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LETTER TO COMMISSION

To: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

Date: April 5, 2012

Subject: District Administration Article – *Widening Participation to an IB Education*

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to share the article *Widening Participation to an IB Education* published in the District Administration April 2012 magazine.

Miami Beach is recognized as being “the only City in America to have the IB curriculum throughout all of its schools – and very much at the municipality’s initiative.” The International Baccalaureate (IB) initiative allows teachers to create a continuum of access and excellence in education, giving students the tools they need to succeed academically at an early age. Implementation of the IB citywide allows schools the flexibility to take advantage of the richness of their student base and the learning opportunities available within our City

District Administration (DA) is the most widely received and regularly read publication for K-12 district-level school leaders nationwide. DA provides cutting-edge coverage of education technology, news, curriculum, policy, finance, profiles and more to this exclusive audience across print, digital and in-person event platforms.

We have made excellent progress to date in the implementation of the various components of our Education Compact and continue discussions with City schools as we strive to meet the educational needs of our children. . Information is available on our City’s website on the Education Tab.

Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

JMG/LDR

Attachment

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Wed, 03/21/2012 - 2:38pm *Feature*

Widening Participation to an International Baccalaureate Education

A new IB Career-related Certificate program will pair academic rigor and international focus with technical training.

By: *Ed Finkel*

District Administration, April 2012

The global economy demands globally educated workers and citizens. About 1,300 schools in the United States—and a total of about 3,200 in 141 countries worldwide—have turned to the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum as their ticket to educating students who are worldly-wise.

“Globalization is costing jobs and, really, the American dream,” says Stephen Spahn, chancellor of The Dwight School in Manhattan, which in 2007 became the first school in the United States to offer the IB curriculum from pre-K through grade 12. “How are you going to create people who remain competitive at all levels of society? It is equal opportunity that’s at stake here.”

But only 25 or 30 percent of students in IB World Schools are taking the program. “The diploma program is not for all,” says Jeffrey Beard, director-general of the IB.

In September, however, IB will add a fourth curricular option aimed at those who don’t feel academically prepared to enter the diploma program and don’t necessarily plan to attend a four-year college. This International Baccalaureate Career-related Certificate (IBCC) program, which will pair some of the same academic rigor and international focus with technical skills training for juniors and seniors, has been in pilot phase for the past several years.



Students in the IBCC program at Roosevelt High School in the Minneapolis Public Schools take part in the Open House last fall, part of the eighth grade recruitment process. They explain the programs for prospective students and parents.

The pilot schools include Binghamton High School in the Binghamton City (N.Y.) School District; Benjamin H. Hardaway High School of the Muscogee County (Ga.) School District; Granite Bay High School of the Roseville Joint Union High School District in Granite Bay, Calif.; Western Hills High School of the Fort Worth Independent School District in Benbrook, Texas; Patrick Henry Senior High School and Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis Public Schools; Poudre High School of the Poudre School District in Ft. Collins, Colo.; and Oconomowoc High School of the Oconomowoc (Wis.) Area School District.



Minneapolis Public Schools' students study the brain in the Teach the Team Brain project, in which they work in groups in part to teach each other about the brain and create a 3D model of an aspect of the brain.

About 100 more schools in the U.S. have applied to follow in the path of these pilot schools this fall, when the program launches.

“This increases student access,” says Albert Penna, principal at Binghamton High, which in 1996 became the third public high school in the United States to adopt the IB diploma program. “[IBCC] blends very nicely the academic, international and career pathways.”

Big Future for IBCC

Spahn of The Dwight School believes that IBCC eventually will dwarf the regular IB program. “Whereas you might have 500,000 students doing the diploma program in the United States, I see 5 to 10 million students doing the IBCC,” he says. “Every school has kids who are passionate about digital photography, computer applications, making films—where we are capturing their interest so they have a career. This is a step that is really critical for America.”



Binghamton (N.Y.) High School juniors, left, in Approaches to Learning, a key IBCC class, ask FEMA

IBCC differs from typical vocational-technical education in several ways, Spahn says. First, an early course called “Approaches to Learning” instills in students a sense of how each academic discipline builds their knowledge. “You are skilled at beginning to integrate knowledge from different resources. No vocational program does that,” Spahn says.

