

December 1, 2017

IB Counseling Workshop Agenda

1. **What is the IB Diploma?**
 - a. Video
 - b. Group debrief
 - c. Knowledge Activity

2. **Nuts and Bolts of IB Diploma**
 - a. Core
 - i. EE
 - ii. CAS
 - iii. TOK
 - b. Subjects
 - c. Points
 - d. 4 Year Plan

3. **Stress, Time Management, Supporting Students in the Diploma Program**
 - a. Time Management
 - b. Stress
 - c. Thinking and Mindfulness

4. **The College Piece**
 - a. AP v. IB
 - b. Credits
 - c. Letters of Recommendation for IB Students

5. **Miscellaneous**
 - a. Bilingual Diploma
 - b. IB Career Program
 - c. IEPs and IB

6. **Topics to Touch on**
 - a. Questions? Comments? How can we make IB a stronger program in our schools, and what is our role as counselors?

Dear Director of Admissions:

_____ is an International Baccalaureate Diploma Candidate at Thomas A. Edison High School in Alexandria, Virginia. The International Baccalaureate is a rigorous college preparatory program that requires students to fulfill advanced academic requirements in English, world language, history, science, mathematics, and an elective. This year, only 12% of the Class of 2011 chose to pursue the full IB Diploma at Edison.

Examinations are administered at the end of each IB course, so students will be able to report scores the summer before they enroll in the universities to which they have been accepted. Students also complete a course in the Theory of Knowledge, undertake 150 hours of extracurricular activities through CAS (Creativity, Action and Service), as well as write an original research-based Extended Essay of 3,500-4,000 words. Edison students who have fulfilled the IB Diploma requirements have completed the most demanding and challenging program our school and school system have to offer. As Jay Mathews, education writer for the *Washington Post*, noted, these high school students are “succeeding at the kinds of scholarly research that master’s degree candidates tackle...”

The qualities for successful completion of the IB Diploma include strong motivation, an ability to think and read critically, a willingness to focus more on learning than on grades, and a demonstrated success in prior challenging courses. As a student in an International Baccalaureate program, individuals have had to be willing to take the risk and the challenge to fulfill all of the high expectations set by international standards. For many of our students, the IB curriculum has been the most difficult academic challenge they have ever confronted. As a result, students have had to develop time management skills to juggle the demands of many competing forces: classroom activities, extracurricular involvements, and personal research.

As International Baccalaureate Diploma Candidates, students have worked hard to uphold the high expectations required to earn the IB credential. We hope you will give this student the highest consideration in making your admissions decisions.

Sincerely,

Stacey Kiggins
IB Diploma Coordinator
Thomas A. Edison High School
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Full diploma candidates:

I would like to add that [REDACTED] is a full International Baccalaureate candidate. This undertaking is the most academically rigorous program of study our school has to offer, and is considered the world-over to be excellent preparation for higher learning. In pursuing this diploma, [REDACTED] has not only taken six college-level courses, but also an additional course in the Theory of Knowledge, completed one hundred fifty hours of Creativity, Activity, and Service, as well as written a 3,500-4,000 word original research paper on a topic of personal interest. Carme Sisson, writer for *The Dispatch*, noted that the "IB experience encourages students to think independently, broadens their understanding of the world, and teaches teamwork." I hope you will consider this distinction a mitigating factor as you make your selection.

For certificate candidates:

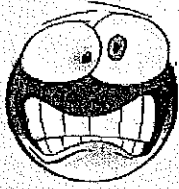
I would like to add that [REDACTED] challenged himself/herself by taking several International Baccalaureate classes at Edison High School. These courses are the most academically rigorous classes our school has to offer, and the level of work is considered the world-over to be excellent preparation for higher learning. Amy McNeilage of the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that "International Baccalaureate students think more critically than peers... and are better prepared for university." These students have been proven to have greater "inquisitiveness, intellectual curiosity, truth-seeking, and confidence in reasoning." I hope you will consider this a mitigating factor as you make your selection.

Date	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8AM							
9AM							
10AM							
11AM							
12AM							
1PM							
2PM							
3PM							
4PM							
5PM							
6PM							
7PM							
8PM							
9PM							
10PM	BED	BED	BED	BED	BED	BED	BED
What is due on this day?							

