

Frequently Asked Questions about the IB Program at Palmer High School

Question: *Is it too late to apply to enter the freshman class next year?*

Answer: Late applications are considered in the spring and summer on a space-available basis.

Q: *How long has Palmer High School been affiliated with the International Baccalaureate?*

A: We admitted our first group of IB students as 10th graders (when Palmer was a grade 10-12 high school) during the 91-92 school year. Our Diploma program is the second oldest in the State of Colorado.

Q: *How many students are in the IB Program at Palmer? How many teachers?*

A: This year we have approximately 350 students out of a total Palmer population of 1850. The Middle Years program (grades 9 and 10) has 220, and the Diploma program (grades 11 and 12) has 128. The IB faculty is comprised of approximately 40 teachers in eight content areas. In addition there are two program coordinators (one for the MYP years and one for the Diploma years) a 9th grade counselor, a 10-12th grade counselor, and a program secretary.

Q: *If a student enters Palmer in grade 9 in the Middle Years program is he or she obligated to enter the Diploma Program?*

A: No. The IB itself describes the programs as “distinctive but complementary.” Admission into the MYP is itself no guarantee of admission into the Diploma program. A separate, collaborative application process occurs in the middle of the sophomore year. However, the MYP is of course excellent preparation for the Diploma program, and most students do move seamlessly into 11th grade IB.

Q: *What courses do students take in the Middle Years program?*

A: As 9th graders, all students take English, Math (Geometry), Social Studies (called Humanities by the IB), a Foreign Language (Spanish, French, or Chinese *ab initio* [beginning]), Biology, a single semester Arts class (Theatre or Visual Arts), and a single semester of Physical Education. During the sophomore year, students continue their core subjects, with Chemistry replacing Biology, and a single semester Technology and Design class replacing the Arts class. Students also have room in their schedules for traditional, non-IB electives such as Student Government, Journalism, Music (choir or band), Yearbook etc.

Q: *What makes IB different from other honors or college preparatory programs?*

A: The most basic answer is the “I” in “IB.” The Middle Years program stresses intercultural awareness, holistic learning, and communication skills in all content areas. Four years of required foreign language, history classes that examine the U.S. in world contexts, and English classes that study a large number of world literature texts in translation help to emphasize the “I.” In addition, the Diploma program aims to distill the very best of a wide variety of international education systems into a single, comprehensive approach. Finally, both MYP and Diploma students complete additional projects and requirements, such as Community Service, the Personal Project (sophomore year), Extended Essay (junior-senior year), and a Theory of Knowledge course (senior year) that help integrate the curriculum and break down barriers between the classroom and “real life.”

Q: *What advantages does being an IB student offer as far as college is concerned?*

A: College admissions counselors have described the IB as “the most rigorous pre-university program of study available.” IB students know how to think critically, communicate effectively, and prioritize efficiently. They are motivated, independent, self-reflective learners across multiple disciplines. They have been tested against international standards of excellence. Many universities actively recruit IB students, offering them college credit depending on their performance on exams. Colorado House Bill 03-1108, passed in April 2003, requires public universities and colleges in the state to award IB Diploma holders at least 24 semester hours of credit. Past Palmer IB graduates have attended University of Denver, Brown, Stanford, Yale, Oxford, Columbia, University of Chicago, Swarthmore, Colorado College, and Williams, among many other elite colleges.

Q: *What standards are used to admit students into Palmer's IB program?*

A: Successful applicants will typically present middle school or junior high transcripts that show:

1. A's and B's in honors-oriented or advanced classes – especially advantageous is 8th grade algebra and some experience in a foreign language.
2. 85th percentile achievement or above in nationally-normed, standardized tests and (if available) Advanced or Proficient achievement in most recent CSAP testing.
3. strong letters of recommendation from their current counselor/administrator and math and English teachers.

Q: *What is the process for application?*

A: Call the Palmer IB Office at 328-5073 or visit our website at <http://www.cssd11.k12.co.us/palmer/IB/> to download an application. If admission is being sought for 10th or 11th grade, please contact the IB Office at 328-5073. (Admission into the 12th grade is not possible).

Q: *Is a permit needed to attend Palmer as an IB student?*

A: Students who are admitted to the IB program but reside outside of Palmer's attendance areas must complete a permit at the time they are accepted into the program, but the permit is automatically granted.

Q: *Are there requirements to remain in the IB program?*

A: Students must earn passing semester grades in all IB classes to remain in the program. Students must also sign and adhere to an Academic Honesty Policy. Finally, students must continue to remain fully enrolled in IB classes to be fulfilling additional program requirements (e.g., Community Service, Personal Project, Extended Essay). Failure to complete those requirements will result in exclusion from the program. It is also the policy of the Palmer IB program that if a student receives one "F" grade at the end of a semester they will be excluded from the program.

Q: *What happens to a student who decides to leave the IB program?*

A: Students must understand that decisions to leave the IB program during the middle of the year can result in placement in non-IB classes that are not always the best fit. Preferred courses may be full, and the nature of the IB curriculum can make finding parallel classes, especially in sciences and math, very difficult. If at all possible, students need to commit to completing the entire academic year.

Q: *Where can I find out more?*

A: Visit the Palmer IB Website <http://www.d11.org/palmer/IB/>

Also. . . call:

Steve Kern Diploma Program Coordinator, at 328-5078 for information on program descriptions and requirements.

Carolyn Derr IBMYP Program Coordinator, at 328-5075, for information on program descriptions and requirements.

Linda Jensen, 9th grade Counselor, at 328-5006, for information on course options or 9th grade issues.

Nola Thomasson, 10-12th grade Counselor, at 328-5031 for information on college planning or university recognition of the IB Program.

Sally Kelly, Program Secretary, at 328-5073, for information on the application process.