

## A Parent's Guide to the International Baccalaureate Program at Spring Valley High School

### Our Mission:

***The Spring Valley High School community is committed to creating a dynamic learning environment that develops critical thinkers, problem solvers, and global citizens who are prepared to succeed in college and life.***

Good evening, and welcome to our first ever IB Magnet Open House. It is our hope that we will answer every question you could possibly have tonight, and that you leave here understanding what a great opportunity Spring Valley High School and the IB Program represents for your family, and especially your children. We have prepared this guide to help you keep track of tonight's presentation, and to make note of any questions you may have for the end of the presentation.

### **Spring Valley High School at a glance:**

Opened in 2004, Spring Valley is truly one of the best kept secrets in the Clark County School District. From our nationally recognized academic programs, such as AVID and Model United Nations, to our wide array of visual and performing arts, athletic teams, and student organizations, we know we can provide every student the best opportunity to succeed and thrive. Our graduation rate is among the highest in the CCSD, and we feel our faculty is the best and most committed group of educators you'll find anywhere. We have always offered our students an outstanding high school experience, and we are looking forward to enhancing that experience with the International Baccalaureate Program.

### **So, what is the International Baccalaureate Program?**

Probably the best way to answer this question is to share two important IB documents:

#### **The IB Mission Statement:**

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop **inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring** young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through **intercultural understanding and respect**.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop **challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment**.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become **active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right**.

The motto of the IB has always been “Creating a better world through education”, and you can see that idea reflected in their lengthy mission statement. You can also see that our own mission statement aligns with theirs pretty well. These are values that we have always emphasized for our students, but now we are making the connection between them, their community, and their future.

### **The IB Learner Profile:**

As IB learners we strive to be:

**Inquirers** – we are curious, and can learn independently.

**Knowledgeable** – we develop conceptual understanding, and explore a range of disciplines with local and global significance.

**Thinkers** – we use critical and creative thinking to analyze and take action on complex problems.

**Communicators** – we express ourselves confidently and respectfully in more than one language.

**Principled** – we act with integrity and honesty.

**Open-minded** – we appreciate our own cultures and histories, as well as the values and traditions of others.

**Caring** – we show empathy, compassion and respect as we interact with the world around us.

**Risk-takers** – we approach uncertainty with forethought, determination, and resourcefulness.

**Balanced** – we understand the importance of balancing the intellectual, physical, and emotional aspects of our lives.

**Reflective** – we thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience, and seek to understand our strengths and weaknesses.

This list of values was created by IB educators all over the world to define the traits we hope to see in all of our students. The Learner Profile is front and center in all IB schools and classrooms worldwide. We work hard every day to develop these traits in your children, and to reflect them in our planning and instruction.

What we refer to as “The IB Program” is actually two different programs that form a seamless continuum for our students. The first is the Middle Years Program (MYP) for our 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and the second is the Diploma Program (DP) for our 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

**The IB Middle Years Program:** The MYP is a challenging framework that encourages students to make practical connections between their studies and the real world. The MYP is for students in grades 6 -10. Spring Valley has formed a partnership with Johnson Junior High School to offer all five years of the program, though it is common for students to enter the MYP in 9<sup>th</sup> grade as well. Eventually, we will have students at SVHS who have been in IB since 1<sup>st</sup> grade, but we will always accept students coming from non-IB schools in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

What you need to know about the IBMYP:

- Students will study six academic subjects at an advanced level including Language and Literature, Foreign Language, Math, Science, Individuals and Societies, and Art or Design.
- Courses are designed to eliminate the barrier between subjects, so that students understand that everything they learn, regardless of content, is related.
- These courses are designed to slowly build towards the much more challenging DP.
- Students will be required to do community service through service learning projects that are built into subject unit plans.
- Students will complete a culminating project during their sophomore year called the Personal Project. The Personal Project is a unique experience in that the student chooses what they want to do, with very few limitations, and they design the whole thing from start to finish. They will be assigned an advisor at school, who will help guide the process, and we will manage various components of the project in their English class, but by and large they are free to show what they know in any domain they choose.

Notes/Questions:

**The IB Diploma Program (DP):** The DP is a curriculum that emphasizes both depth and breadth of knowledge, and is considered the most rigorous academic program available to high school students. The DP is made up of six subject areas including: English, Foreign Language, Individuals and Societies, Sciences, Mathematics, and an IB elective. All six subjects culminate in exams that can earn college credit. The DP also requires students to conduct in depth research (the Extended Essay), to get involved in the community, the arts, and their own physical well-being (CAS) through various outlets offered by the school.

What you need to know about the IBDP:

- Students will study six IBDP courses including Language and Literature, History of the Americas, Foreign Language (Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Japanese), Math, Science (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics), and an IBDP elective (an additional language, an additional science, Psychology, Environmental Systems and Societies, or Dance).
- These courses will culminate in international exams that are administered in May of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years. Students can take up to two exams in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, but all must be completed by May of the final grade.
- Exams are taken at two levels: Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL), and students must take three at each level.
- These exams cost approximately \$800 (2015-16), and that cost is your responsibility. We will have several options available to families to help with this.
- Students must complete a 4000 word research paper on a topic/subject of their own choosing. They will be assigned a mentor to guide the process, and we will manage various components in their English course.
- Students must complete 150 hours of Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS). This is an experiential learning component that encourages students to go beyond their normal school day and routines, and connect with the world around them through creative endeavors, physically beneficial activities, and volunteerism.

Notes/Questions

**So, what's the payoff? This is a very challenging path to choose, so hopefully it results in some sort of tangible output, right? Well, it does!**

IB as a philosophy, or approach to education is one thing, and a good thing at that. We all know the high school years are incredibly significant in the intellectual, social, and emotional development of young people and at the heart of the IB Program is a desire to educate and support the whole student in all of these areas.

Beyond that, most families want to know about the program's influence on college preparation and admissions, so we'll close with this important aspect of the IB Program.

The college admissions process is increasingly competitive, and becoming more so. Students who are serious about their post-secondary education must take advantage of every opportunity to stand out as applicants. The process is still anchored by three equally important components, and the IB Program is structured to support all three:

- The SAT or ACT is generally taken in early in the senior year, so students have results in time to apply early action or early decision in November. The more challenging the coursework a student has taken, the higher the score. The national average on the SAT hovers around 1500 out of a total of 2400. In my 18 years involved with IB in the CCSD, IB graduates have averaged 1800+ on the SAT.
- The high school transcript is still the one factor most likely to get a student through the filters set up by university admissions officers. They are trying to assess college readiness, so they will look at the rigor of coursework, grades, and class rank. Almost every class your student takes here will be weighted as either an honors course or as an IB course and that is clearly indicated on the transcript. It is also important to remember that attendance is included on the high school transcript, and colleges take it very seriously.

These first two factors function as a kind of "at a glance" way for schools to cut down their applications. It's a scary notion, but admissions officers say they spend only a few minutes on that step, which makes the final factor very important.

- Extracurricular involvement is ultimately how your student can show that they are more than just good grades. Universities know what they can do for you. What they want to know is what you will do for them. What will you bring to their campus that will make it a better place for all students? Creativity, athletics, volunteerism, activism; all of these things are ways to answer that question.

Thank you very much for coming tonight. I know your time is valuable, and I also know you have many choices available to you when it comes to your child's education. We are committed to offering our students the very best academic experience available. Our goal is not to match or exceed the best high schools in Las Vegas, but to match or exceed the best high school's anywhere. We feel we have everything we need to meet your expectations, and to ensure that your student walks out of here in 2020 with every possible opportunity available to them.