



What's the difference between an International Baccalaureate (or "IB") education program and a traditional program?

Teaching and learning in the IB celebrates the many ways people work together to construct meaning and make sense of the world – through an interplay of asking, doing and thinking. Sustained inquiry forms the centerpiece of the written, taught, and assessed curriculum. With a structured inquiry approach, prior knowledge and experience establish the basis for new learning, and students' curiosity provides an effective provocation for learning that is engaging, relevant, challenging and significant.

Can you summarize the IB program's history?

The IB Diploma Program was developed as a high school program in 1968. The aim was to provide a challenging and comprehensive education that would enable students to understand and manage the complexities of our world. In 1994, the IB began to offer the Middle Years Program and then in 1997, the Primary Years Program. The programs are researched based and field tested by thousands of educators around the world. Currently there are over 5,477 programs serving 1.3 million children world wide in both private and public schools. In 2005, Mark Twain was the first in Texas to provide the PYP.

What does attending an IB school mean for my child on a day-to-day basis?

Hmm. This is the most difficult question to answer succinctly and without too much educator language. Visitors to our school tell me that they can "feel" the difference. When asked to elaborate, they mention how engaged the students are, how they are excited about learning, the student work is creative and individual, there is a lot of discussion and the classrooms are organized to encourage cooperative group work. Some have described it as organized chaos. Using professional jargon, the PYP offers a comprehensive inquiry –based approach to teaching and learning. A balance is sought between acquisition of essential knowledge and skills, development of conceptual understanding, demonstration of positive attitudes and taking responsible action. Another central tenet, international-mindedness, encourages an "openness to and curiosity about the world and people of other cultures, and a striving towards a profound level of understanding of the complexity and diversity of human interactions."

What's next after Twain in terms of my child's IB education?

There are several middle schools in HISD that provide the IB Middle Years Program, which spans from 6th through 10th grade. The middle schools are Lanier, Grady, Hogg and Fondren. To complete the continuum, the IB Diploma Program is offered in grades 11 and 12th at Lamar, Reagan, and Bellaire HS.

Submitted by Kathleen Blakeslee
IB coordinator
Mark Twain – an IB World School

Information was taken from *What is an IB education?* published by IB in 2014
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