

# Certification Inspection Report

BRITISH COLUMBIA PROGRAM

*at*

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL - ASTANA

ASTANA

KAZAKHSTAN

OCTOBER 19-20, 2023

## INTRODUCTION

On October 19 and 20, a certification inspection was completed on Canadian International School - Astana (CIS-Astana) in Astana, Kazakhstan, referred to as the School in this report. The purpose of this inspection was to determine if the requirements for the British Columbia (BC) education program have been met, according to the *BC Offshore School Program Certification Agreement* (the Agreement). The Inspector, appointed by the Executive Director of the Independent Schools and International Education Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care (the Ministry) in accordance with the Agreement, was Harry Moes.

The School's BC program has an enrolment of 89 students, in grades 10 and 11.

During the visit to the School, the Inspector reviewed all standards required in the *BC Offshore School Program Certification Agreement* and *Operating Manual* and met with the School's Owner/Operator, school board, Offshore School Representative (OSR), BC Principal, BC teachers and administrative staff.

The Owner/Operator, Ulytau Educational Foundation, is responsible for the grade 10 and 11 BC program. Directors of the Ulytau Educational Foundation were present during the inspection.

The BC program's philosophy, and special features include the objectives to provide –

- the best and most current educational practices and methodologies by offering the Canadian (British Columbia) and Kazakhstan education systems.
- a dual track system of education that will prepare students for future studies and careers, whether in Canada, or at home in Kazakhstan.
- educational programming that promotes inquiry and collaboration in a personalized learning environment.

- a variety of teaching strategies and learning experiences adapted to meet the needs of the individual student.

The Inspector would like to thank Canadian International School - Astana for its hospitality, cooperation, preparedness, and transparency throughout the inspection visit.

<b>The School has satisfactorily addressed requirements contained in the previous inspection report.</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Not Met	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
<p>Comment: 2022/23 was the School's first year of operation (grade 10 only) and no requirements were detailed in the inspection report.</p>			

## BUSINESS PLAN 1.0

<b>The Owner/Operator has submitted a business plan to the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, confirming the sustainability of the program.</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requirement Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Requirement Not Met
<p>Comment: The School received 908 student applications for the current academic year, and 132 offers were made based on student test results and applications. 41 of 49 last year's grade 10 class returned as grade eleven students, and the new grade 10 cohort numbers 48.</p> <p>Marketing and student recruitment initiatives utilize multiple social media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook) and onsite opportunities (Open Door Day, Education in Canada, English Classes). Canada House serves as the information hub in raising the profile of the School, hosting special events and teacher professional development events.</p> <p>The Ulytau Educational Foundation website, the landing page which coordinates application materials, as well as ongoing media posts, continues to result in positive responses of interest. The user-friendly school website, launched in October 2022, greatly assists in ongoing recruitment.</p> <p>During the inspection, the school administration, teachers and the Inspector intersected with the School's process of evidence-based strategic planning to enhance student learning. The School's Annual Report referenced how both qualitative and quantitative data, as it relates to student performance, is utilized in determining priorities in school improvement planning.</p>		



**Commendation:**

The School is commended for the quality of the Annual Report that was submitted to the Ministry. It was detailed and comprehensive and a demonstration of the School's commitment to excellence and accountability.

The School is commended for utilizing student performance data to inform and support current and future strategic planning for continuous school improvement and enhanced student learning.

**INSPECTION CATALOGUE 2.0****2.02 The Owner/Operator meets all requirements as set forth in the Agreement.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirmed that the Owner/Operator, Ulytau Educational Foundation, meets all the requirements as set forth in the Agreement.

The Ulytau Educational Foundation remains highly supportive of and committed to the success of the School. The Foundation has developed strong relationships with the BC program administration and teachers in tandem with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

It is noteworthy that the Ulytau Educational Foundation continues to explore possible future government funding for construction of new facilities as well as funding to offset operational expenses.

The Principal, Offshore School Representative and directors of the Ulytau Educational Foundation collaboratively participated and supported the two-day certification inspection.

**Commendation:**

The Ulytau Educational Foundation is commended for competing alongside 69 other regional public schools by providing student projects and master teacher professional development.



**2.03 The Owner/Operator has written approval from the appropriate government entity to operate the School, as outlined in section 5.03 of the Agreement.**

Requirement Met                       Requirement Partially Met                       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirmed that the School has written approval from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, dated May 6, 2022, to operate the School.

The reviewed correspondence details no expiration date.

**2.04-2.05 The School meets building inspection/safety, food preparation/cafeteria and fire safety codes/regulations. Facilities are deemed to be suitable to support the BC program.**

Requirement Met                       Requirement Partially Met                       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School has moved from Canada House to a newly leased facility, occupying the second and third floors (14,000 sq feet) of a five-story building for instructional and administrative purposes. The student entrance features a secure admission station with a security guard.

