

International Baccalaureate Program

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Questions and Answers

What are the general goals of IB?

The IB Program seeks to offer a balanced, general education for the 21st century, building a foundation in each of the major disciplines and emphasizing the development of independent critical thinking and learning-to-learn skills.

What characteristics do students have who succeed in IB?

IB students are often described as “kids with guts,” risk takers, students interested in a challenge. Some IB students are extraordinary in their talents; most, are ordinary kids with extraordinary motivation. IB Learners are inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective.

What is the difference between MYP and DP?

The IB Program at PHS includes the Middle Years Program (MYP) for 9th and 10th graders and the Diploma Program (DP) for 11th and 12th graders. The MYP is an authorized international program that provides a broad traditional foundation of knowledge through interdisciplinary teaching. MYP students are encouraged to question and evaluate information critically, to seek out and explore the links between subjects and to develop an awareness of their place in the world. MYP also prepares students for academic

success in 11th, 12th, and beyond high school. The DP is a rigorous, pre-university course of studies that meets the needs of motivated secondary students. Typically, students with previous MYP preparation or advanced courses, are more successful in DP than those with no prior preparation.

Will students who live outside Poudre’s attendance area be able to enroll in IB?

The IB Program is a district program housed at Poudre High School and is therefore open to all PSD students. In addition, students outside the district may attend the program. At present, we have students from Loveland and Windsor attending the program.

How does a student apply for IB?

Students in eighth grade along with their parents attend an IB informational meeting to learn more about the IB Program. All eighth graders in the Poudre School District are sent a letter in the fall notifying them of three informational meeting dates. They need only attend one as all meetings cover the same material. Students complete an application and submit it to the IB office by a deadline date in January.

How are students selected for participation in MYP, and what is the rationale for the selection process?

The informational meetings are designed to provide students with the necessary information to make an informed decision about IB. The best selection process is a self-selection process. By having students apply to the program, students demonstrate their knowledge of and commitment to the IB Diploma Program. The application process also looks at key indicators for success in the IB program: present academic performance, academic aptitude, motivation, and commitment to the demands of the program. The process is intended to assure that students understand the demands of the program and that they have a significant chance of meeting success in the program.



What are the benefits of starting IB in 9th grade or earlier?

Because of the demands of the IB Program for 11th and 12th grade, a strong MYP background is recommended as preparation. The MYP philosophy and study skills provide a foundation on which to build and prepare for the rigor of DP. Students transferring from another IB school may enter the program at any time providing that the programs align. In rare cases, under individual circumstances, students may enter the PSD IB Program after 9th grade if they have completed all the necessary prerequisites.

Can a student leave MYP if they feel it isn't a good fit?

When a student is accepted in to the 9th grade MYP, we ask that the student and family make a commitment for at least one year. So, while occasionally there are extenuating circumstances, we do not typically allow students to leave 9th grade MYP at semester. At the end of the year, grades will be reexamined and conversations will be had with the student and family to determine what is best for the coming years.



Can a student complete just part (s) of the Diploma program?

The philosophy of the IB Diploma program is grounded on the belief that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Therefore, students are accepted as full Diploma students.

Is it true that IB is better suited to the humanities than math and science?

Because the Diploma program allows students to determine the courses they take at the higher and standard levels, students may indi-

vidualize their course of study according to their interests and talents. Students may choose to take humanities-type courses at the higher level and math and sciences at the standard level OR take their science and math courses at the higher level and humanities subjects at the standard level. It is important to note that all IB courses (both standard and higher) are at a significantly rigorous level. What is unique to the IB is that students are challenged in all disciplines regardless of their area of strength. Therefore, math and science students are equally challenged in English and history and humanities students are equally challenged in math and science. This is what is truly meant by a *liberal arts* education.

How are teachers trained?

All DP and/or MYP teachers are required to complete IB teacher training seminars. All workshops are taught by experienced IB teachers from throughout North America and on occasion the world. IB also supports teacher workshops by providing chief examiners from each discipline to conduct part of the training.

In addition, each teacher receives a curriculum guide prepared by IB for each course. Teachers also receive subject reviews after each examination session addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the students who tested that session. Teachers then use the reports to modify their curriculum as needed. IB continually monitors the program of each individual school and provides guidance for improvements. IB schools must renew their affiliation each year; schools that do not meet the high standards of IB will be disqualified from offering the curriculum.

What IB courses are offered at Poudre, and who plans the IB program?