Secondly, each student must complete a career project—a sort of practical “mini-thesis”—guided by a mentor. “You’re getting an individualized approach to work on a project,” Spahn says. “It’s

representatives, facing the camera, about contaminants that have exacerbated flood clean-up in Binghamton.

going to be, 'I'm actually going to redesign and reengineer an engine,' which is different from, 'I worked in an automotive workshop.' You learn to innovate."

Thirdly, Spahn cites the foreign language requirement for both years, and lastly, a requirement that students take a concentration of academically rigorous coursework in an area that interests them. For example, a Mexican-American student might want to refine his or her use of the Spanish language. "That's meant to tap into the spark of genius," Spahn says. "Everybody has something they're good at. We call it personalized learning."

Final grades in IBCC courses are based heavily on how those projects are constructed and presented. "They're forced to construct something and show how they've done the research," Beard says.

History of IB

Founded in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland, the IB traditionally has consisted of three programs—a primary years program for students aged 3 to 12, a middle years program for those aged 11 to 16, and a diploma program for those aged 16 to 19. The curriculum emphasizes teamwork, critical thinking skills, and cultural and linguistic fluency, and it encourages students to think about issues from different points of view.

"The teacher will ask leading questions: Why is this important? Why do you think this way? Students are forced to articulate," says Beard. Rather than lecture, teachers use discussion and writing assignments to pull out concepts. "It's 'explain, define, compare and contrast,'" he adds. "The skills they pick up, as a result, are at a much higher level."

The IB curriculum is based on a "hexagon" of academic areas—language acquisition, language and literature, individuals and societies, mathematics and computer science, experimental sciences, and the arts. Those who progress through the diploma program must complete an extended essay based on in-depth study of one of their subjects, examine different ways of knowing (such as perception or emotion) and different kinds of knowledge (like scientific or artistic), and undertake a service task outside the classroom.

Spahn remembers asking Alec Peterson, the first director general of IB, what makes a great education. "He said very simply, 'If you drop a person anywhere in the world, can they thrive?'"



Binghamton High School juniors in upstate New York use a whiteboard to study ways to alleviate future N.Y. flood damage.

Beard believes the IB program meets Peterson’s criteria. “Increasingly, the call is for students who can understand the world, understand other cultures, speak different languages, have the ability to relate to other cultures,” he says. “That demand happens to line up very well with what we promote automatically: teamwork, cultural skills, critical-thinking skills.”

Initially developed for private international schools aimed at the children of diplomats, IB has become increasingly public-school-focused: 95 percent of current IB World Schools in the United States are public. “The notion that International Baccalaureate is for private schools, elite schools, is false,” Beard says. “We are now primarily in public schools.”

Miami Beach, Fla., has become possibly the only city in America to have the IB curriculum throughout all of its schools—and very much at the municipality’s initiative. Although the city is not officially responsible for education, Miami Beach drew up a compact with massive Miami-Dade County Public Schools to implement IB with a \$500,000 infusion from the city to support teacher training.

“We are an international city, and we need to have an international educational system,” says Leslie Rosenfeld, educational liaison for IB with Miami Beach, which has six schools. “If you speak to members of the community about Miami Beach High School, it’s no longer perceived as, ‘I have no choice [but to go there].’ It’s a viable and attractive option. It’s a competitive option.”

IBCC Ready to Roll Out

Binghamton High School has seen a number of benefits to

KEY DATES IN IB HISTORY

1962

A group of international school teachers worldwide, led initially by teachers at the International School of Geneva, creates the IB Diploma Programme for high school students.

1966

Alec Peterson named the director-general.



1968

The first official trial examinations, or student practice exams that help teachers assess student preparedness, are held.

1977

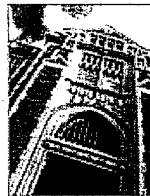
The IB opens its first of four regional offices—IB North America, in New York—and works with schools in the United States, the Caribbean and Canada.

1978

The Africa, Europe and Middle East regional office opens in London.

Early 1980s

Universities recognize the IB diploma came through the efforts of Peterson, director of the Dept. of Education Studies at Oxford University, and other education and public leaders.



1982

The IB establishes IB Latin America in Buenos Aires and IB Asia-Pacific in Singapore.

1994

The IB adds the Middle Years Programme (MYP), a curriculum for students age 11 to 16.

1997

The IB adds the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students age 3 to 11. IB Africa, Europe and Middle East settles in Geneva.

