

Q: What is IB?

A: IB (International Baccalaureate) is a critical component of C-PP's *Quantum Leap* student achievement initiative that will help more students perform at higher levels faster. The world-renowned programs are based on a framework of proven, best practice teaching strategies that are designed to develop the "whole child" by addressing their academic, physical and social needs. Also, IB is focused on helping students develop critical thinking skills (Rigor), understanding the connections between subjects and with the "real world" (Relevance) and collaborating with others (Relationships). Additionally, it is often said that IB makes average students above average and above average students exceptional.

Q: Why did the District choose IB?

A: Because we needed to make significant, District-wide changes in our curriculum to improve student achievement, especially at the middle school level. After a C-PP team conducted extensive research into available options, the Board of Education voted to implement IB. The program has a 38-year track record of success in schools all around the world. In fact, there is no other educational program that is as well known or as highly regarded as IB. The quality of education is so superb that 1,878 schools in 124 countries have instituted the programs. In the U.S. alone there are 684 IB schools, including 39 in New York State, and the numbers are continuing to grow. C-PP has the unique distinction of being the first and only public school district in New York State that provides the IB programs to all secondary students.

Q: Who manages IB?

A: The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) is a non-profit located in Geneva, Switzerland. It is funded by fees from participating schools, income from workshops, sales of IB materials and donations. There are four regional offices around the world, including IB North America (IBNA) in New York, NY. The regional offices work closely with IB schools to provide support, training, resources and assistance with student assessments.

Q: How does IB benefit students?

A: IB starts with the expectation that all children can learn and achieve at a high level. The programs help students become aware of their personal learning style, how to take responsibility for their learning and how to communicate what they have learned. Also, IB gives students a broader view of the world through studying different cultures and countries in a variety of classroom subjects, including foreign languages.

In addition, IB provides students with the following key benefits:

- Development of critical-thinking, problem-solving and time-management skills as part of the best college preparation available. (Rigor)
- Instruction that emphasizes the connections between classroom subjects and with the real world. (Relevance)
- More collaboration between teachers to create interesting and integrated learning experiences, and more hands-on and group activities for students. (Relationships)

Q: What are the specific IB programs?

A: There are three distinct IB programs: the Primary Years Program for grades Pre-

K through 5; the Middle Years Program for grades 6 through 10 and the Diploma Program for grades 11 and 12. Currently, C-PP is in the process of implementing the Middle Years and Diploma Programs in all four of our middle and high school buildings. We have a long-term goal to adopt the Primary Years Program once the middle and high school programs are well-established.

Q: What is the IB Diploma Program?

A: The IB Diploma Program (DP) is widely recognized as the most prestigious college prep program in the world. In our District, the DP is an optional program for East and West High students. The best candidates are hard-working, college bound students who want to be challenged, to earn college credits and to improve their chances of being admitted into the college or university of their choice. DP students may take individual courses for certification or pursue a full IB diploma. Those who graduate with an IB diploma have a credential that proves that they rank among the very best students in the world.

Q: If the IB Diploma Program is so rigorous, what is C-PP doing to make the grading system fair?

A: The C-PP Board of Education has approved weighted grades for all DP courses.

Q: What is the DP curriculum?

A: Students can choose to take one or more courses for certification, or they can pursue the full IB diploma. One-year Standard Level (SL) and two-year Higher Level (HL) courses are offered in six subject groups: English, French or Spanish, Mathematics and Computer Science, Experimental Sciences, Individuals and Societies, and the Arts. Full diploma candidates must take at least three and not more than four courses at the higher level and the others at the standard level. This allows students to explore some subjects in depth and some

more broadly over the two-year period of the DP. In addition to studying courses in the six subject areas, students will explore, investigate and create within the three elements that form the core requirements of the Diploma Program curriculum: Theory of Knowledge; Creativity, Action and Service; and the Extended Essay.

Q: What is Theory of Knowledge?

A: Known as "TOK," this part of the DP curriculum is an interdisciplinary course designed to help students reflect upon the knowledge they have gained inside and outside the classroom. Composed almost entirely of questions, the TOK course is excellent preparation for college as it prompts students to become aware of themselves as independent thinkers, to respect others' points of view and to act responsibly in an increasingly interconnected and uncertain world.

Q: What do I need to know about Creativity, Action and Service?

A: Participation in the Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) aspect of the DP encourages East and West High students to be involved in music, drama, art, sports, community service work and other activities. These opportunities allow students to pursue personal interests and develop natural talents that help them develop into well rounded people. Along they way, CAS helps them learn to appreciate what life has to offer outside the traditional classroom, including the value of giving back to the community.

