

# 1 What Is IB?

The IB Diploma Program is an internationally recognized, demanding pre-university course of study that leads to examinations. It is designed for highly motivated junior and senior high school students. The student who satisfies its demands demonstrates a strong commitment to learning, both in terms of the mastery of subject content and in the development of the skills and discipline necessary for success in a competitive world. Success in the IB examinations and other program requirements results in receipt of an "IB Diploma." Those who do not receive the diploma may be awarded "certificates" in the subject areas that are successfully passed.

The IB Program aims to:

- Provide an internationally accepted qualification for entry into higher education
- Promote international understanding
- Educate the whole person, emphasizing intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth
- Develop inquiry and thinking skills, and the capacity to reflect upon and to evaluate actions critically.

## The IBO Organization

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) is a non-profit educational organization founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968. The Diploma Program was originally designed to cater to the educational needs of globally mobile students in international secondary schools. It was developed as a deliberate compromise between the specialization required in some national systems and the breadth preferred in others. The general objectives were to provide students with a balanced education, to facilitate geographic and cultural mobility, and to promote international understanding. Because of the balanced curriculum and high standards of assessment, the Diploma Program has evolved from its original purpose as a service to the international community and now encompasses member schools in national systems around the globe.

The IBO is a recognized leader in the field of international education that works with over 3,000 schools that offer its programs in 139 countries. There are over 700 schools offering the Diploma Program in the US, with 29 located in Colorado. The IBO provides IBO world schools with a number of services, including curriculum development, assessment, teacher training and information seminars, a curriculum resource website, and publications and materials for classroom use.

Along with the headquarters in Geneva, research activities are based in Bath, England, with curriculum, assessment, business and financial operations in Cardiff, Wales. The IBO has three regions, each administered by a regional office. The North America office is located in Bethesda, MD.

## **IB at DCHS**

DCHS was officially awarded status by the IBO as an IB Diploma Program school in 1998, with the first class graduating in 2000. The IB Diploma Program is a junior/senior program. However, the school offers preparatory honors classes for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, for core and language courses. The coursework is designed to refine students' study skills and build an academic foundation to prepare them for success in the IB program.

Rather than segregating IB as a separate program, DCHS attempts to integrate IB students into all aspects of the school environment. IB students participate fully in all school organizations, athletics, and performing arts. The desire is that the IB program enhance and influence the overall school environment. In addition, AP students are invited to enroll in IB courses where space is available.

Currently, over 300 students participate in the IB program at DCHS. Approximately 81% of DCHS IB diploma candidates have received the IB Diploma since program inception, with the remainder receiving subject certificates in the examinations passed.

In the Douglas County School District, IB classes are offered at Thunder Ridge High School and Douglas County High School, which operates as a "magnet" location for high school students in the district. About 50% of the students in the program come from outside the DCHS attendance area. Transportation to DCHS is provided at a central location in Parker. Once admitted to the program, DCHS becomes the student's home school, meaning that all classes must be taken at DCHS, as well as participation in extracurricular activities.

In the spring of 2005, DCHS conducted an IBO Five Year Evaluation, consisting of an analysis of objective data (enrollment, test scores, etc.) as well as a self-study performed by the school. The self-study focused on the school's principles and practices of five standards: philosophy and international mindedness, support for the program, curriculum and assessment, resources, and student support. DCHS successfully completed the review process, meeting or exceeding standards in all areas.