

## 4 Who Should Participate?

### Who Is Best Suited for the IB Program?

Students who enjoy challenges in all areas and who view education as an ongoing process will meet with the greatest success. Attitude is all important in IB. Students must always strive to work hard and must be willing to learn from setbacks.

IB students succeed because they are involved. It is essential to participate in activities you love and enjoy. Students who are on athletic teams, involved in drama, working on the school paper and so forth, find the greatest contentment in the program. Academics in IB are designed to be inclusive with other commitments.

IB students should pursue an international curriculum because they value a wide range of perspectives, and because they want to enhance their ability to think critically. Students with diligence, intelligence and compassion comprise the program. These are characteristics which will be enhanced by the program and which will ultimately translate to ongoing academic and personal success.

Additionally, a successful student:

- ... is willing to work hard at their studies;
- ... is willing to develop good personal study habits, self-discipline, self-motivation, and time management;
- ... Has a capacity for thinking critically and creatively;
- ... Enjoys being very busy with school work and extracurricular activities.

### Admission to the IB Diploma Program

Students may apply to the IB Diploma Program anytime before the junior year. However, most students apply during 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the Middle Years Program, which is offered for the freshman and sophomore years. Once a student is admitted to the IB Program, he/she does not need to re-apply for admission to the IB Diploma program for the junior/senior years.

The admission period is in the late fall. An application must be completed, and is available online on the DCHS/IB web site. The application requires the submission of transcripts from the prior year, and three teacher signatures recommending you for the program. In addition, the student must submit a writing sample in response to the prompts in the application.

The goal for the admission process is to determine whether the program is a good fit for the student. Guidelines for acceptance will include, but are not limited to:

- commitment and enthusiasm for the program
- evidence of academic potential
- teacher support
- good work and study habits, or the potential for the same

Students are advised of their acceptance in December.

## Students Outside DCHS Boundaries

Any student in the Douglas County School District area may apply to the DCHS IB Diploma program. However, admitted students outside the DCHS attendance area must complete an open-enrollment application as an "out of boundary" student for DCHS. Once a student enrolls, DCHS is considered to be the student's "home school."

## Comparison of AP and IB Programs

DCHS provides two college preparatory programs that can yield college credit, the AP and the IB programs. Both programs offer academic rigor.

**Advanced Placement (AP)** is an American program that offers the ability for a student to take special AP courses in a variety of subjects. Almost all are one-year courses, comparable to college-level coursework. Students may take only one, or as many AP courses as they choose. Courses may be taken at any time during high school, as long as prerequisites are met.

At the end of each AP course, students may voluntarily choose to take the College Board's AP test (the same organization that provides SAT tests). These tests are given nationally over a two-week period in May. Tests are scored on a range of 1 – 5. U.S. colleges and universities, and some universities in other countries, generally provide college credit for high scores on these tests, with some colleges requiring higher scores than others.

The **IB Diploma Program** is a two-year comprehensive program, taken during a student's junior and senior years. It requires students to take courses in 5 subject areas as well as an elective subject. The curriculum is based on international standards, administered by the International Baccalaureate Organization. The program emphasizes critical thinking and writing, and encourages students to think globally.

IB students are assessed throughout the year in their courses through a variety of oral and written activities. IB exams are also generally given at the end of each individual subject course sequence in May of the junior or senior year, as appropriate, and are graded internationally by educators world-wide. IB students in all IB world-wide schools take the same exams. The final score for each subject area (range of 1 – 7) is determined by both work assessed in the course as well as the final exam.

Colleges and universities in the U.S. and world-wide recognize the IB Diploma, and generally provide college credit for high scores on many of the IB exams, primarily those taken at the High Level. In the U.S. the diploma's value is becoming more increasingly recognized, due to the excellent academic preparation and study skills its students display. In fact, colleges are more frequently offering advanced standing (via extra credits) and/or various other benefits to those obtaining the Diploma.

In comparison, AP is a U.S. program that allows students to take AP courses in areas of their strengths. The program is flexible, in that students are not locked into a course of study for more than one year. The final AP score is based solely on the result of the AP test, taken at the end of the course. The IB Diploma program, however, is a two-year international program that requires students to take courses in all its subject areas, although students may choose which courses to take at a high vs. a standard level. The final score in each subject is based upon both coursework and the IB exam taken at the completion of the subject course(s). The IB Diploma

program also includes three additional required components: the Theory of Knowledge course, the completion of an Extended Essay, and CAS hour requirements.

IB students may also take AP courses if their schedules allow. Similarly, students not in the IB Diploma program may also take selected IB courses, if there is room in that particular class, with instructor approval.