The School utilizes seven classrooms including a science classroom, almost all employing Smart Board technology and inclusive of air purification systems. A student commons/library is available for student activities, and a staffroom affords space for both the BC certified teachers and local teachers.

Students access athletic facilities at a neighbouring gymnasium located on the campus of Nazarbayev University. The gymnasium features court space for group games and fitness activities.

The School has a written emergency plan for natural disasters (i.e., fire, earthquake) with documentation on file which includes a protocol for unplanned temporary or permanent closure of the School. All staff and students take part in emergency drills.

The School's emergency plan was vetted for accuracy and functionality by the Offshore School Representative (OSR) and detailed in the Annual Report.

**Commendation:**

The School is commended for its new, spacious, esthetically pleasing, and pedagogically inviting, leased and refurbished school facility.

**2.06 Offshore School Representative (OSR) - The Owner/Operator must appoint an individual to act as an OSR. This individual must be confirmed by the Province and must meet all the requirements set out in Schedule B, Part II of the Agreement.**

Requirement Met                       Requirement Partially Met                       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The appointed Offshore School Representative (OSR) serves as the primary liaison between the Owner/Operator and the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The OSR continues to work closely with the School's administrative team and teachers in addressing Ministry recommendations and requirements. He is also actively involved in mentoring the new Principal and in providing ongoing teacher professional development.

The OSR has the unique opportunity of also serving as Director of the school board. He is knowledgeable about all facets of the School's operations and all related aspects of the Owner/Operator's business operations, governance, and administrative functions of the School. He is aware of his obligation to report critical information relating to changes in the operation of the School or ownership structure that could significantly impact operations.

**Commendation:**

The School is commended for maintaining a relationship with a competent and knowledgeable OSR, who remains current with all aspects of the Agreement.

**2.07 The Principal meets the requirements as outlined in Schedule B, Part III of the Agreement and Section 2.07 (b) of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met                       Requirement Partially Met                       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Principal has extensive experience as a teacher and administrator, overseas as well as in Alberta and British Columbia, last serving as a school district lead teacher in Vernon, BC. He completed his PhD studies at Simon Fraser University in 2016. His timely doctoral research studied texting, reading, and writing practices and the development of literacy in adolescence.

The Principal arrived at the School in August 2023, and provides caring and dedicated leadership. He is described as a caring and approachable professional leader.



**2.08 The School meets the administrative support requirements as outlined in Section 2.08 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School's administration team is comprised of the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Principal, Vice-Principal (academics), Vice-Principal (student wellness), Executive Assistant and Registrar, marketing/admissions/technology personnel, and designated staff to coordinate events, career services and extra-curricular events.

Together, they employ a collaborative leadership style, capably and effectively supporting the Principal, as they manage, supervise, and evaluate the educational programs at the School.

Professional development activities are promoted and scheduled, and teacher visas and travel arrangements are finalized.

The experienced and bilingual Executive Assistant and the Vice-Principal (student wellness) offer social and emotional student support and provide a communication bridge between the School and parental community.

**Commendation:**

The School is commended for its governance structure, allowing the COO and Principal to work collaboratively and encouragingly with all members of the leadership team.

The School is commended for modeling unity of purpose allowing education to take place in a safe, caring, and respectful environment.

**2.09 The School meets the Student Record requirements as outlined in Section 2.09 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

Student files contain current registration forms, English language assessments (verified by the Principal), the last two report cards and the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care's personal (student/parent) information consent forms and evidence(s) of student self-assessment of the Core Competencies.

The School's Student Progress Report Cards verify (a) the number of instructional periods that students are absent during reporting periods, and (b) the number of days students are late during reporting periods.



The School utilizes Power School as a school administration software application and TRAX to process and transmit student data to the Ministry. Student information is appropriately and safely backed up as required.

The review of student files confirmed that the School meets all aspects of the student records requirements.

Commendation:

The School is commended for the meticulously and consistently managed student files.

**2.10-2.18 The School meets the teacher certification requirements as outlined in Sections 2.10-2.18 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

Comment:

The Inspector verified that teacher files contain current teacher contact information, a copy of the Authorized Person's work permit or visa, as well as copies of teacher evaluation and teacher growth plans. Teacher files confirmed that all authorized persons under the Agreement possess valid and current certification under the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Professional development plans for the current academic year detail partnering with the Surrey School District focussing on leadership development and pedagogy.

Specific areas of focus will be in leading teachers to provide opportunities for their students to engage in each language modality: listening, reading, speaking, and writing in each class, and honing strategies that allow students to access prior understanding, on their pathway to demonstrating understanding of new content.

Employment contracts between teachers and the Owner/Operator clearly outline the terms of employment. Employment contracts acknowledge that the Province of British Columbia is not party to the contract of employment between the Owner/Operator and the teacher and that the Province of British Columbia is not liable in any event, instance, or circumstance.