Time Management – Helpful Hints

1. Schedule SLEEP and EXERCISE first. DO NOT TOUCH THESE.
2. Figure out how much time each assignment takes. Don't over estimate.
3. You need to have a balance of activities, not just school work. Schedule in your favorite TV show or dinner with friends just like you would schedule a school assignment.
4. Do your schedule one-two weeks in advance. That way you can balance due dates (and teachers will be more likely to listen to you).
5. If you find that you no longer have a balance in your life, speak to your teachers. They care about your well-being and will listen to suggestions to changing due dates, etc.
6. ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF.
7. Finally, do not spend more than an hour on any assignment without a break. Your brain uses energy just like your muscles and needs frequent breaks.

Self Help for Stress



Stress is our emotional and physical response to pressure. That pressure can arise from external factors including life events, illness (ourselves or someone close to us) living conditions, work, home and family, study, lack of some necessity, or the demands we place on ourselves. Even those events which we see as enjoyable can be stressful, such as holidays, moving home, starting a better job, pregnancy, parenthood, Christmas etc.

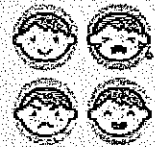
Thoughts which are common when feeling stressed

- This is too much - I can't cope!
- It's unfair. Someone should be helping me.
- I haven't got enough time
- I'll never finish
- I must get this done...



Emotions

- Irritable, bad tempered
- Anxious
- Impatient
- Angry
- Depressed, hopeless



Physical sensations

The physical response to stress is caused by the body's adrenaline response - the body's alarm signal and survival mechanism when faced with a threat.

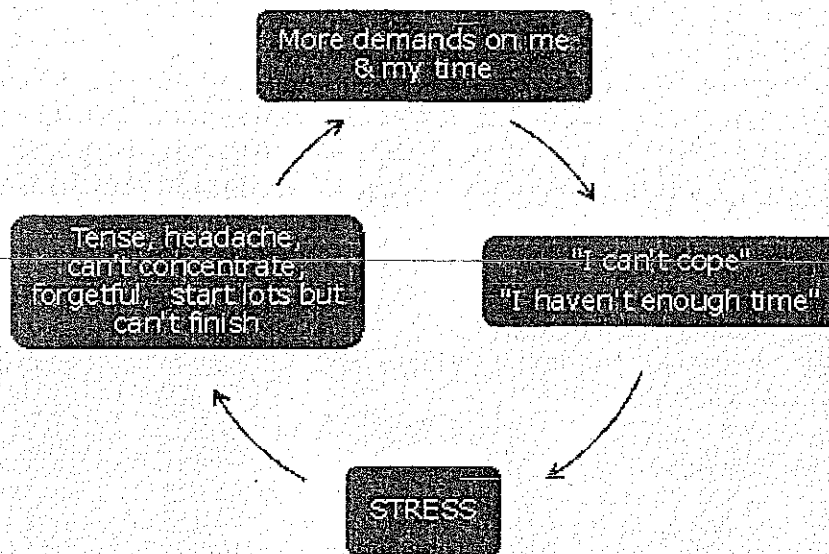
- Heart racing
- Breathing faster
- Tense muscles - e.g. neck, shoulders, abdomen
- Hot, sweaty
- Headache
- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetful
- Agitated, restless
- Bladder or bowel problems

Behaviour

- Unable to settle, constantly busy, rushing about
- Lots of things on the go, but don't finish them
- Sleep disturbances
- Shouting, arguing
- Eating more (or less)
- Drinking more
- Using drugs
- Smoking more
- Crying



Vicious Cycle of Stress

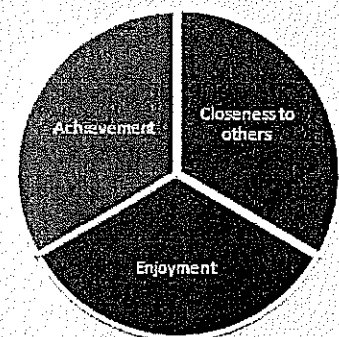


Identify your stressors - what's making you stressed?

