

Introduction

During the 2010-2011 school year, the faculty and administration of Decatur High School were charged with completing the vision of City Schools of Decatur as an IB district by designing an IB Diploma Program for DHS. We were given wide latitude to design a program that would best fit the needs of Decatur students. A committed group of administrators and volunteer teachers began holding design meetings and attending IB trainings and, after much thoughtful consideration, decided to create a program that continued the long-standing goal of the Board and our faculty of opening access to college-level courses. As a part of the rigorous application process teachers attended intensive IB training and wrote detailed subject guides in literature, world language, social studies, science, math, art, and philosophy while the administrative team communicated our plans to the community and devised an application process for students. We were ultimately approved to offer the IB Diploma in the spring of 2013 and began teaching Diploma courses in the fall of 2013 with all students taking IB Biology, 25% taking at least one IB class other than Biology, and 25% pursuing the full IB Diploma.

The Program

IB offers two levels of courses, Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL). Students completing the full Diploma must take three Higher Level and three Standard Level courses. American colleges and universities typically have credit policies that treat IB Higher-Level courses similar to AP courses. Credit for Standard Level courses is usually only offered for students who are awarded the full Diploma. We opened the program offering Higher Level courses in English, Spanish, History, Biology and Physics and Standard Level courses in Spanish, French, Psychology, Biology, Physics, Theater, Art, and Music. All courses were designed to last two years. For Diploma students, the additional IB core course, Theory of Knowledge, was offered as a “zero-period” before school to allow these students to preserve a 7th “non-IB” course in their schedules. In order to preserve maximum access to college-level courses, one-year AP courses were preserved in the senior year in English, Biology, and Psychology. AP Statistics and AP Calculus were infused in the two-year IB Math sequence.

Our Results

Thanks to the tireless efforts of an incredible group of dedicated students and teachers, Decatur enjoyed tremendous success with our first class of graduates. Of the 116 students who registered for IB assessments, 83% scored a four out of seven or higher in at least one subject and 75% percent of Diploma candidates earned the IB Diploma. In all, 20% of DHS's class of 2015 earned an IB Diploma. All Diploma candidates earned passing scores on the Extended Essay and passed the Theory of Knowledge course. Individual subject results are below. The final scale of IB grades runs from 1-7, seven being the highest. Many colleges and universities award credit for IB grades of four or higher, making an IB four similar to an AP three. Grades in Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay run from A-E, A being the highest.

Subject	Total Students	Average Score	Global Average
English HL	75	5.00	5.09
English SL*	2	5.50	5.22
Spanish HL	26	5.35	5.36
Spanish SL	44	5.20	5.03
French SL	3	4.67	4.89
History HL	73	4.38	4.79
History SL*	11	5.00	4.65
Psychology SL	37	4.57	4.36
Biology HL	88	3.30	4.34
Biology SL*	7	4.57	4.25
Physics HL	6	4.83	4.68
Physics SL	16	3.75	4.19
Math SL*	43	4.07	4.43
Math Studies SL*	22	3.86	4.48
Visual Arts	5	6.00	~4.40
Theatre	15	4.64	4.97
Music	10	5.60	4.31
Subject	Total Students	Median Score	Mode Score
Theory of Know.*	65	C	C
Ext. Essay	65	C	C
*Only students pursuing the full Diploma were assessed in these subjects			

A special note- After many began taking Spanish in Kindergarten in a CSD elementary school, 70 seniors culminated high school by completing IB Spanish at either the Higher or Standard Level and their scores were outstanding, with 80% of students scoring a four or higher and all HL students scoring four or higher. Our previous high for seniors taking a college-level Spanish course was 14 in the 2013-2014 school year.