The Inspector verified that locally certified teachers have valid local certification and that criminal record checks were appropriately filed.

**2.19 The School meets the requirements for curriculum implementation outlined in section 2.19 of the Annual Report for offshore schools.**

Requirement Met                       Requirement Partially Met                       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School has developed course planning documentation and implemented curriculum delivery to reflect the required elements and provided evidence of curriculum documentation compliance.

During the inspection, interviews were scheduled with all teachers, affording the opportunity for teachers to provide perspective and context as well as student work samples.

Teachers shared planning documentation and techniques which revealed a degree of flexibility to allow teachers to express their individual creativity in implementation.

The School's planning documentation details to varying degrees the (a) integration of the Big Ideas, learning standards, Curricular Competencies, Core Competencies, First Peoples Principles of Learning, and (b) ensures that assessment (self-assessment and classroom assessment) supports student learning in each course.

**2.20 The School meets the requirements for English language assessment and acquisition as outlined in Section 2.20 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met                       Requirement Partially Met                       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Principal oversees the admissions process and is responsible for making final decisions with respect to student assessment and admission.

The School's admission process is extensive and rigorous. In addition to completing language assessments, all applicants are interviewed and are required to present a portfolio. The School is exploring the possibility of partnering with Nelson Canada to provide English language proficiency assessment in each year of the School's program to provide data on the gains made by students and inform program delivery.

Strategies employed to improve student English language acquisition and proficiency include – multi modal presentation; using think-pair-share; pre-teaching subject-specific vocabulary; 'chunking' lessons into 5 to 15-minute intervals; speech modification when lecturing and giving instructions; and incorporating interactive and kinesthetic activities permitting students to move and take short, regular 'brain breaks' from the full-immersion environment.





All students are enrolled in four English 10 two-credit course offerings—Composition, Literary Studies, New Media, and Spoken Language. At the grade 11 level, students are enrolled in two English 11 four-credit courses—Literary Studies and Composition.

Student interviews provided evidence that students are able to demonstrate learning, engage in critical thinking and self reflection and succinctly and engagingly communicate.

The very encouraging 2022/23 BC Numeracy and Literacy Assessment results were reviewed with the Principal.

**2.21(a-e) The School meets the course credit requirements (equivalency, challenge, exemptions and BAA courses) as outlined in Section 2.21 (a-e) of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School is transitioning to providing additional course credit opportunities through equivalency, challenge, and exemption, as well as exploring opportunities of offering Board/Authority Authorized Courses (BAA) courses.

The School does not currently offer BAA courses, nor graduation program courses taught by locally certified teachers.

**2.21(f-g) The School meets the course overview/course planning requirements as outlined in Schedule B Part I, 2. (e) of the Agreement; namely, that all BC program courses offered in the School meet or exceed Ministry learning outcomes/learning standards identified in the educational program guides for each course.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The courses currently offered at the School meet or exceed the learning outcomes/standards identified in the educational program guides for each course.

Curricular compliance documentation includes content, teaching strategies, evaluation and assessment methods that are linked to the BC learning standards. Curriculum planning documentation was reviewed by the Inspector and classroom visitation and teacher interviews provided clarity and context.

Teachers spoke knowledgeably about curriculum implementation and about their assessment practices. It was clear that teachers, to varying degrees, strived to understand the intersections between the Big Ideas, learning standards, Curricular Competencies, Core



Competencies, First Peoples Principles of Learning and teacher assessment and student self-assessment.

There was evidence of a wide range of learning activities, including inquiry-based questions, global citizenship connections and potential English language learning teaching strategies.

**2.22 The School meets the instructional time allotment requirements as outlined in Section 2.22 of the Annual Report, including the requirements set out in Sections 1.1 to 6, with the exception of s. 4(5)(b), 4(6), 5(8)(a) and (d) and s. 5.3 of Ministerial Order 41/91, the Educational Standards Order, enacted under the Independent School Act.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

All students in grades 10 and 11 are working towards dual graduation certification, earning both a BC Dogwood Diploma and a Kazakhstan high school diploma.

The School provides 5.8 hours of BC program instruction per day over 179 days per year for a total of 1038 hours of instruction per school year; this exceeds the Ministry's minimum requirement of instructional hours per year.

**2.23 The School meets the assessment methods requirements as outlined in Section 2.23 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The Inspector confirmed that teachers use multiple formative and summative assessment practices that align with BC's curriculum. Teachers provided examples of how they are using competency-based assessments to inform students' learning. Formative assessment (for and as) strategies include use of descriptive feedback, in-class questioning, citation practise, peer assessment, and teacher observation.

