

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #6 (2004-2005)

August 23, 2004

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSE APPROVAL

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to approve the proposed International Baccalaureate Program courses to begin with fall semester 2004 at West High School.

PERTINENT FACTS:

On May 19, 2003, West High School received approval from the Anchorage School Board to pilot an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) at West. The administration felt the IB program would meet the needs of West High's diverse student enrollment and rejuvenate both students and teachers by providing an exciting and challenging program of studies offered within a smaller learning community. Work was ongoing during the past year to prepare for the program's fall 2004 pilot launch.

The International Baccalaureate is a rigorous, international K-12 curriculum. There are almost 1300 schools in 115 countries authorized to offer IB programs. IB incorporates the best elements of several national educational systems with a focus on academic rigor, an international perspective and the interrelationship of all knowledge.

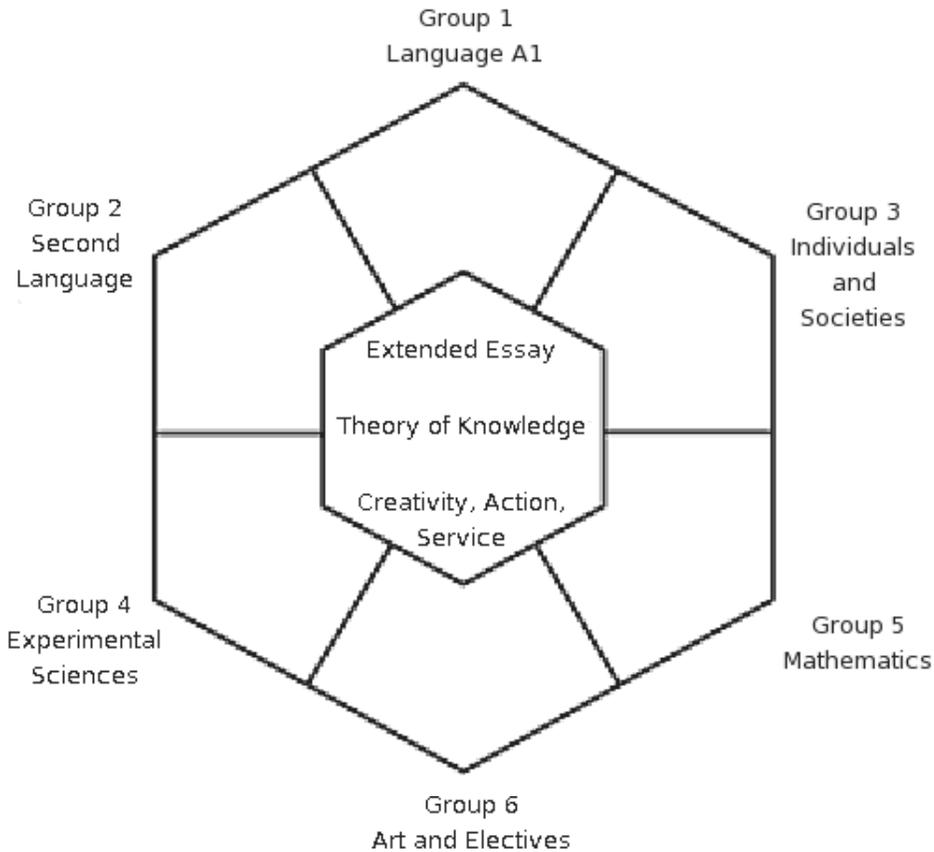
The IB Diploma Program at West High School is a two-year, integrated set of academic courses designed for eleventh and twelfth graders. Besides being the preeminent college preparatory program in the world, IB actively promotes international understanding in all of its courses. The effectiveness of IB is due not only to the depth of the individual courses, but also to its comprehensive nature.

The mission of the International Baccalaureate program is to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end, the IB program works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment.

The International Baccalaureate is recognized as the best comprehensive college preparatory program of study available. IB is on a par with Advanced Placement and is recognized by most American and foreign universities. IB has developed a broader curriculum than AP and provides it to a more diverse population. The IB diploma is awarded on the basis of international assessment and affords students the opportunity to enter universities worldwide. The emphasis on promoting international understanding fosters intellectual inquiry and a humanitarian perspective.

IB meets and exceeds the current national and state standards. It emphasizes staff development and training opportunities. The IB curriculum provides for the social/emotional, cognitive, and creative needs of the student, and also encourages individuals to actively participate in the community outside of school. Generally, students enrolled in the IB Diploma Program score higher than their peers on the SAT, ACT, and AP exams. IB and AP coexist nicely, offering students multiple pathways for learning.

Following is a list of courses IB students may take during the 2004-2005 school year. All IB students must take six academic courses, one each from six groups shown below.