## **Student Workload**

As with most rigorous college preparatory programs, the academic demands of the IB program are high. One of the goals of the program is training students to manage their time in preparation for similar demands in the university environment.

## **Involvement in Extracurricular Activities**

Contrary to popular belief, IB students generally are involved in a variety of extracurricular activities, both at DCHS and in the community. A recent survey of our junior and senior students (with an 87% response rate) determined the following information about the respondents:

- ... 44% hold a paying job
- ... 77% belong to one or more (often many more) clubs at DCHS
- ... 20% hold officer positions in those clubs
- ... 52% participate in one or more sports (13 different sports)
- ... 20% participate in either band, choir and/or orchestra at DCHS
- ... 18% participate in drama at DCHS

These figures do not take into account non-school-related activities, such as church and youth groups, outside musical/drama organizations, Girl/Boy Scouts, Explorers, 4-H, music lessons, cultural societies, and a myriad of volunteer organizations.

## **Recommendations for Success**

IB is demanding, but following a few recommendations will help any student do well in the program:

- ... Make a study plan for the coming week/month, anticipating deadlines for assignments as well as upcoming activities and social events.
- ... Work in surroundings conducive to thoughtful study.
- ... Begin studying sooner rather than later, and in a sustained fashion.
- ... Follow up recent class notes carefully, and check for clarification with the teacher to ensure you understand what is being taught/learned. Keep class notes well organized.
- ... Participate in class with other students and the teachers.
- ... Demonstrate an eagerness to ask questions.
- ... Submit assignments that are carefully researched, analyzed and presented.

## Students' Advice for Keeping Up with Schoolwork

### DON'T PROCRASTINATE

- ... Do homework the moment it is assigned, rather than waiting until the night before.
- ... Don't let yourself get behind. If you do, work to catch up.
- ... Don't even think about putting something off—you will burn and die!
- ... Just do it!

### KEEP ORGANIZED

- ... Learn how long assignments will take and plan accordingly.
- ... Have an organized plan for schoolwork and other activities.
- ... Force yourself to become organized—make lists!
- ... Reward yourself when you follow your plan; punish yourself when you don't!
- ... Keep all your notes from every year; they will come in handy.

### PRIORITIZE

- ... Do most important assignments first.
- ... Learn what work you don't have to do.

### MANAGE YOUR TIME

- ... Schedule your time in a way that works best for you.
- ... If you have free time, work on extra homework to reduce superlate nights later.
- ... Fill spare time with small assignments. Do large ones when you're totally free.
- ... Study a little each night.
- ... Work fast!
- ... Go to the library.
- ... Use advisement time and class time.
- ... On weekends, get as much homework done as possible for the week. Then your week is less stressful and more fun.
- ... Plan on at least 2 - 3 hours of homework a night.
- ... Concentrate on one thing at a time and get it done.
- ... Don't ever be bored; always get something done.
- ... Know what you are getting yourself into, and know your limits.

### PROJECTS

- ... Work on projects in pieces.
- ... Start right away!

### MISCELLANEOUS

- ... Focus! Don't let video games control your life!
- ... Work in sections. For example, give yourself an hour to finish a subject's homework. If you finish in time, reward yourself with a short break.
- ... If you're smart, study. If you're not, work harder than smart people.
- ... Your desk is now your pillow.
- ... Study sessions make the workload bearable. But know when others can help you, and when working in a group may not be to your best advantage.
- ... Persevere.
- ... Remember—your parents and teachers are there for you, so use them.

## Students' Advice for Handling Time Pressures

### RELAX WHEN YOU CAN

- ... Listen to some good music.
- ... Take alone time.
- ... Take a deep breath.
- ... Light incense.
- ... Go for a walk.
- ... Meditate.

### HANDLING STRESS

- ... Don't panic—leads to time wasted.
- ... Take a mental health day if you need to.
- ... Take breaks; take an hour off between assignments and do something you enjoy.
- ... Take time to eat.
- ... Don't stress; life's too short.
- ... Eat chocolate.
- ... Learn to laugh—a bad grade doesn't determine the rest of your life.
- ... Cry.
- ... Don't lose your sense of humor—a smile can get you through anything.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

- ... Involve yourself in a decent amount of non-academic activities.
- ... Cut back on after-school activities.
- ... Don't give up your friends.
- ... Make time for yourself.

### REGARDING SLEEP

- ... Get some.
- ... Don't.
- ... Sleep prevents you from crashing and slipping in your schoolwork.
- ... Always a priority.
- ... Drink caffeinated beverages.
- ... It isn't as important as you thought it was.