

# Palmer High School

## An International Baccalaureate World School

### The IB Program

The IB Program is an internationally-recognized academic program designed to prepare students for wherever their path takes them. The IB Program emphasizes students' abilities to think critically and globally, and to develop the skills which can help them be successful beyond high school; time management, problem solving, and the ability to work in a group and independently are all essential to the IB Program.

The IB curriculum is student centered and inquiry based, rewarding motivation, curiosity, and growth. Courses are evaluated using multiple types of assessments accommodating different styles of learners. Furthermore, students are encouraged to explore and apply skills to issues of personal interest, increasing relevancy and allowing them to make choices and become active participants in their own education.



### The Program at Palmer High

In 2001 Palmer High became the first high school in the state of Alaska to offer IB courses. Since then, students at Palmer have been able to take advantage of the unique opportunities presented by the program to:

- Gain an advantage in competitive college admissions processes
- Learn skills that correspond to higher success rates once enrolled in college or in the workforce
- Qualify for scholarships
- Earn college credit



## IB Options at Palmer High

While some courses require pre-requisites, there is no admissions process and students can enroll directly through the guidance office. Because students' goals and motivations are diverse, we offer a variety of ways in which a student can participate in the I.B. Program:

1

The full IB Diploma Program is a rigorous, holistic, course of study for highly motivated students across six subject areas:

- Language and Literature
- Language Acquisition
- Individuals and Societies
- Experimental Science
- Mathematics
- An IB elective of choice

Diploma students also must complete additional work including:

- Theory of Knowledge: A class that connects and evaluates ways of knowing
- The Extended Essay: A college level research paper
- Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS): students plan and enact projects of self and community improvement.

2

IB Scholars can pursue targeted interests in a way that works for them. IB Scholars have the freedom and flexibility to customize their education by taking one or more IB classes without pursuing the full diploma.

We value participation that addresses academic growth while keeping in mind each student's individual needs and interests.

### Education Beyond the Classroom

Outside of academics IB encourages extracurricular and community involvement for all students. IB diploma students and scholars participate in sports and clubs, often taking on leadership roles in those activities and organizations. This includes:

- Tennis, Football, Cheerleading, Volleyball, Cross Country running, Nordic Ski, Wrestling, Basketball, Hockey, Track and Field, Soccer, Baseball
- Service organizations and projects such as NHS, Key Club, and the Sandwich Project
- Extracurricular clubs and activities such as FFA, Ed Rising, Film Club, Chess Club, Band and Choir, and more

Find out more about options, specific course offerings, the potential for college credit, and more by visiting <https://www.matsuk12.us/Page/13093> or by following this QR code



IB Diploma students and IB Scholars participating in a Thanksgiving Basket Drive





## Common Terms and Acronyms

**IB Diploma Candidate:** Diploma candidates complete courses and test in at least six subject areas in addition to the EE, CAS, and TOK (see below). For more information on what specifically is needed for the Diploma please see the next page.

**IB Scholar:** Any junior or senior can enroll in an IB class and upon successful completion of the course take an exam with the potential to earn a “certificate” that can translate into college credit depending on the score achieved and requirements of the University in question.

**Extended Essay (EE):** A 4000 word research paper on a topic of the student’s choosing. Graded externally on a letter scale, a passing EE is required for the IB diploma. While done independent of any one class, students will work with a mentor who can offer insight into the chosen subject area.

**Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS):** In order to qualify for the full IB diploma, candidates engage in and reflect upon diverse extracurricular activities. Their senior year diploma candidates will plan and implement a “CAS project.”

**Theory of Knowledge (ToK):** A class centered around metacognition, reflection, and the philosophy of learning and knowledge. While mandatory for the full diploma, any IB scholar can choose to take it.

**Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL):** Typically SL courses can be completed in a year while HL courses take place over two years of study. HL courses also include extra exams in the spring of the testing year. HL exams often have the potential for more college credit.