### **Group 1 [Language A]**

English: English A1 HL is a two-year, 290+ hour class that addresses each of the four prescribed parts - World Literature, Detailed Study, Groups of Work, School's Free Choice - one per semester. The course will explore the interrelated and distinct ideas in literature from six cultures - Latin American, European, African, North American, Japanese, and Greek - from ancient civilizations to contemporary societies. Regardless of the unit of study, the class will typically follow this process: students will closely examine literature through independent reading and class discussion. The teacher will help focus students' reading and discussions through questions, direct instruction, and structured activities, all of which encourage critical thinking. Students will then create a variety of unique products (each assessed according to IB criteria) that reflect personal understanding, detailed interpretation, recognition and appreciation of diverse cultures and literary forms. In the 11th grade, IB English will co-seat with Honors 11 English, and in the 12th grade, with AP English. The IB course work will take precedence. Special study units will be prepared for students preparing for the AP Test.

IB Language A2 is a very specialized class for students with near native fluency or a very high level of competency in a language other than English. This class can substitute for a Group 2 Foreign Language. The student does the same work as in Language A1 (in our case, English). In the incoming class of IB students, there is at least one, a native Russian speaker, who wants to do Language A2.

IB Language *ab initio* is a very specialized class for students who have never studied the target language and who will have only the two years - 11th and 12th grades - to come to the *ab initio* (beginner's) level of proficiency.

## **Group 2 [Language B]**

Spanish: IB Spanish SL is a two year course in which reading, writing, dialogues, and oral activities will be part of the daily routine. Students will be guided to do improvisation and practice spontaneous oral and written communication. They will acquire a basic geographic, ethnic, and cultural knowledge of the Spanish speaking countries in the world. Class will be conducted in Spanish ninety percent of the time and students are strongly encouraged to attempt to communicate in Spanish. They will practice daily oral communication and drills to perfect and learn correct conjugations. Question and answer activities (dialogues, discussions, debates, interviews and individual or group conversations) in Spanish will be routine. Their cultural enrichment will develop by reading authentic materials, watching the news in Spanish and studying current events in the Hispanic world. Students will be using a variety of texts to become familiar with all the styles of the Spanish language.

Reading skills will be broadened to include authentic material such as short stories, plays and poems. Writing skills will include the perfecting of grammar and structure through the writing of compositions and summaries. At the end of the year, each student will be expected to write his/her own story in Spanish and to prepare a portfolio.

The course will emphasize the five areas recommended in the National Standards for foreign language instruction: communication, connection comparison, culture and communities.

Russian: Russian SL is a two-year, 290+ hour course for students with some previous Russian language experience that addresses each of the four IB curriculum L2 areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Besides intensive study of spoken and written Russian, students will improve their use of Russian grammar and study the history of Russia, its geography, and its people, especially as expressed through the visual and written arts. Students will communicate by E-mail with Russians in America and in Russia. Current events

- both on line and in paper form - will supplement text and other materials. Students will complete projects and participate in events that help them prepare for the IB assessment, including the National Essay Contest and the Olympiada of Spoken Russian.

French: IB French SL is a 290 hour, two-year course in which reading, writing, dialogues, and oral activities will be a part of the daily routine. French Level I and II are prerequisites for this course. Students will be guided to do improvisation and practice spontaneous oral and written communication. They will acquire a basic geographic, ethnic, and cultural knowledge of the French speaking countries in the world. Class will be conducted in French ninety percent of the time and students will be strongly encouraged to attempt to communicate in French. They will practice daily oral communication and drills to learn correct conjugations. Question and answer activities (dialogues, discussions, debates, interviews and individual or group conversations) in French will be routine. Their cultural enrichment will develop by reading authentic materials, including newspapers and magazines in French, and studying current events in the francophone world. Students will be using a variety of texts, auditory and video materials to become familiar with various dialects of the francophone world.

Reading skills will be broadened to include authentic material such as short stories, plays and poems. Writing skills will include the perfecting of grammar and structure through the writing of compositions and summaries. At the end of the year, each student will be expected to write his/her own story in French and to prepare a portfolio.

The course will emphasize the five areas recommended in the National Standards for foreign language instruction: communication, connection comparison, culture and communities.

### **Group 3 [Individuals and Society]**

History of Europe: History HL - Europe is a two year program designed to develop in students the understanding and appreciation of European and Soviet/Russian influence in the modern world, especially in the 20th Century. The course will use primary and other documents to engage students in the study of European history/Cold War from a wide variety of national and historical perspectives, and will challenge them to assess and deal with differing international points of view.

Because we believe that IB is as much about process as about content, History HL Europe will have a dual purpose: students will *learn* history as well as *use* history

as a vehicle to develop a range of research, study and writing skills they will need to be successful in college and beyond.

