



April 25, 2007

Dear Parents,

Open up the newspaper and it's hard to miss what is happening in our local schools. In the effort to leave no one behind, many of our most talented students are finding themselves ignored. It used to be a simple decision where to send your talented son or daughter to school. Not any more.

Madison County Day School proposes a unique alternative for the greater Dane County community. Upon our accreditation to become an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, we will offer in the fall of 2008 the IB Diploma Programme to our Upper School junior and senior classes.

The IB Diploma Programme is an internationally recognized pre-university program known for its challenging curriculum. The Programme supports critical thinking through the disciplined study of six subjects that embed the principles of active citizenship and a global vision.

But what does the IB Programme offer beyond a typical high school education?

- An internationally recognized curriculum which offers a *proven pathway to college entry as well as college credit and/or placement.*
- The rigorous liberal-arts education requires that students receive a balanced education. Interdisciplinary coursework and the original research project develop writing skills and spirit of inquiry necessary in higher education.
- Cultivates thoughtful, analytical, well-rounded individuals with a global perspective through the Programme and extra-curricular and service requirements.

If you are concerned about the quality of your son's or daughter's education, it's time to consider what one of the premier secondary education programs can offer. Come learn more about where small class sizes, a top-notch college advising program, and an exceptional curriculum can take your child.

Join us at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 11th, for an informal presentation on the MCDS Upper School and the IB Programme. As an additional option, this overview will be held in conjunction with our Middle School/Upper School 'game show mania' social, which will be held from 7 to 9 on the evening of the 11th. It features an interactive game show, music, food, and an iPod door prize. If you so choose, your son or daughter can get to know the MCDS community in a relaxed setting while you learn more about the IB educational experience.

Please call Caitlin Stade at 608-850-6374 to reserve a place. It's the first step to matching your child with the educational challenge every talented student needs.

Sincerely,

Luke W. Felker
Head of School

P.S. We look forward to answering any questions you may have. In the meantime, checkout the MCDS website at www.madisoncountryday.org and the IB website at www.ibo.org.

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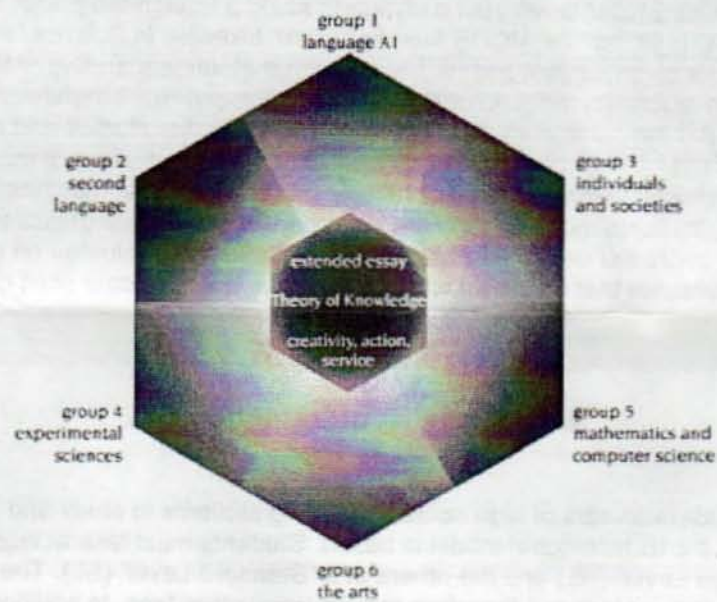
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www.madisoncountryday.org

International Baccalaureate at Madison Country Day School: An international, liberal-arts curriculum

IB Diploma Programme



History

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme is an internationally recognized pre-university program established in 1968. It is recognized world-wide for its challenging curriculum, and is currently offered in 77 countries to approximately 475,000 students. In the United States alone there are more than 650 IB World Schools. The IB Diploma Programme is a comprehensive two-year curriculum offered during the junior and senior year. The Programme supports critical thinking through the disciplined study of six subjects that embrace the principles of active citizenship and global perspective taking. Students who successfully complete the assessments in these areas as well as other requirements are awarded an IB Diploma, a highly competitive credential.

Upon completion of our application to become an IB world school, MCDS will offer students in the Class of 2025 and beyond the opportunity to participate in this well-rounded academic experience.

Why IB?

- Internationally recognized curriculum, offering a proven pathway to college entry as well as college credit and/or placement
- Provides further depth to our liberal-arts education, requiring that students receive a balanced education and providing opportunity to pursue personal interests
- Interdisciplinary course and original research project develop writing skills and spirit of inquiry needed in higher education
- Cultivates thoughtful, analytical, well-rounded individuals with a global perspective through the Programme and extra-curricular and service requirements
- MCDS will be the only school in Dane County to offer an IB education

The IB Diploma Programme Curriculum at MCDS

The IB Programme preserves a number of important features of the current MCDS Upper School curriculum and adds depth to our offerings through the diploma requirements listed below. Through a prescribed book list which mirrors our own, students in English will continue to develop a personal appreciation of literature and their oral and written communication skills. Students will also continue to study a foreign language, using literature to seek a native fluency in a given language, per the MCDS founding ideal. Likewise in Science, students will continue to learn the essential topics in a given subject and further develop their understanding of the scientific method through the IB emphasis upon laboratory work. Like MCDS, the IB Programme emphasizes an intellectual approach to academics: the IB math curriculum prepares students for further studies and careers but also aims to develop an appreciation of the intrinsic beauty of mathematics. One other feature of the IB Programme is that it is proven to develop an analytical ability and habit of reflection in students that matches MCDS' liberal-arts ideal. In History, for example, students move beyond the AP model of exhaustive details to carefully studying a number of periods and areas in greater depth. Likewise in Art, students are evaluated on both their studio work and research workbook that ensures that their own work reflects and builds upon a solid grounding in the history of art.

IB Diploma Requirements

Earning the Diploma

The Programme covers the last two years of high school, requiring students to study and sit exams in six academic areas, upon which the IB hexagonal model is based. Students must take at least three, and not more than four, courses at a "Higher Level" (HL) and the others at a "Standard Level" (SL). The HL courses call for students to learn more skills and content and therefore require more class time. In addition to the minimum six classes, students fulfill three unique requirements: a critical thinking class called "Theory of Knowledge", a 4,000 word original research paper called the "Extended Essay," and a minimum of 150 hours of participation in extracurricular activities under the heading of "Creativity, Action, and Service" (CAS). If a student fulfills these requirements and achieves a cumulative score of 24 on exams in the six areas (exams are graded on a 1-7 scale), they receive the IB Diploma. Subject exams amount to 42 points, with 3 points also available for exceptional Extended Essays and Theory of Knowledge work.

Extended Essay

The extended essay is an opportunity for students to explore a topic over six months research and writing in a manner similar to a college senior's thesis. According to Jay Matthews and Ian Hill, in *Supertest: How the International Baccalaureate can Strengthen our Schools*, this provides "in many students minds the highlight of their two years in IB."

Theory of Knowledge (TOK)

Theory of Knowledge not only develops students' knowledge of the interrelationship between subjects but develops their own ability to make connections between ideas and think critically about the way they learn. Such skills are prized by future educators and employers.

Creativity, Action, Service (CAS)

Creativity, Action, and Service, inspired by Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound, ensures that students grow as people, just as MCDS has always encouraged athletics and arts. By formally adding service, we can maintain our tradition of developing the whole student.