms. Dismissal time is 3:00 pm and parents/guardians may come to the classroom to pick up their children. Students not picked up at this time will be brought to the auditorium and will follow dismissal procedures as are listed in the previous section (also see Kiss N' Ride procedures below).

## KISS N' RIDE PROCEDURES

If you drive your child to school, please help us by not bringing your child too early or picking them up late. During drop-off and pick-up hours, cars are not allowed to stop or stand on Waveland or Fremont Avenues. Under no circumstances should you block the flow of traffic, even for a moment, or leave your car running, especially with children inside the car. Please be patient and courteous to other drivers. If you cannot find a parking spot directly across from the school, there are plenty of legal spots available on the surrounding streets, such as Addison and Halsted. Our goal is to have a smooth and safe procedure for all of our children, parents, teachers, and staff. Specific drop-off and pick-up procedures are explained below.

**Drop off:** hours are from 8:00 - 8:55 am on the south side of Waveland Avenue (Fremont Avenue is closed for bus traffic only). Drive east on Waveland until you see the drop off sign, by door #2, and an adult will direct your child to the building. It is unsafe to drive into oncoming traffic to drop off your child or double park on the north side of Waveland and stop the flow of traffic to send your child across the street. Please do not block the flow of traffic by leaving your car unattended or getting out of your car as you will be ticketed by a Chicago Police Officer.

**Pick up:** hours are from 3:20 – 3:35 pm on the east side of Fremont Avenue. At the end of the day staff bring students that are being picked up to the auditorium. Students wait in auditorium until the buses leave around 3:20 pm. Staff then walk students that are being picked up out of the building and escort them to their automobiles.

Before pick up time, you may wait in your vehicle on Fremont Avenue north of Waveland Avenue on the west side of the street. Get behind the last car in line; please do not cut in front of other cars.

Stay in your car in case someone parked on the west side of Fremont needs to exit his/her parking space; you must allow these drivers to exit. A Chicago Police Officer is on hand to ensure that IAMS school dismissal is safe and orderly every day.

Hang your child's grade shape on a visible place in your car, such as the rear view mirror. Parents of pre-K students and their older siblings (with blue and yellow circles) should drive up to door #6 on Fremont (closer to the entrance of the staff parking lot). The rest of the students will be dismissed from door #7.

#### **IAMS PARKING LOT**

The parking lot at the corner of Fremont and Addison is gone and will be replaced with a complex, which will include a Chicago police station and a parking garage. Once the construction is complete, there are plans to make several parking spots available for IAMS parents/guardians and visitors.

# School Oversight

## **LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL (LSC)**

The Inter-American Magnet School Local School Council (LSC) consists of six parents/guardians, two teachers, two community members, and the school principal. Parents/guardians, faculty, and community members elect LSC officers every two years. The LSC holds monthly public meetings (check the monthly calendar for dates and times) in the school library and approves the school budget, conducts an annual evaluation of the principal, and approves the school improvement plan. LSC committees are listed below.

**Budget:** This committee reviews budget proposals and recommends budget amendments to account for fund increases or shortfalls and helps to insure the budget is in alignment with the School Improvement Plan.

**Recruitment/Admissions:** This committee assists with marketing IAMS open houses for prospective students, providing volunteers to guide school tours, organizing student language surveys, and coordinating student registration day.

**Middle School:** This committee develops and works on initiatives that will enhance and enrich the IAMS middle-school experience, including working on the annual High School Fair.

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR ADVANCING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (SIPAAA)**

This plan is the blueprint for school and education improvement at IAMS; it guides the work and monitors the progress of the LSC and the entire school community. More information on SIPAAA, including the latest IAMS plan, can be found online at:

[http://www.stratplan.cps.k12.il.us/sipaaa\\_process.shtml](http://www.stratplan.cps.k12.il.us/sipaaa_process.shtml)

## **BILINGUAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BAC)**

The BAC supports English-language learners at IAMS and affirms the philosophy of the dual-language program. The committee meets monthly and is comprised of administrators, teachers, and parents/guardians.

# Family Involvement

Inter-American Magnet School was founded by parents and continues the tradition of active parent/guardian involvement. "Children's positive development requires maintaining close ties to their family and community. If home language and culture are supported, children, families and communities stay securely connected." (NAEYC 1995) Together with the highly trained, committed IAMS staff, parents/guardians promote student excellence by providing valuable input, fundraising support, and help with dual-language enrichment activities at school and at home.

IAMS strongly encourages parental involvement. By participating in school and volunteer activities, parents/guardians make personal connections with IAMS faculty and families and enhance their appreciation of the children's learning activities and environment. Whether you have lots of free time or very little, whether you are available during the school day or only after hours or on weekends, your help is needed and appreciated!

To volunteer in your child's classroom, please contact your child's teacher directly; the school also requests that classroom volunteers submit a form indicating that the parent has had a negative TB test. If you would like to assist with activities elsewhere in the school, please contact FELE, which maintains a volunteer database, the school administration, or the Local School Council (LSC).

## **FAMILIAS EN LA ESCUELA (FELE)**

FELE is the IAMS parent organization and is structured as a Parent Advisory Council (not a PTA). There are no membership dues required and all parents/guardians of IAMS students are automatically members. FELE believes that parent participation in both the classroom and the school organizational structures improves the quality of the school and the educational experience of all children. FELE supports the school in several ways.

