

A CSU AND CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATION

# CAMPUS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Two large stuffed giraffes are positioned just inside the front door. There are no desks for students or teachers. And Mandarin Chinese is on the daily lesson plan.

The newly launched Campus International School (CIS) is a far cry from a traditional neighborhood school. A collaboration between Cleveland State and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, CIS has already been recognized by the *New York Times* as an innovative model for urban education.

Housed in leased space at the former First United Methodist Church at East 30th Street and Euclid Avenue, just blocks from the CSU campus, CIS was championed by President Ronald Berkman and won enthusiastic support from Cleveland schools former CEO Eugene Sanders and Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson.

The school opened this fall with 112 youngsters in kindergarten through second grade. Third grade classes will be added in fall 2011; eventually the school will offer classes through grade 12.

Campus International will incorporate programs from the International Baccalaureate (IB) — a Swiss-based education program renowned for its academic rigor, international curriculum and high standards. IB schools develop intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills for students to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world.

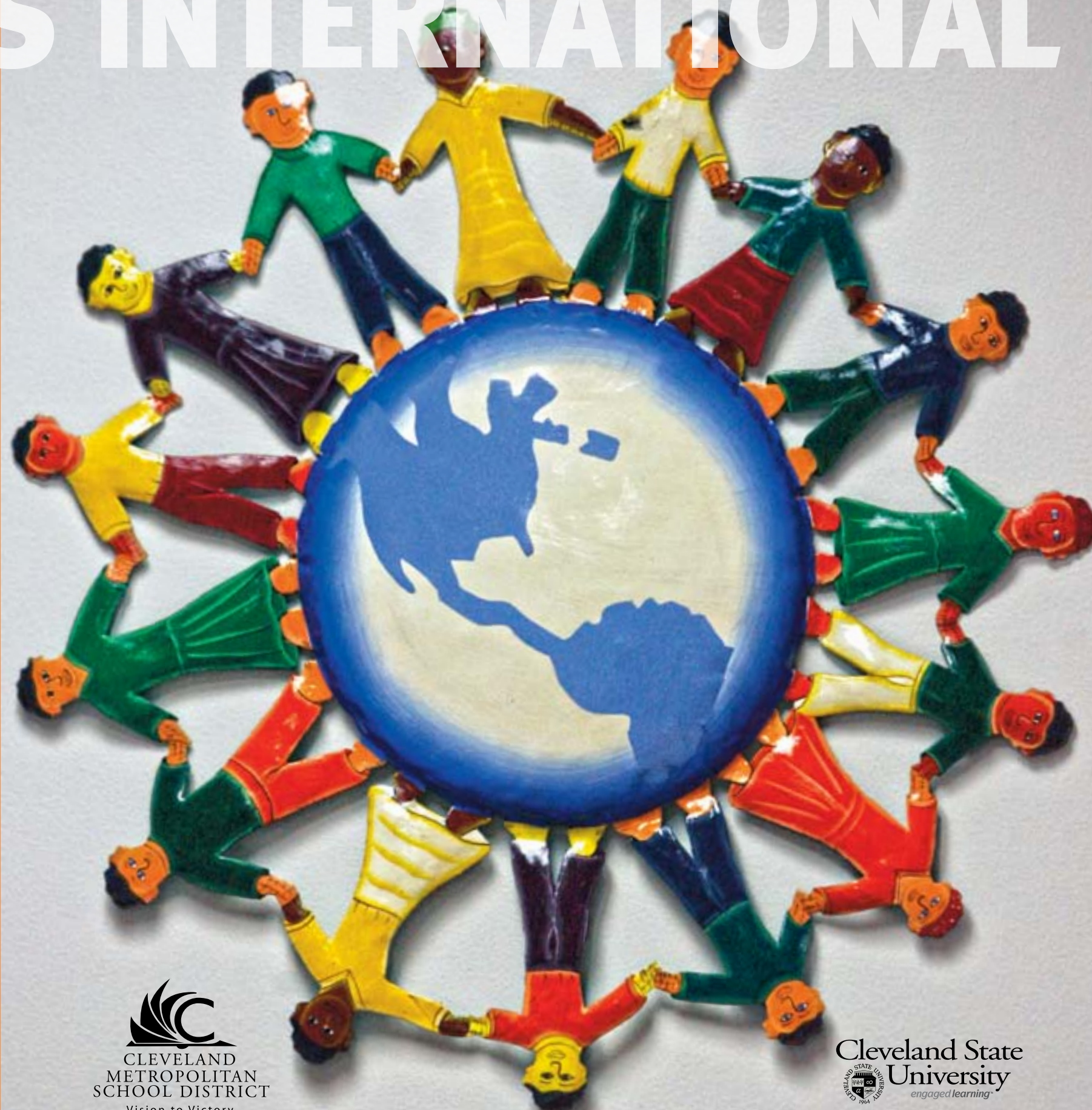
At CIS, the entire third floor is the classroom for first and second graders while the second floor is the kindergarten classroom. Individual rooms are learning centers named for local landmarks like the Great Lakes Science Center and West Side Market and for CSU's Colleges. It's one way of introducing students to what's around them and helping them become global citizens.