- Where am I when I'm feeling stressed? What am I doing? Who am I with?
- What helpful changes could I make? (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/cbtstep3.htm)
- What is within my control?
- Even if there is little you can do about some situations, maybe making some small changes - in routine, in the way you handle things, doing things differently, taking time out, thinking about it in a different way, in getting help, seeking advice - could make all the difference

Doing things differently

- Do something different (to what you normally do)
- Make time for yourself each day - relaxation, fun, enjoyment. (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/relax.htm) Create a healthy balance - allow time for activities which give you a sense of achievement, those that give a sense of closeness to others, and of a sense of enjoyment. When stressed, it's often the case that we spend more time doing things that help us achieve, but less of enjoyment and closeness to others. Aim for a healthy balance as shown in the pie chart. Keep an ACE Log to help you keep track <http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/ccount/click.php?id=15>)
- Mindfulness - learn Mindful Breathing (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/mindfulness.htm)
- Focus your attention fully on another activity - Mindful activity



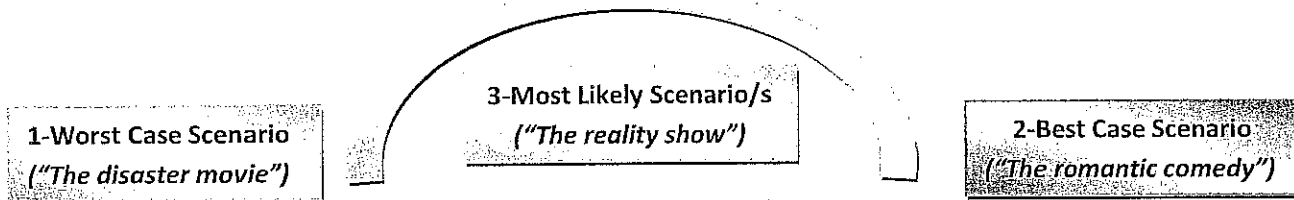
Decatastrophizing – Stopping the Anxiety Cycle

Anxiety – How It Happens:

- 1) **“Ambiguous Stimuli”** – Something happens that is potentially upsetting, but is unclear in its meaning or impact. This becomes the “trigger experience.”
- 2) **“Catastrophizing”** – The individual responds to this situation by immediately focusing on the “worst case scenario” of what the trigger experience might mean, or might become.
- 3) **“Fight or Flight Mode”** – Envisioning this “catastrophe” (often as a detailed “movie”) sends messages from the brain to the body, alerting it to possible imminent danger. The body responds by going into “fight or flight” mode – faster breathing, accelerated heart rate, etc.
- 4) **Anxiety** - This launches the physical symptoms of anxiety – which then launch additional worry and distress, without the original “trigger experience” yet being resolved.

Turning It Around – How to Stop the Anxiety Response:

Step One: Generate A Menu Of Alternative Explanations.



Develop these in the order indicated – first, “worst-case” (since your anxiety has already given you that); second, “best-case” (make it as fun, light, humorous, and outlandishly happy as you can, to compensate for the heaviness of the “worst case”); last, “most likely” – think of as many realistically probable explanations as you can. Having the full “arc” of alternatives distracts you from sitting anxiously focused on the “disaster movie,” and prepares you better for the full range of possibilities. Often, this step alone will provide enough relief, without proceeding to the other two.

Step Two: Assess The Probability Of Each Scenario

If step one doesn’t give sufficient relief, proceed to this step. Assess the probability (% chance) of each scenario you identified. Most often, the “worst-case” and “best-case” scenarios will have fairly low probability (5% or less chance), while the most likely scenarios will have a higher probability (30% or higher.)

Step Three: Develop A Coping Strategy for the “Worst Case Scenario”

If your “worst case” scenario has a high probability rating (40% chance or more), then proceed to this step. “Just in case” that negative scenario occurs, what steps can you take to be better prepared for it? Once you have a clear coping strategy, the worst-case scenario is likely to be less terrifying. (This step is only needed in a minority of situations.)

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

All or nothing thinking



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed

Either I do it right or not at all

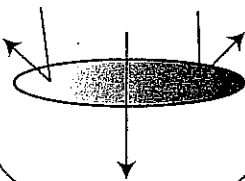
Over-generalising

"everything is always rubbish"

"nothing good ever happens"

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

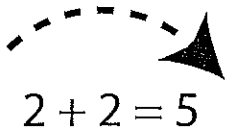
Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count

Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophising) & minimisation



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophising), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should

must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labelling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

I'm a loser
I'm completely useless
They're such an idiot

Personalisation

"this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

Decatastrophizing Worksheet

Step One: Generate A Menu Of Alternative Explanations.

1-Worst-Case Scenario
("The disaster movie")

3-Most Likely Scenario/s
("The reality show")

2-Best-Case Scenario
("The romantic comedy")

Step Two (If Needed): Assess The Probability Of Each Scenario

_____ % chance

_____ % chance
_____ % chance
_____ % chance
_____ % chance
_____ % chance

_____ % chance

Step Three (If Needed): Develop A Coping Strategy for the "Worst Case Scenario"

Stress Buster Plan

1. Looking at the indicators of stress, which symptoms do you get when feeling stressed?

2. When you start to recognize these symptoms, what should you do?

3. Look at the list of stress relievers listed. Which one(s) look like they would help you?
Why do you think they will help you?

