



International Baccalaureate Program Facts

Key Facts:

- International Baccalaureate (IB) is a high-caliber academic program that independent research has shown improves college-readiness.
- The IB is a local choice made by local school districts to implement.
- IB students develop a strong sense of their own identity and understand the importance of participation in their local community through a service component. This sense of identity provides the basis to help students understand other cultures, and readies them to participate in a global economy.
- The first teaching of the IB program in Texas was in 1979 at Houston Bellaire High School.
- IB Diploma Programme is offered by 830 schools in the United States and 59 high schools in Texas.

Myth: IB programs are pilot programs for UNESCO and the UN, developed for the purpose of creating an “international education system.”

Fact: The International Baccalaureate (IB) is an independent, apolitical, nonprofit organization. The IB is not under the control of any ministry or government, including the UN, nor does it own or operate any schools. The IB was founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968 as a non-profit educational foundation. Its original purpose was to facilitate the international mobility of students; not only the children of diplomats, but also the children of missionaries, and children whose parents worked for global companies. The idea was to prepare these mobile students for university by providing schools with a curriculum and a diploma universally recognized by universities.

Since then IB’s mission has expanded. Today there is no “typical” IB school. IB schools in America are public, private, parochial, magnet and charter schools. They are found in urban, suburban, and rural America, and include the U.S. Department of Defense schools. The International Baccalaureate seeks to make an IB education available to any school which chooses it for students in any country and of any economic means.

Myth: IB is funded by the UN/UNESCO

Fact: The IB was funded by the United Nations Educational Service and Culture Organization (UNESCO), the 20th Century Fund, and the Ford Foundation until 1976. From 1977, however, the Heads Standing Conference (HSC) of Diploma Program schools was formed and they began to pay the IB annual subscription fee. In countries where state schools offered IB Diploma, the governments made financial contributions, and some continue to do so on a reduced basis. In return for these fees, the IB helped schools implement the Diploma Program, offered training workshops, and managed a system of external examinations for IB diploma candidates.

Myth: IB is a foreign owned entity and it controls the curriculum, therefore, foreigners are determining our students' curriculum.

Fact: The decision how to implement the IB Diploma Programme in a school is 100 percent up to the school to decide. The schools choose the textbooks, design their curriculum, and maintain full control including when and if to adopt the program. It is up to schools to align their local education requirements. While the IB offers a framework program, the strength of IB is its flexibility in terms of content selection, classroom resources, pedagogy, and assessment.

IB programs accommodate a diversity of thought, backgrounds, opinions, and global views. The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), dedicated to addressing the needs of children of US military personnel, has singled out the IB as a worthwhile and rigorous academic program for the children of US service members.

Myth: A State has the right to require that its public schools are controlled by local and state authorities, not foreign entities. IB is a foreign entity; therefore any school that adopts the IB cedes local control to it.

Fact: The decision how to implement the program is 100 percent up to the school to decide. The schools choose the textbooks, design the curriculum, and make modifications to accommodate local standards. Schools maintain full control over their IB Program. Once a school and the board decide to adopt an IB Program, the IB advises the school throughout the authorization process.

Myth: All tests and paper of American IB students are sent to Europe/Geneva for grading and evaluation.

Fact: The IB Diploma Programme relies on trained examiners for external validation (educators, including university, around the world) for a portion of its coursework as well as the student's own teachers. The evaluation of coursework undergoes careful review to ensure that standards are applied equally to the work of all students. Educators – nationally and worldwide – have realized the benefit of international standards of academic evaluation set by the best practices of educators worldwide. Programs such as the U.S. College Board AP Program likewise send their exams to other teachers around the world for scoring.

Myth: IB indoctrinates children to be world citizens not citizens of the United States.

Fact: IB students develop a strong sense of their own identity as Americans and understand the importance of local community, especially through the Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) component of the IB. This sense of identity helps them to understand other cultures, and prepares them to participate in a global economy. The Diploma Programme challenges students to move beyond memorizing facts and figures to question and think critically. The mission of the IB is to provide students with the critical thinking skills to reach their own conclusions based on their own research and experiences.