The content of the course will find reflection in other IB core classes at West High. The IB curricula the staff has designed for Russian, Theatre Arts and World Literature all have elements that are connected with the History of Europe.

#### **Group 4 [Experimental Sciences]**

Biology: The Biology HL course will be taught over a period of two years and exceed the required total teaching hours including the Core, AHL, Options, Investigations, and Group 4 Project. These components will give the students a broad and comprehensive experience in the experimental subject of Biology, a science based on the use of the scientific method to answer the universal conundrums faced by all living things, with the hope of increasing the appreciation of, and respect for, life. Beginning with the simple and moving toward the complex, students will use textbooks, laboratory experiments, current worldwide literature and scientific journals to acquire their skills. The goal is to objectively access and possibly contribute to solving the challenges posed by topics - the Chemistry of Life, Cell & Human Biology, Ecology and Evolution. The field of Genetics, which in recent years has taken the front stage on many ethical and moral issues such as human cloning and genetically altered foods that feed a growing world population, will be of special interest. The course will foster communication and cooperation among students in their scientific quests to better prepare them to be the future members of the greater international scientific community. It will do the same for faculty as they work with each other and with the students on the Group 4 projects.

Chemistry: The Chemistry HL course will be taught over a period of two years and will exceed the required total teaching hours including the Core, AHL, Options, Investigations, and Group 4 Project. These components will give the students a broad and comprehensive experience in the experimental subject of Chemistry; a science based on the use of the scientific method to answer questions about the composition, structure and properties of all the things around us. Beginning with the simple atom and moving toward complex reactions, students will use textbooks, laboratory experiments, current worldwide literature and scientific journals to acquire the skills to objectively access and possibly contribute to solving some of mysteries in the physical things in our environment. Through this inquiry students will become aware of how chemistry has affected the quality of life today. The course will also foster communication and cooperation among students in their scientific quests to

better prepare them to be the future members of the greater international scientific community.

### **Group 5 [Mathematics]**

Math Standard Level: The Mathematics SL class will be a one or two year class and will be scheduled concurrently with Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, and Statistics. The formal IB coursework will start in the 11th grade after successful completion of Geometry and other acceptable qualifying considerations. External examinations will take part in the second half of the second year of the program (unless the candidate is prepared at the end of the 11th grade year). The calendar for portfolio production will be administered concurrently with Mathematical Methods SL curriculum.

The focus of this course is for students to recognize a need for a sound background in mathematics for their future studies. This standard level program is aimed at introducing and expanding important concepts and applications through the development of pertinent and specific mathematical methods. Six fundamental core topics will be explored along with several special mathematical topics. The class will also focus on English language skills through presentations and papers. Candidates and their parents will be fully advised regarding the academic requirements and administrative time constraints of the program to ensure proper management and candidate/parent expectations and understanding. Course work will be developed so as to be consistent with Alaska State Department of Education standards for mathematics.

### **Group 6 [Arts and Electives]**

Theatre Arts: Theatre Arts will follow a curriculum emphasizing international themes, styles and literature and will be structured around the five HL Parts: Performing Skills, World Theatre Skills, Practical Play Analysis, Theatre Production, and Individual Project. The overriding goal of the program is for students to come away with an understanding of the nature of theatre, its place and its contributions to societies all over the world, and to become lifelong theatre goers and participants. Students will study the things that distinguish one particular kind of national theatre from another, and things that are similar to both. They will acquire technical skills, knowledge about the theatre and an ability to approach and value a wide range of styles.

Acting techniques will be practiced and there will be a focus on play analysis and directing. The course will also provide the foundation for future individual projects and for the extended essay, if the student chooses this subject for his topic.

Students will perform before an audience and demonstrate understanding and some skill in acting techniques. These include, but are not limited to ensemble work, performance, characterization, script analysis, improvisation, and vocal technique. Independent research and study, peer response and peer coaching, and self-assessment are an integral part of the course work. Students will keep a journal of their experiences during the course, to be used later as the basis for their internal assessment Portfolio.

This two-year course will be taught as a part of the Advanced Acting Class and will require participation in at least one semester of Play Production class. Before beginning the 11th grade, students will already have taken Acting class for a minimum of one full year.

Visual Arts: The Visual Arts Higher Level and Standard Level will follow a curriculum that will meet the needs of three major factors.

- the cultural background and personal needs of the student
- the situation of the school and the influences of local culture
- the teacher's own training and special skills

This approach will allow students not only to realize their own creative potential as individuals but provide an opportunity to discover their own cultural foundations through a variety of visual experiences. The overall goal of the course is for students to develop a body of work, which represents their individual research and development of artistic expression. They will become aware of a relationship between their own interest and what has been accomplished historically in that vein. The student's base of knowledge will be based not only on the teacher's own training and skill, but also inspired by personal research and commitment to a concentration. Students will be given an opportunity to select from a variety of visual media of their choice, limited only by the resources available to the individual.