2006

Jeffery Beard named the director-general



2008

October 28 marks 40 years since the official founding of the IB. The IB Board of Governors celebrates in Atlanta with a lecture and gala dinner.

2012

The IBCC program is born.

date from IBCC. Average daily student attendance has risen to 93 percent from around 70 percent before the program was implemented. With approximately 70 percent of students in any given year on free or reduced lunch, Binghamton nevertheless sends more than 90 percent of its students to two- and four-year colleges or into the military, Penna says. Currently, the school has 1,600 students; 52 are doing the diploma program, 42 are doing IBCC, and more than 300 are taking individual IB courses.

Students are required to take at least three courses in their career core for IBCC, courses that Binghamton has developed in partnership with the Clifton Park, N.Y.-based career-preparation program Project Lead the Way.

A 15-year-old organization that has placed hands-on, engineering-oriented programs in more than 4,200 schools, Project Lead the Way has been impressed with how seamlessly and intentionally the three IBCC schools with which it has partnered have been able to fuse those hands-on programs with the schools' corresponding academic subjects, says Mark Schroll, director of strategic partnerships.

For example, he says, "If you're solving for 'X' in an algebra course, then you walk into engineering and use those kinds of thought processes to design a circuit. Teachers don't have time to show the relevance in math class. They love Project Lead the Way because kids say, 'Oh, that's what you use it for!'"

In schools that don't offer IBCC, "All we can do is recommend that students take these classes that correspond; that doesn't mean it happens by requirement. It happens if it can," Schroll adds. "IBCC ensures that kids will get this wonderful mix of core academics and a place to apply those academics."

Although career preparation is the focus in IBCC, students are also required to take a foreign language, take courses that develop teamwork and analytical skills, and participate in public service projects. "It's where the local curriculum meets the global," Penna says. "It also prepares students very well for 21st-century learning skills, for them to be internationally minded, respecting the opinions of others. If we're looking at the cognitive skill sets of students, their ability to do research, to analyze, to communicate, to have confidence and be able to present—they're doing PowerPoint, they're being conversant with global literature, they're reading The New York Times. It's not a narrow band of technical skill."

The program attracts students who want a viable career pathway. "Every public school in the nation has cohorts of kids who are not necessarily Cornells, or Harvards, or Dartmouths, but these are good kids," says Penna. "They want to be anchored in a solid foundation."

"Sometimes our kids start out thinking they're not ready for Harvard or someplace like that," says Robert Gazda, director of IBCC at Binghamton. "Sometimes, over two years, they start thinking, 'Yes I can. Yes I can.' Some of them want to end up being electricians; some of them want to be electrical engineers. [IBCC] provides them an opportunity to really find out what [ambitions] they have."



Jeffrey Beard, middle, named the director-general of IB in 2006, celebrates 40 years of IB in 2008.

Binghamton has been refining its program during the past three years with input from local community colleges and businesses like Lockheed Martin, Gazda says. “They are aware that students are coming out of this that [they] may want to hire someday,” he says. In Minneapolis, Roosevelt High School began IBCC in 2008-2009, and Patrick Henry Senior High followed in 2010-2011. Both had strong tech education programs with an emphasis on health careers, and IBCC has infused skills like cultural and linguistic competency to better serve growing immigrant populations in the Twin Cities area, says Paula Palmer, program coordinator for International Baccalaureate and College in the Schools.

Minneapolis has the IB diploma program already in six of its seven high schools, and IBCC has broadened its reach. “It has cast a wide net for the IB philosophy and vision by bringing in career tech ed kids,” Palmer says. “It bridged the best of both programs. It’s brought more academic rigor into career tech ed, and it’s brought different kinds of kids into the IB world.”

The tech students have been prompted to think more deeply about the mechanical skills they’re learning and their potential applications. “It opens up their minds to think differently about their field,” Palmer says. “Just because they can build it, should they? That’s the most powerful outcome of this. It’s taking their technical skills to a new level of awareness.”

At last year’s graduation in Binghamton, IBCC students wowed potential employers with that awareness. “People from the business world were saying, ‘I can’t believe these kids—how they talk, how they think. I’ll take anybody who comes out of this school,’ ” recalls Beard. “We think it’s going to be as popular as the diploma program over the years.”

Ed Finkel is a contributing writer for District Administration.

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