

Frequently Asked Questions

education
for a better
world

What is the International Baccalaureate (IB)?

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a non-profit organization headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland with offices worldwide. A recognized leader in the field of international education, the IB programmes encourage students to be active learners, well-rounded individuals and engaged world citizens. Founded in 1968, the IB today works with 2,302 schools in 127 countries to offer and develop its three challenging programs to 612,000 students ranging in age from 3 to 19. The IB also serves in an educational advisory capacity to other educational organizations.

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end, the organization works with schools, governments and international organization to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

What does the IB offer?

The International Baccalaureate offers three high-quality and challenging educational programmes for a worldwide community of schools, aiming to create a better, more peaceful world.

The **IB Primary Years Programme**, for students aged 3 to 12, focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

The **IB Middle Years Programme**, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and to become critical and reflective thinkers.

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The **IB Diploma Programme**, for students aged 16 to 19, is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education with final examinations that prepares students for success at university and in life beyond.

All IB programmes include:

- a curriculum or curriculum framework;
- student assessment;
- professional development for teachers; and
- school support, authorization and programme evaluation.

What is an IB World School?

The IB does not own or manage any schools. Instead, the IB works with schools around the world (both state and privately funded) that share its commitment to international education. Schools that have been authorized by the IB to offer one or more IB programmes are known as IB World Schools. These schools:

- share the mission and commitment of the IB to quality international education;
- play an active and supporting role in the worldwide community of IB schools;
- share their knowledge and experience in the development of IB programmes; and
- are committed to the professional development of teachers and administrators.

What makes the IB unique?

Over nearly 40 years, the IB has built a reputation for high quality, challenging programs of education that develop internationally-minded young people who are well prepared to meet the demands of life in the 21st century.

The IB's reputation rests upon the rigor and quality of its academic programmes. Its curriculum is challenging, its assessment is rigorous, and its teacher training is professionally rewarding. The IB process of school authorization and evaluation "raises the bar" when they are implemented in schools.

Is the IB curriculum consistent with state content standards and the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act?

Absolutely. The International Baccalaureate can easily be adapted to fit any state's existing content standards. It doesn't replace the local or state curriculum; rather, it *enhances* it with highly rigorous lessons, classroom materials, and teacher tools, helping students not merely to meet standards but to exceed them. Further, students participating in IB tend to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as defined under NCLB, at much higher rates than do their peers in non-IB schools. In 2005, for instance, nearly three-quarters of IB-authorized public elementary schools in the United States made Adequate Yearly Progress, according to a review by *The Washington Post*. And among IB schools receiving Title I support (federal anti-poverty funding), more than two-thirds made AYP.

Can IB and AP be implemented successfully into a single school or school district?

Yes. As the popularity of International Baccalaureate's Diploma Programme continues to grow, it is not uncommon for the IB Diploma and the College Board's Advanced Placement programs to be used in the same schools.

While the AP offers high-quality preparation in individual subjects, the IB brings those subjects together in a comprehensive programme, including not just math, science, social studies and literature but also the arts and foreign languages. The IB programmes also emphasize oral and written communication, critical reflection, and community service. Additionally, the IB offers an integrated model with rigorous assessment, professional development, programme evaluation and support for schools.

Does IB provide financial assistance to low-income schools and students?

The IB bursary fund provides short-term grants for schools experiencing financial challenges or wanting to increase access to IB programmes.

This fund offers grants to schools or education districts in three categories:

Category 1: IB World Schools experiencing temporary financial difficulties owing to circumstances beyond their control.

Category 2: Schools aiming to become authorized IB World Schools. Schools must be able to demonstrate anticipated wide socio-economic access to the IB programme, long-term financial viability and that the IB programme will potentially make a significant impact on the school community as a whole.

Category 3: IB World Schools wanting to widen access to their IB programme(s). An example would be an IB World School wanting to establish a consortium with schools that do not offer an IB programme or developing online facilities to support another school.

Grants are short term, valid for one year with a possible extension to two years maximum. The ongoing sustainability of an IB programme is an important consideration in awarding a grant. Funds can be used for, but are not limited to, the training of teachers and administrators, the payment of the IB annual school fee for one or more programmes, or to support creative schemes to widen access as indicated above.

Additionally, there are several programs at the state and federal level in the United States and provincially in Canada that can provide funding for IB programmes.

In Canada, for example, the provincial ministries of education provide funding for the IB in public schools. Some provinces, such as British Columbia, are striving to make more funding available to public schools for IB programmes.

In the United States, schools wishing to implement IB have access to a number of federal grants to help defray costs for the programmes. If a school qualifies, a key funding opportunity comes from Title I funds for schools with low-income populations.

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Other federal grants to research for funding opportunities include:

- The Magnet Schools Assistance Program
- AP Test Fee Program
- GEAR UP
- Advanced Placement Incentive Program
- Smaller Learning Communities Program
- Academic Competitiveness grants

For more information about the bursary fund and other governmental grant opportunities, contact the IB North America support desk at 212-696-4464 x1 or via email at ibna@ibo.org.

How does IB certify that individual teachers are knowledgeable and have the requisite skills to be successful in implementing the programme(s)?

The International Baccalaureate views its teachers as essential to the success of the school-learning community. During the application process to become an IB World School, all teachers who would be participating in the IB programme go through a thorough interview process.

Once a school becomes authorized, it must undergo a rigorous evaluation every five years. The evaluation process is a reflective exercise that involves the entire school community and assesses the implementation of the IB programmes. An integral part of the evaluation includes visiting and meeting with teachers.

How does IB monitor a school's progress once they've achieved IB World School status?

Following authorization, schools are required to undergo an evaluation every five years. The IB's evaluation process is thorough and unique. It insures that each school demonstrates the philosophy, programme standards and practices of the IB programmes by:

- Assessing the implementation of the programmes in each school; and
- Assisting the school in maintaining dynamic programmes.

The school evaluation is a reflective exercise that involves the entire school community and aims to improve practice, identify strengths and weaknesses, and determine areas for future focus. This evaluation process provides a set of criteria against which both the school and IB can measure the school's progress towards achieving the required standards and practices in implementing its programme.

The evaluation process allows the regional office to work closely with the school in its ongoing development of the programmes. It is also an opportunity for the IB to support schools in upholding or improving the quality of their programmes.

The evaluation process involves three important stages.

- The self study (PYP, MYP, Diploma)
- The school visit (PYP, MYP)
- The evaluation report (PYP, MYP, Diploma)

For more information, please visit our [website](#).