

IMPACT – FAQ (July 2024)

How are students being prepared for high school?

Students are being prepared for high school by learning to take ownership of their learning and engaging in critical reading, writing, and reflection. Within the IMPACT program, inquiry-based learning is emphasized, encouraging students to ask questions, investigate topics independently, and draw connections between different areas of study. IMPACT teachers facilitate this process by providing a supportive environment for students to think independently and critically, fostering a growth mindset and a love for learning.

Many IMPACT teachers also teach high school courses at Burriss Laboratory School, and some teach classes at the university level. This breadth of experience is carefully considered when designing and delivering instruction within the IMPACT program, ensuring that the curriculum is aligned with high school and university standards. By exposing students to rigorous academic content and teaching methodologies, IMPACT effectively prepares them for the challenges they will encounter in high school and beyond, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in their next academic journey.

The IMPACT program provides schedule flexibility for high school courses in middle school. This allows students to earn more dual credit and AP credits, opening up Ball State dual credit opportunities as sophomores. Such opportunities enable students to get a head start on college-level coursework, easing the transition to higher education and enhancing their academic portfolios.

How are students being held accountable?

Students are held accountable through regular academic conferring between them and their teachers. They are also held to high expectations throughout their units, ensuring consistent academic performance. Parents are invited to a mid-unit parent-teacher conference, which includes them in the accountability process and keeps them informed of their child's progress. Additionally, students maintain a K-8 portfolio containing required works and reflections, which showcase their learning and growth over time. This portfolio serves as a tangible record of their accomplishments and areas for improvement.

What does homework look like in IMPACT?

The students themselves primarily determine homework assignments in the IMPACT program. This student-led approach is a key aspect of our inquiry-based learning method. By engaging in the inquiry process outside of IMPACT, students take initiative and responsibility for their learning. This fosters a deeper and more personal engagement with the material, leading to a

more comprehensive understanding. This approach helps students develop crucial skills such as time management, self-discipline, and independent thinking, which are essential for their academic and personal growth.

What does academic rigor look like in IMPACT?

In IMPACT, academic rigor is personalized for each student, ensuring they are appropriately challenged based on their individual needs and abilities. Rather than simply increasing task difficulty, IMPACT deeply engages students with the material. This approach includes understanding what students already know through personalized preassessment, providing clear directions with explicit expectations, offering differentiation in how students approach tasks, and fostering metacognition by encouraging reflection on the learning process and the acceptance of struggle as a natural part of learning.

What training and professional development have teachers had to teach in IMPACT?

Our teachers undergo comprehensive training and professional development to implement the IMPACT program effectively. Teachers meet weekly to discuss the program, share their expertise, provide constructive feedback, problem-solve together, discuss relevant research findings, and collaborate on designing new instructional methods. This ongoing professional development ensures that our educators are well-equipped to deliver high-quality instruction tailored to the needs of our students within the IMPACT framework.

In addition to regular weekly meetings, our IMPACT team members convene each summer for a dedicated period of reflection, evaluation, and continuous program development. This annual gathering allows us to collectively assess our progress, identify areas for improvement, and refine our instructional strategies based on feedback and insights gained throughout the school year. By engaging in this ongoing process of reflection and refinement, our team ensures that the IMPACT program remains dynamic, responsive, and aligned with the evolving needs of our students and the latest educational research.

New teachers joining the IMPACT program undergo comprehensive onboarding training. This specialized training familiarizes them with the principles and practices of IMPACT, ensuring they have a solid understanding of the program's objectives, instructional methodologies, and assessment strategies. By providing targeted onboarding support, we equip new educators with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively integrate into the IMPACT team and deliver high-quality instruction that meets the unique needs of our students.

How does IMPACT cover different subjects?

IMPACT employs a transcurricular approach that integrates multiple subjects within the framework, fostering interdisciplinary connections and a deeper understanding of complex concepts. By blending science, social studies, English, fine arts, physical education, and other subjects, IMPACT provides students with holistic learning experiences that encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

IMPACT encourages inquiry projects and discussions that incorporate diverse perspectives and encourage students to draw upon knowledge and skills from multiple subject areas. This interdisciplinary approach prepares students to tackle real-world challenges, requiring them to think critically, communicate effectively, and apply their learning meaningfully. By blending subjects, IMPACT promotes a deeper understanding of content, encourages creativity and innovation, and prepares students for success in an increasingly interconnected world.