



IB CANDIDATE SCHOOL

Coordinator Notes
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Hello South Hills students, parents, and staff

This is our inaugural IB newsletter to keep lines of communication open, build all aspects of the Diploma Program at South Hills, and help support all stakeholders at all junctions. If we work together, we can achieve greatness and set the model for years to come.

Our district superintendent shares the following message:

“The International Baccalaureate (IB) program prepares students to meet the excitement, challenges and competition of our intensely connected world with sophistication and confidence. Stimulating coursework and internationally benchmarked assessments are deeply aligned with excellent instruction provided by our teachers to support student success. Students engaged in the IB program have many opportunities to grow academically and as inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young adults. The Program was created to promote peaceful relationships among nations through developing a greater understanding of cultures. I am very proud that South Hills High School is a candidate school for the Diploma Program and is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools throughout the world that share a common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education.”

Dr. Catherine Nichols

“Creating Extraordinary Futures”

On Thursday March 21, 2013, we finalized our Application for Authorization with the International Baccalaureate, and we now are officially in the queue for the visiting team sometime during October or November of 2013. It has been a long process [over a year and a half to get to this point], and it has been intense and engaging, but this phase is over and the next and most exciting phase is about to begin.

This week, March 25-29, our coordinator will be visiting with students who indicated interest in the Diploma Program or one or more classes as certificates. During these visits to all Freshman Honors English classes, we will try to get a more accurate count and find out specifically what classes students want to take in the IB. There will also be a question and answer period, an open forum for students to ask any questions that come to mind.

To better bridge any potential academic gaps students may have, we are working with DeVry University and Mount San Antonio College as well as our district to see what we can offer in the way of courses and academic boosts to get them in-line with the scholastic and social demands of the Diploma Program. We are also working closely with Sierra Vista Middle School as its staff explores becoming a Middle Years Program in the IB, and in our conversations we are exploring academic and course issues and IB Learner Profile implementation. Reports from other parents

and students from other local IB programs on why they were unhappy or concerned often centered around the gaps between grade 7, 8, 9 and 10 leading into the grade 11 and 12 Diploma Program.

As we've mentioned at previous meetings and handouts, all our potential IB teachers have been trained at IB sponsored workshops in at least Category 1, and through these sessions our staff made contact with other IB teachers around the world [from Singapore to Barbados, from Dubai to Brazil, and from Norway to Canada]. This worldwide educational bond helps to stir the creative mix and prepare us for the tasks ahead. Also, earlier this academic year, we brought in Jerry Chris, a longtime IB Theory of Knowledge educator, trainer, and IB leader, for half a day to speak to our staff and demonstrate Socratic seminar techniques and related IB teaching strategies. As a result of this and our curriculum sharing time, almost all IB teachers have implemented some of Dr. Chris's techniques and more in the classroom. Our staff has also met to work through Academic Honesty, Admissions, Language, and Special Needs policies, and as we refine these, you will receive notification of where you can access these documents and provide input and feedback.

Seeking models and ideas for our own IB Diploma Program, we have visited several top-notch IB World Schools: John W. North High School [Riverside], Capistrano Valley High School [Mission Viejo], Corona-Centennial High School [Corona], Beechwood Academy [Fullerton], Claremont High School [Claremont], Lakewood High School [Lakewood, CO], and Smoky Hill High School [Aurora, CO]. We are scheduling visits to Diamond Bar High School and another visit to J. W. North. Through these visits, we witnessed great techniques, ideas, and strategies, and we met and talked with staff, students, and administrators.

Through all meetings, our school visits, our IB consultation visit, and sharing with each other, we built our plan to offer at least one High Level class and one Standard Level class within each group, and at the moment, Theory of Knowledge will be scheduled [tentatively] during zero period. We will also offer several rare programs not offered at many IB schools: Sports Exercise and Health Science, Film, Business and Management [one year], and Economics. We are also evaluating schedules, teaching strategies and building a strong and vibrant parent association.

We are on schedule to start our Diploma Program in the fall of 2014 with those juniors [present freshmen], and we will take applications for the Program before the second semester of next year [January 2014] so we can better plan our classes and numbers.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerest best wishes,

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