Students interviewed confirmed they receive opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. The completion of a unit normally leads to a summative assessment. During labs, simulations, field studies, fairs and competitions students are provided experiential, holistic opportunities to demonstrate strengths, as well as make connections to real life applications, including societal impacts.

The BC Numeracy and Literacy Assessments have been scheduled for Spring 2024. The School is aware of the requirements that (a) all devices used for the assessments need to have installed the e-assessment security control; (b) each workstation and device that will be used



for provincial graduation assessments meets the computer and browser requirements; and (c) that only BC certified teachers invigilate BC graduation assessments.

**2.24 The School meets the learning resources requirements as outlined in Section 2.24 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

Students bring their personal laptops or tablets to school. This allows students to work at school and home with word processors, spreadsheets, programming languages and electronic network systems.

The library/commons affords the opportunity for the entire school to assemble. The majority of classrooms are equipped with Smart Boards, allowing teachers and students to learn collaboratively, share files, access online resources, and use educational software.

Teachers and students have access to the EBSCO Explora online platform. Explora ensures that students and educators can quickly find the reliable information they need to complete homework and research projects, deliver curriculum and achieve professional goals. The digital platform is intended to be supported by hard copy titles in fiction and non-fiction.

Computer technology used in the School, as well as all learning resources, are evaluated and approved with consideration given to curriculum fit, pedagogy, social considerations, and student age and developmental appropriateness.

The School uses Power School as its student information system. Microsoft Teams allows students to access learning resources shared by the teacher, and complete work individually or in groups online.

**2.25 The School meets the student progress report requirements as outlined in Section 2.25 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The School reports to parents on multiple occasions throughout the school year. Interim reports are issued for at-risk students every term. Term reports provide written updates while at the end of each semester a summary of learning is shared with parents.

Progress reports include attendance, work habits, letter grades, and teacher comments. Student self reflection of the Core Competencies is filed appropriately. Parent-teacher



interviews are held twice each semester. Additional parent-teacher interviews are scheduled when necessary.

Parents and students have access to Power School, providing real-time information regarding attendance and progress.

**2.26 The School meets the parent/student handbook requirements as outlined in Section 2.26 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The parent/student handbook, available in English, is descriptive, informative, and current. It includes a message from the Principal and details the School's vision/mission/philosophy; calendar; student behaviour and attendance expectations; parental appeal policy; attendance; curriculum (know-do-understand model and the Core Competencies); assessment; learning resources; extra curricular, uniform and technology policies; and emergency procedures.

The opportunity to offer a translated version for parents was discussed during the inspection.

**2.27 The School meets the teacher handbook requirements as outlined in Section 2.27 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met       Requirement Partially Met       Requirement Not Met

**Comment:**

The teacher handbook details the School's vision/mission/philosophy; governance and administration, admissions, calendar, attendance expectations; student supervision; records management, student assessment and code of conduct; dispute resolution; contractual certification and confidentiality expectations; health and safety and emergency procedures.

Teachers and administrators are evaluated as required and respective policies were reviewed.



**2.28 The School meets the Online Learning requirements (formerly Distributed Learning) as outlined in Section 18 of the Agreement and Section 2.28 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met
                 
  Requirement Partially Met
                 
  Requirement Not Met
                 
  Not Applicable

Comment:  
The School does not currently offer Online Learning courses.

**2.29 The School meets the requirements for offering Remote Instruction under the BC Offshore School Remote Instruction Policy and as outlined in Section 2.29 of the Annual Report.**

Requirement Met
                 
  Requirement Partially Met
                 
  Requirement Not Met
                 
  Not Applicable

Comment:  
The School does not currently offer Remote Instruction courses.

## CONCLUSION

### Commendations

**The Inspector wishes to recognize the Owner/Operator, Principal, staff and Offshore School Representative of Canadian International School – Astana for:**

- its hospitality, cooperation, preparedness, and transparency throughout the inspection visit.
- the quality of the Annual Report that was submitted to the Ministry. It was detailed and comprehensive and a demonstration of the School’s commitment to excellence and accountability.
- utilizing student performance data to inform and support current and future strategic planning for continuous school improvement and enhanced student learning.
- the Ulytau Educational competing alongside 69 other regional public schools by providing student projects and master teacher professional development.
- its new, spacious, esthetically pleasing, and pedagogically inviting, leased and refurbished school facility.
- maintaining a relationship with a competent and knowledgeable Offshore School Representative (OSR), who remains current with all aspects of the Agreement.
- its governance structure, allowing the COO and Principal to work collaboratively and encouragingly with all members of the leadership team.



- modeling unity of purpose allowing education to take place in a caring respectful environment.
- its meticulously and consistently managed files.

### **SUMMATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

**The Inspector recommends to the Executive Director of the Independent Schools and International Education Branch that the British Columbia education program offered at Canadian International School – Astana continues to be recognized as a British Columbia certified school.**