**External Assessments:** In May students sit for exams corresponding to the classes they took that year. These exams are graded externally, meaning not at the school site. Some classes may also produce essays and commentaries that are sent out for evaluation.

**Internal Assessment (IA) or Individual Oral (IO):** For each IB course students are tasked with completing either an IA or IO, depending on the subject area. While spring external exams cover content, these papers and projects task students with showing a mastery of the skills of a particular subject. Students have a great deal of freedom in choosing a topic of interest to them to investigate further, providing it fits within the subject area criteria.



# Achieving the Full IB Diploma

Taking place over a student's junior and senior years, the International Baccalaureate diploma curriculum is built around a holistic approach to education. Students are encouraged to push themselves across different disciplines, enriching their confidence as learners no matter the subject. In order to qualify for the full IB Diploma students need to complete a course and test in each of the following categories of classes:

## 1. Studies in Language and Literature

a. Current offerings include Literature and Language and Literature

## 2. Language Acquisition

a. Current offerings include French and Japanese

## 3. Individuals and Societies

a. Current offerings include History of the Americas and Philosophy

## 4. Experimental Sciences

a. Offerings are subject to change given student interest and instructor availability, but have included Chemistry, Biology, Environmental Systems and Societies, and Physics

## 5. Mathematics

a. Mathematics Applications and Interpretations

## 6. A sixth subject

a. Offerings are subject to change given student interest and instructor availability but have included IB Visual Arts, IB Music, or an additional class from one of the above categories (Ex: doubling up on History and Philosophy; or Biology and Environmental Systems and Societies)

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## Further Details

- Each evaluated course can result in a score of 1-7. The combined scores from the six subjects must total at least 24 points.
- At least three of the tested subject areas, but no more than four, must be HL.
- HL scores must total at least 12 points. Additionally, no HL score can be lower than a 3 to receive the diploma.
- Students can complete two SL courses their Junior year.
- In addition to the above, to receive the Diploma students must earn at least a D grade in ToK and the EE.

It is important to note that the above is required only for *the full IB Diploma*. Non IB Diploma seeking students who show interest in a subject matter and have met prerequisites are encouraged to take and test in as many courses as they can fit in their schedule.



## How do I get involved?

There is no formal admissions process for students who are interested in participating. While it is an academically rigorous program, most classes do not require advanced prerequisites, and any student who is curious, motivated, and willing to work is encouraged to explore our options.

### **Upperclassmen (Juniors and Seniors)**

IB classes and exams become available to students during their junior and senior year. It is at this time that you will have to make choices regarding the extent and nature of your participation in IB.

1. Talk to your counselors and teachers about how either the IB Diploma or being an IB scholar fits within your schedule and post high school goals.
2. Make sure you know and understand which classes you plan on taking HL and SL (especially if you are a Diploma candidate).
3. If you're interested in college, begin researching if and how they recognize IB, to help you set academic goals.
4. If you are interested in the full Diploma, make sure you sign up for ToK, and pay attention to announcements regarding the EE and CAS projects.
5. Attend and participate in classes, pay attention to deadlines, and take advantage of study opportunities offered.

### **Underclassmen (Freshmen and Sophomores)**

While underclassmen cannot take IB classes or tests, there are still steps you can take to better prepare yourself and have more options available to you later on.

1. Talk to your counselors and teachers about your goals, questions, and options.
2. Take a second language your Freshmen and Sophomore years. While many courses have flexible pre-requisites, experience in a second language is essential if you think you might want to pursue the IB Diploma.
3. Maintain good attendance, be engaged in your classes, and look for opportunities to grow your academic skill set. Don't be afraid of things that seem challenging, instead work on asking for help, establishing good study skills, and taking responsibility for your education.
4. Take advantage of volunteer opportunities. Help with upperclassmen CAS projects and explore your own interests.

If you have questions or would like to talk about options please don't hesitate to reach out.  
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