Music: Students involved in the IB Music class will experience the breadth and variety of music in our world. Through in-depth analysis of representative works, the study of genres and styles found around the world, and concentrated effort in solo performance, group performance, or composition, students will gain an educated insight into music and enhance their personal skills as musicians.

All students will participate in coursework, historical surveys, theory, ear training, and musical investigation of a variety of genres. Additionally, students will select a personal emphasis in solo performance, group performance, or composition.

Students may fulfill the requirements for the IB Group Performance option by enrolling concurrently in one of the following performance ensembles:

Concert Choir, Show Choir,  
Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, Percussion Ensemble  
String Orchestra

Assessment of student achievement will include recordings of student performance, a journal of written work, and an external assessment tool prescribed by IB that includes musical analysis and comparative essays based on written and aural examples.

### **Other Courses**

Theory of Knowledge: The Theory of Knowledge is at the heart of the IB hexagon, and, although it is only a small percentage of the class time and points needed to earn an IB diploma, ToK does indeed belong in the center. The purpose of the ToK course is to provide a forum for students to critically reflect upon their education. The goal is to help them to become mindful learners in two important ways: first, to be able to see the connections between the disparate fields of their six core subjects, and second, to begin to answer for themselves the questions of epistemology: What does it mean to know something? How do you come to know a thing? How certain can you be of that knowledge? How can a learner evaluate between competing truths?

One of the unifying aims of the course will be to have students examine for themselves the competing ideas of cultural relativism and objectivity. While coming to understand and appreciate how divergent understandings come to be, we also wish to guard against a relativism that says that all possibilities are equally valid, meaning that uncertainty is absolute.

Students will spend their time in class discussing problems of knowledge they encounter in their other classes, seminar-type discussions based on short readings pertaining to issues of knowing, and discussions of the essential questions of each of the subsections of the ToK diagram. Grades each semester will be based on participation, a reflective journal, one oral presentation, and one essay based on one of the IB prescribed titles.

CAS (Creativity, Action Service): The CAS component is the heart of the IB program. CAS is not a class and carries no grade. It is an out-of-school IB requirement that requires students to devote 150 hours to creative, active and service endeavors. The goal of developing a well-rounded student with a

healthy body and a healthy mind parallels the goals of a strong CAS program. The challenge that West Anchorage High School is prepared to undertake is "to design activities that integrate the spirit of CAS with the uniqueness of the school and the local community."

Students will work with the CAS coordinator throughout their junior and senior years in defining activities that focus on creativity, action, and service. Creativity can be likened to the planning stage. Action is implementing the plan. Service entails helping others using the plan – "thinking globally and then acting locally." There are numerous values that are intrinsic to CAS and can include, but are not limited to, the following: responsibility as a citizen of the world; receptive to different experiences and ideas; diversity of experiences; examination of individual values; discovery of talents; validation of individual interests; strengthening individual identity; discovering balance in life; increase of awareness of the world; explore and expand possibilities.

Collaborative partnerships with students, parents, school, and community with the CAS coordinator will insure that this component will be successful. Documentation is necessary to monitor activities, but there will be room for flexibility. Written records, photos, web sites, bulletin boards, presentations, newsletters, etc., can be used to certify activities that will fulfill the minimum 150 hours that insure that the IB candidate has a new role with a real task that has real consequences that gives them opportunities for reflection.

The following activities are "examples of good practice":

- Teaching children who have a disability to cross-country ski
- Coaching a sports team
- Teaching a musical instrument
- Designing and constructing bulletin boards with specific messages that encourage reflection
- Writing for the school paper
- Working on a beautification project at a local children's shelter
- Teaching English to recently arrived immigrant children
- Writing and publishing a newsletter at a care facility
- Planning and participating in a running race
- Participating in Habitat for Humanity
- Organizing a clean-up day
- Organizing student participation in the Model United Nations
- Creating a CAS web site (As the students work with the CAS coordinator, the coordinator will determine those activities that will foster the CAS spirit in each IB candidate).

The following courses do not as yet have complete descriptions. The teachers are currently in training and are writing the curricula. Descriptions will be available for the August 2 Board Meeting

German: Group 2

History of the Americas: Group 3

Environmental Systems: Group 4

Math Higher Level: Group 5

International Baccalaureate offers many more courses in addition to those described here; West High School will phase in other IB courses as the need arises. For instance, Information Technology in A Global Society will be added this year as a Group 3 alternative.

CC/JC/EH/MH/RG/JB/

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