

MAKING WAVES AT DCS



Student Voices on the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme

Part two of a two-part series about the IB Programme.

DHS seniors and IB Diploma candidates Avery Goodrich, Charlie Magnus and Morgan Marsh share their thoughts on the IB experience.

Why did you choose to pursue the IB Diploma?

Avery: I originally decided to pursue the IB Diploma because I thought it would really help me to stand out from other students. I feel like nowadays everyone has really impressive extracurriculars and grades, so I wanted to find something that would make me stand out. I was already interested in a lot of the IB classes without even knowing much about the program, so my counselor suggested it and it seemed like a really great fit.

Charlie: I pursued the IB Diploma in hopes of fully preparing myself for the future. I wanted to challenge myself and prove that I could achieve this goal through hard work. I noticed my study habits (including procrastination) would not be at the level needed for college, so I decided to do IB.

Morgan: I knew going into 9th grade that I wanted a global education. My parents had instilled a deep appreciation for global perspectives; thus, when the global and interconnected nature of the program was explained to me, I knew I wanted to take IB courses. I quickly decided to go for the full program as, with a bit of research, I realized the [IB programme would be most valuable with the full diploma]. With that said, it was natural that I decided to take on the full diploma.

What do you like about your IB classes?

Avery: What I like about IB is the structure of the classes; there is a lot of freedom as to what classes you can take. DHS has quite a few options for classes in different subjects, which makes it easier to find what's going to work for you. I will say that this year, the IB Diploma has been more work than it was last year. I think partially because we were online last year, but also because of due dates that are coming up soon. The extra work required in the IB (Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge, and CAS project) all piles up at once, so it has been really important for all of the IB kids to stay on top of deadlines.

Charlie: I like how you are more likely to get the same teachers in the IB Programme, especially for HL classes. Having this consistency allows you and your teachers to form connections, and they can adapt to how you learn best. Because of the small class sizes, you are more likely to stay with the same people throughout your classes and this allows for students to work together and feel comfortable talking to each other. The diploma core class can especially be helpful when all the people in the class may be struggling with the same things.

Morgan: As I previously mentioned, I wanted a global perspective in my education, and IB courses provide that. More importantly, I found myself frustrated with other high school courses as I felt they were very "America-centric" in both the lessons and style of tests. My IB courses offer uniquely non-American perspectives and a focus on depth rather than the amount of content. I'm also drawn to the written answer style of tests, which I've only found in my IB courses. My experience with both standard

[high school] and AP courses left me disenchanted with multiple-choice tests and a fast-paced "content cramming" learning environment. It is a combination of both of these factors which keeps me interested and engaged in my IB courses.

How does the IB Diploma Programme play into your college plans?

Avery: I plan to attend the University of Alabama, where I will be a pre-med student majoring in Biology with a minor in Psychology (both classes I am currently taking at the HL level). Because I am taking these classes at the IB level, I feel really prepared and excited to see how I can add to my knowledge. Right now, as long as I perform well on my tests and receive the IB Diploma, I will start college a semester ahead. I have discussed this with my admissions counselor at the University (i.e. credit transfers), and with the IB Diploma I have really opened up many options for my future at college.

Charlie: IB helped me to narrow down what I plan to study in college, as well as form good study habits. Because the IB classes are taught like college courses, I am exposed to how my workload might feel in college. It also exposes me to how the rest of the world is taught, because it follows a standard curriculum. This will help me achieve my goal of studying overseas and the challenges that might come with that.

Morgan: My motivation to continue in the program currently comes from my desire to potentially attend undergraduate programs abroad. When I did my research for college planning, I took a deep interest in attending schools overseas and these schools required the IB Diploma for successful admission. Furthermore, I found that for many accelerated programs in the U.S., admissions representatives recommended prospective students look into the IB Diploma Programme due to its rigor. In general, I've spent a lot of time researching and formulating my college list, and all of my work has led to the conclusion that IB was necessary for my plans.

What advice do you have for students looking into the IB Diploma Programme?

Avery: Overall, the IB Diploma Programme has been really useful in pushing me to be one step ahead. Whether that be on a resume, or for the coming years at college, it has helped me to prepare and face challenges that I do not believe I would've faced having not pursued the IB Diploma

Charlie: When weeks come where you have 5 tests, you have IB essays due, or anything else like that you just have to calm down and break it into chunks. All teachers are more than willing to help and talk to you if you are struggling, especially IB teachers. They understand what you have due and might extend deadlines or offer to help without hesitation.

Morgan: Find your interests early. The IB program is much more enjoyable when you are taking classes that serve your educational passions. There is no set path in IB, so picking the right classes can make or break your experience. Also, do your own research into the program so you can start planning and thinking early on in the IB process. Doing this will prevent stress later on.

This program is rigorous, it has a lot of moving parts and many components that need to be completed. I think a lot of people are shocked at just how much IB entails. If you are interested in the program, you should ask yourself if you are ready to take on the workload.

For more information about the IB Diploma Programme or IB/AP classes at Dexter High School, visit the DHS Academics webpage at <https://dhs.dexterschools.org/academics> and click on the menu item "AP and IB." Program Coordinator Deb Marsh has also created a video detailing the differences between AP and IB, as well as available courses, which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/CB1SqSuY7Is>.