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Q: What is the Extended Essay?

A: This is an independent, self-directed research project that allows students to study a topic of interest in-depth over the course of two years. In completing the 4,000-word essay, students learn how to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information and to their own draw conclusions. They are supported and guided by a teacher throughout the process. The Extended Essay is important because it prepares students for the kind of research and writing they will be required to do at the college level.

Q: When do students have to decide whether or not to enroll in the IB Diploma Program?

A: Students must choose whether or not to pursue the full IB diploma at the end of 10th grade because many DP courses extend over two years, and students must begin those classes in their junior year.

Q: What if a student enrolls in the DP and later wants to drop out?

A: If for some reason a DP student wishes to withdraw from the program, they can do so at any time. However, they cannot decide to enter the full Diploma Program after their junior year begins because it takes two years to complete. Therefore, all reasonably bright students with a good work ethic are encouraged to begin the DP and make adjustments at a later date if they so choose.

Q: What choices do students have if they do not want to enroll in the IB Diploma Program?

A: In the 2006-2007 school year, juniors and seniors in the C-PP District can choose from the following paths leading to graduation with a New York State Regents Diploma:

- Standard Regents classes
- Standard Regents classes combined with one or more AP, SUPA or ACE classes
- Standard Regents classes combined with one or more IB classes for certification
- Full IB Diploma Program (meets all Regents requirements)

Q: What about the local diploma?

A: Currently, C-PP offers a less rigorous local diploma for those unable to meet the New York State Regents requirements. Also, students with disabilities can take the Regents Competency Test if they have not been successful on the corresponding Regents exam in order to earn a local diploma. C-PP's local diploma will be phased out in 2008, as required by the state. The low pass option for the required Regents exams will become a permanent safety net for students with disabilities.

Q: Do colleges award credit for IB courses?

A: IB students receive college credit at numerous institutions. Because IB courses and exams are standardized, most colleges and universities know exactly what a student had to do to achieve certification in an individual IB course or to earn the full IB diploma. They also know that a successful IB student will be a successful college student. In fact, 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. Students who graduate with the full IB diploma are eligible for an average of 30 hours college credit, and often get their entire freshman year waived, which represents tremendous savings for families.

Q: How can I find out which colleges give credit for IB courses?

A: Some of the colleges that grant credit for IB include many that C-PP students regularly attend, such as: SUNY schools, St. Bonaventure, Alfred University, Duke, University of Rochester, RIT, Penn State, Ivy League schools, military academies, Johns Hopkins, Notre Dame and many others. A link to the complete list can be found at www.ibo.org/country/US/index. This handy index allows Web users to call up specific colleges and read their current IB policy statements.

Q: I've heard that the IB Diploma Program is too hard – how do students manage it?

A: In a March 2006 survey of enrolled DP students at East and West High, 59% of respondents said the balance between school work and other activities was "about right – I can do the things I want to do and still do well in school." This statistic is important because the respondents were actual DP students in the C-PP District. The reality is, all students have to make choices about what courses to take and which activities they can manage, whether it is music, sports, clubs, church activities or a part-time job. Learning to set priorities and make these kinds of choices is healthy for high school students, as they will have to do it throughout their lives. Students are encouraged to think through these choices with their parents, IB Coordinators and Guidance Counselors.

Q: How many C-PP students are enrolled in the DP program?

A: The Diploma Program (DP) is an optional program for 11th and 12th graders. It is intended for highly motivated students who are willing to work hard and are

college bound. In 2005-2006, the first year of DP implementation in our District, there were 152 East and West students taking individual DP courses or pursuing the full IB diploma. DP enrollment has increased to 286 for 2006-2007. This number is expected to rise each year as the program becomes better established and more familiar to C-PP students and their families.

Q: What support is available for DP students?

A: The District is committed to supporting IB Diploma Program students and their parents. A dedicated team of teachers is working hard to make sure all requirements are known and understood. The DP teachers actively coordinate major assignments to avoid overlapping deadlines and exam dates to help manage student work loads. Also, DP teachers leverage existing curriculum wherever possible to avoid creating duplicate or unnecessary extra work for students. In addition, the DP Coordinators at East and West High Schools communicate frequently with everyone to address questions and concerns. This is done through email, parent and student meetings, building newsletters, the District's Web site, teacher Web sites and brochures, among other ways.

Visit C-PP's IB site to learn more.

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