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Setting Yourself Up for Success!

In 9th and 10th grade, you will still be a student in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP) at East or West High School. During this time, you will have some choices to make concerning the classes you will take. Even though there are not many electives built into the freshman schedule, students will need to consider the level of the course they take in a few subjects. When deciding which courses you will take at the Honors versus the Regents level, it would be wise to think ahead a little about whether you might choose the IB Diploma Program (DP) as your course of study in your junior and senior years.

Students who are planning to go to college and are willing to work hard are encouraged to choose the IB Diploma Program for a variety of reasons. (See the box below for details.) If you fit this description, then you can begin to prepare yourself now for the road ahead as a DP student.

While being mindful not to over-do it, you will want to include some Honors classes in your schedule in 9th and 10th grades. Taking a couple of Honors classes is a wise choice because doing so will help you learn where your strengths lie and also which topics you most enjoy studying. This experience becomes important when, as a DP student, you need to decide which courses you will take at the Higher Level (two-year courses) and which you will take at the Standard Level (one-year courses). Also, many Honors courses teach material that it will be helpful for you to understand before reaching the DP class in that subject.

For example, if you take an Honors level Biology class in 9th or 10th grade, you will get a better sense of whether you would rather take Biology or Chemistry as a Higher Level course in the Diploma Program. Not only will you strengthen your base of knowledge in the Honors Bio class, but you will also get practice in the rigors of an advanced level course.

So, you see, by mixing in a few Honors classes during your first two years in high school, you will actually be setting yourself up for success in the last two years. Even if you ultimately decide that the Diploma Program is not right for you, you will have done yourself a favor by challenging yourself in rigorous classes. Your experience will help you to tackle whatever lies ahead. In the end, though, taking some Honors classes and then *not* choosing the DP would be better for you than skipping the Honors courses in 9th and 10th grade and then not feeling ready to pursue the IB diploma if you really want to do it.

When you are planning course schedules, remember to get input from parents, teachers and guidance counselors. Sometimes, they see strengths in you that you haven't noticed, and they can guide you through your decisions.

The IB Diploma Advantage

College-bound C-PP students would be wise to consider taking the IB Diploma Program in 11th and 12th grade. Here are a few reasons why:

- In a survey of District 9th and 10th graders, 80 percent said that preparing for college is very important. **No academic program prepares high school students for the rigors and responsibilities of college like IB—hands down.**
- In a survey of C-PP Diploma Program students, 63 percent said earning college credit during high school is important. **Students who graduate with the full IB diploma are eligible on average for 30 hours of college credit.***
- Want to get into your dream school? In the highly competitive college application process, **admissions officers sometimes question the choices of capable students who do not pursue the IB diploma** when it is offered in their high school.

* For a complete list of colleges and universities across the U.S. and elsewhere in the world that have IB diploma recognition policies, visit C-PP's IB web pages or go directly to www.ibo.org/universities/listalluniversities.cfm.



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