With just 20 students per class, youngsters move from room to room and floor to floor, learning Chinese, literacy, math, social studies, science, music, media, art and physical education. They sit at round tables or on the carpeted floor in rooms painted bright orange, green and blue. Hallways and stairwells are adorned with student artwork.

Some 70 percent of students are from Cleveland; the remainder live in suburbs from Solon to Westlake to Wickliffe. Some 70 percent are African American, with other ethnicities represented as well. The boy/girl split is about 50/50.

With open enrollment, the student body represents a wide range of academic ability. The curriculum is customized to meet individual needs.

CIS has seven full-time teachers for its six classes and physical education. There also are part-time teachers for art, media and music. All came from the Cleveland schools. But they don't sit in one room, at a desk, in front of 20 students.



"Everything is shared — space, resources, teachers. Every student has every teacher and our teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of each student," notes Ronald Abate, CSU associate professor of teacher education who is on sabbatical this year to serve as the liaison between CIS and CSU.

"In traditional schools, teachers can get isolated. Here, teachers collaborate. Every subject is taught in every learning center. Students explore and interact as they learn. It's a dynamic environment."

In keeping with the international curriculum, every CIS student has a passport that looks like the real thing. As a country or culture is studied, the passport is stamped. And students actually travel — with weekly trips to the CSU campus for recreational or educational experiences.

CIS not only provides a unique learning environment for its young students, it also provides access to a teaching environment for CSU education students. Similar to a teaching hospital, CSU students are using the campus school as a hands-on training facility to enhance their classroom experience.

"The entire University community has been extremely supportive of the school," says Dr. Abate. "From computer and technology assistance to speech and hearing students testing our kindergarten students to the Confucius Institute providing funding for our Mandarin teacher, the support and interest from CSU have been outstanding."

Parental support and involvement have been exemplary as well.

"Campus International affords parents a fabulous educational choice for their children. It's a viable alternative for those who might otherwise choose a private school or leave the city," says principal Julie Beers. In fact, some parents are signing up their unborn children.

Other schools in the Cleveland district will benefit from CIS as well, through the sharing of best practices developed in the innovative environment.

"This school will set a new urban standard in education," says President Berkman. "CIS provides the city with a unique, high-end education at no additional cost to parents. It also provides the University with a venue to produce new, best-in-class teachers of the future."

For Mayor Jackson, CIS is a step toward reversing the flow of urban sprawl and drawing new families back into the city.

"This school represents a viable new option for younger families who want to live downtown," Jackson says. "The first step of redeveloping any urban core begins with education, and this project sends a clear message that we are committed to bettering the community with students who will compete globally."

For information, contact the Campus International School at 216.431.2225. ◀