- Providing and promoting opportunities for parent/guardian involvement
- Enhancing communication between school and the home
- Raising funds to support both curricular and extra-curricular programs
- Acting as parent and student advocates

FELE volunteers write, translate, and distribute a bi-monthly newsletter to inform parents/guardians of FELE activities and events and to share other school-related news. FELE officers include a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary and are elected annually in June. Regular meetings are held at the school and all IAMS parents/guardians are encouraged to attend. A FELE volunteer sheet is distributed at the beginning of each school year. Committees include arts in the school, fundraising, budget, communication, hospitality, nutrition, and Spanish Stars. All of FELE's activities are undertaken in close collaboration with the school faculty, administration, and staff.

According to the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, a bipartisan economic think tank in Chicago, Illinois ranks towards the bottom of school funding provided by state revenue. State revenues contribute only 30 percent of Illinois school funding, compared with a national average of 51 percent. Thus, fundraising is a critical function of FELE. All funds raised by FELE are used to provide needed school programming, extracurricular enhancements such as arts education, and improve communication by publishing school newsletter and this handbook. FELE has two main fundraising efforts each year, the fall Walk-a-thon/Scoot-a-thon and the spring Fiesta Cultural (see descriptions in Section 6). These events raise approximately \$20,000 for the school each year.

Outside organizations often attempt to distribute promotional or advertising materials to IAMS students, either in the classroom or at events. These materials include product samples and promotional giveaways such as book covers, folders, posters, and other school supplies. As the designated representative of the parent population, FELE attempts to monitor the content and quantity of advertising and promotional materials directed to IAMS students and must approve any major branding efforts. For more information on FELE's advertising guidelines, contact a FELE officer.

## **PARENT LOUNGE**

The IAMS Parent Lounge is a place for parents/guardians to relax while their children are in school. It's a place to access the Internet, have a cup of coffee, or gather for meetings. It is available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays so stop by on those days.

# Fundraising

Because it's difficult to be asked repeatedly to raise money for your child's public school education, Inter-American Magnet School and FELE have found several simple ways to raise money. Greater the participation in these types of fundraisers reduces the need to ask IAMS families to make cash requests.

## **GOODSEARCH.COM**

Give a penny to IAMS every time you conduct an Internet search. While that may not sound like much, if 1,000 people affiliated with IAMS were to conduct two searches per day every day for one year through Goodsearch.com, the school would earn \$7,300. Simply visit <http://goodsearch.com> and follow the instructions to make this site, powered by yahoo, your homepage to add a search box to your browser toolbar. Once that is done, you just need to select IAMS as your charity. You can also make online purchases with stores such as Sears, Target, and Wal-Mart on the GoodSearch site.

## **DOMINICK'S ESCRIP.COM**

If you shop for groceries at Dominick's and have a Fresh Values card, you can raise money for IAMS every time you shop simply by registering your Fresh Values Card at <http://escrip.com>. Dominick's contributes between 1-4 percent of each grocery bill to IAMS for as long as your Fresh Values card is registered with the school. You can also register your debit and credit cards and shop online with eScrip merchants. If you do not have access to a computer, please give your name, address, and Dominick's Fresh Values card number to the FELE fundraising committee chair.

## **BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION**

You can clip 10¢ box top coupons from hundreds of grocery products, including Huggies®, Cheerios®, Betty Crocker®, Juicy Juice®, Ziploc®, Kleenex®, Hefty®, and more. These coupons can be deposited throughout the school year in any of the box top envelopes located on the wall near each classroom. A parent volunteer exchanges the coupons for cash twice a year (October and April). In addition, you can shop at over 70 online stores, including the Gap™, Oriental Trading Co.™, JCPenney™, and Lands' End™ at the Box Tops Marketplace; a percentage of each purchase goes back to IAMS. For more information about the program, check out <http://www.boxtops4education.com/>.

## **CAMPBELL'S LABELS FOR EDUCATION**

To help IAMS purchase art supplies, computer software, and classroom accessories, collect labels marked "Labels for Education" from Campbell's soups and pasta, Campbell's Supper Bakes®, and Pepperidge Farm® products as well as the plastic caps from V-8 Splash® beverages. These labels and caps can be deposited throughout the school year in any of the box top envelopes located on the wall near each classroom and will be sent in twice a year. For more information about the Campbell's labels for Education program, check out: <http://boxtopsforeducation.com> [labelsforeducation.com](http://labelsforeducation.com).

## **TARGET CREDIT CARDS**

Do you have a Target store credit card? You shop, your school benefits. To participate, simply follow the directions below

Go to <http://target.com/tcoe> and type in number for 45841 for the Inter-American school id for your designated school

Start shopping with your Target card.

Target will track purchases made by all participating cardholders, then send a "no-strings-attached donation" check directly to the school principal. Checks are distributed twice a year. If the total of accumulated donations is less than \$25, the amount carries over to the next payment period. You can track your school's progress at <http://target.com/tcoe>.

## **JEWEL SHOP AND SHARE DATES**

Each year, Inter-American obtains some available Monday – Wednesday dates from Jewel to shop at any Jewel store and benefit the school. To do so, shoppers must bring a shop and share voucher to the store and present it to the cashier at the time of check out. Inter-American can receive up to five percent of a shopper's total purchases on that date, as long as the voucher has been provided. There is no cap on the amount that IAMS can receive for this promotion.