The IB curriculum and exam system provide broad latitude for each school's individual program. The program at Poudre was originally set up by a planning team of Poudre School District teachers representing all three high schools and several junior high schools. The present program is reviewed by the IB teaching

staff and changes are made according to student needs and expertise of the teaching staff. The IB Program at Poudre presently offers six major disciplines (English, World Language, Science, Mathematics, Arts, and History).

Students are also required to take electives in art, theatre, music, and P. E. The IB curriculum presently offers Spanish, French and German for world language; biology, chemistry, physics and environmental systems for experimental sciences; world history, History of the Americas, Contemporary World Politics for social sciences; and art, music, psychology and theatre for electives.

Do students working to earn the IB Diploma have time to participate in major extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, and/or drama?

IB students typically participate in athletics, drama, music, and other extracurricular activities, just as other students do. Students attracted to IB thrive on challenge and have a balanced commitment to academics and extracurricular activities, but they must develop good time-management skills. Some Colorado IB programs have surveyed their IB students and found that IB students on average participate in three or more extracurricular activities, more than the typical high school student.



What are the differences and similarities between Advanced Placement (AP) and IB courses?

AP and IB courses both use exams that are externally reviewed according to a fixed grading scale by well-trained teacher-graders. The AP exams are graded on a five-point grading scale with a "3" being the minimum passing score and a "5" being the highest possible score. IB exams use a seven point grading scale with a "4" being the minimum passing score and a "7" being the highest score possible.

Students in AP courses compete nationally while IB students compete internationally. In some areas, the curriculum and standards are quite similar and therefore we are able to combine some AP and IB classes. Both programs offer college credit or advanced standing based on student performance on exams.

The main difference, however, is that the IB program is a full, comprehensive Diploma program. In addition to the separate courses, students have additional requirements to complete (Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge, and CAS). The whole is intended to be greater than the sum of the parts. In addition, students do not need to take AP courses to sit for AP exams,

and students in AP courses do not need to necessarily take AP exams.

In IB, however, students *must* be in IB courses to sit for exams.

In several IB courses, the final exam is not the sole source of IB assessment. For example in English, students complete two world literature papers during their course of study that are externally assessed and an oral presentation component that is internally assessed and externally moderated. The final exam in English only counts for 50% of the total score. This allows students several opportunities to demonstrate their ability rather than resting their entire evaluation on one exam. IB also



places emphasis on writing skills by using essay questions wherever appropriate.

Students interested in specializing in their subjects of interest and strength may best be served by AP programs where they can choose those subjects to take at an advanced level. Students wanting to be stretched in all areas should consider the IB Diploma Program.

Is the process of completing IB courses and exams too stressful for students?

Most IB students report finding the challenges of the IB Program meaningful, stimulating and enjoyable. IB requires students to think carefully about what they read, to formulate their own positions, and to defend those positions with substantive, accurate evidence and argumentation. Students become personally involved when they are stimulated by readings/discoveries and/or express originality and critical thinking in discussions and essays. However, some students do choose to leave IB, and others experience a stressful transition until they adjust to the demands of IB and acquire better time-management skills and learning strategies. Students who leave the program often explain that they do not want to work as hard as they need to in IB. Some explain that they would rather specialize in certain subject areas rather than fulfilling the full requirements of the IB Diploma. Typically those who leave the program believe they have benefited from their time in the program and profess to miss the teachers and stimulating class discussions and interactions.

Are there any special fees for IB students?

To have such a coordinated curriculum world-wide and such a thorough examination process costs money. Students pay examination fees during their junior and senior years when they sit for IB exams. Because the IB Diploma is not required for graduation from PSD, students are responsible for all fees associated with the IB Diploma. The total cost

for 6 exams is approximately \$900.00 When you consider that this fee could buy a year's credit at some of the most competitive universities in the world, it is clearly a bargain.

Because of the nature of the curriculum and depth of knowledge, students are often encouraged (though not required) to buy workbooks, novels, and even some textbooks for their classes. These costs are also paid by the student.



Is there financial assistance available?

The PSD IB Program is committed to providing access to all students. A parent committee has established a scholarship fund that awards money to pay IB fees to students who qualify. In addition, the IB Program has established a grocery certificate fundraising campaign allowing students and their families to purchase grocery certificates for all the major supermarkets with a 5% rebate to use toward IB-related activities and fees. Students using this program can pay for most if not all of their IB expenses.

Would the IB diploma be an asset if a student hopes to attend a college outside the U.S.?

Definitely yes. The IB diploma is honored for admission at universities and colleges around the world. In contrast, a high school diploma from the U.S. is generally not sufficient for entrance into colleges and universities outside the U.S. IB operates in three official languages—English, French, and Spanish—and is respected and supported by many governments, colleges, and universities.