4. The next time you start to feel the bad stress starting, describe two things that you will do immediately to help counteract the stress.

- Relaxation techniques - try lots and find one that works for you (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/relax.htm)
- Put on some music - sing and dance along, or just listen attentively (use music that is likely to help you feel your desired emotion - avoid sad songs if you're depressed) (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/music.htm)
- Meditation or Prayer (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/meditation.htm)
- Help others
- Be with others - contact a friend, visit family



- Talk to someone
- Grounding techniques - look around you, what do you see, hear, smell, sense? Hold a comforting object.
- Physical exercise - walk, swim, go to the gym, cycle (take the stairs instead of the lift, get off the bus a stop early)
- Engage in a hobby or other interest - if you don't have one, find one! What have you enjoyed in the past? What have you sometimes thought about doing but not got around to?



- Limit your responsibilities - it's okay to say no
- Write down your thoughts and feelings - get them out of your head
- Just take one step at a time - don't plan too far ahead
- Positive self-talk - encourage yourself, tell yourself: I can do this, I am strong and capable - find an affirmation that works for you (even if you don't believe it at first!). Write it down and memorise it for when you need it. See Affirmations (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/affirmations.htm)



- Do something creative - make a box of items that remind you to use the techniques that help, or put photos on paper, or write and decorate a list
- Use Imagery (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/imagery.htm)
- Tell yourself: "This will pass, it's only temporary". "I've got through this before, I can do it now". When we're going through a tunnel and become fearful of being trapped, there's no point in stopping - we just have to carry on in order to reach the end of the tunnel.



- Learn to communicate assertively (rather than passively or aggressively) (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/ccount/click.php?id=36)
- Eat a healthy balanced diet, with plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Drink less caffeine and more water
- Pamper yourself - do something you really enjoy, or do something relaxing



Consultant's Corner

Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate?

Volume 6 / Issue 4 / Summer 2006

My daughter's high school offers both the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs. Will these programs sufficiently meet the academic needs of my gifted child? How do I know if they are appropriate for her?

Advanced Placement (AP) courses and the International Baccalaureate (IB) program are both designed to provide opportunities beyond what the high school curriculum traditionally offers. The AP program, which is structured around a curriculum representing introductory college courses, allows students to enroll only in those courses in which they exhibit both ability and interest. In contrast, the IB program combines advanced content knowledge with a focus on the development of critical thinking and an appreciation of global issues. Earning an IB diploma requires a multiyear commitment across disciplines.

Research has documented that gifted students tend to find the teachers and the curriculum of both AP and IB courses challenging and far superior to other courses in their high schools. Certainly these options offer sufficient challenge to meet the academic needs of many gifted students, but not all. Students also report great satisfaction in being in classes with equally motivated and advanced peers.

Yet the content of AP science and math courses often does not enable gifted students to achieve an in-depth understanding of the discipline. Classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers also demonstrate that there is limited opportunity for the pursuit of individual interests or passions in these courses. The IB program provides greater opportunity for in-depth pursuit of a topic and greater emphasis on deep understanding than on the acquisition of information.

Students who are likely to succeed in AP and IB programs have a record of high achievement, are willing to work hard and to devote much out-of-school time to absorbing knowledge, have developed the prerequisite skills for the courses, are confident and self-motivated multitaskers, and manage their time well.

Those for whom AP and IB are not suitable options seem to be nonconforming students who resist the strict curriculum that is set forth. They dislike following inflexible syllabi driven by the goal of high performance on the tests that measure success. Students who question the structure of a fixed curriculum or who wish to explore new ideas or concepts through research or applied knowledge may be uncomfortable in AP courses or the IB program.

However, there is much variability among and within schools in the ways that AP courses are taught and the IB program is run. Some teachers are extremely knowledgeable and are willing and able to adapt a very structured curriculum to the particular needs of students; other teachers lack the mastery of their discipline or sufficient understanding of gifted students to realize the AP or IB classroom's potential.

Here are some questions to ask about the AP and IB programs at your daughter's school and about other options for meeting her academic needs:

- Are the teachers well prepared in the disciplines they are teaching?
- Are they willing to accommodate your daughter's learning needs and styles and to respond to the interests and passions of their students?
- Do they understand the needs of gifted students?
- Do they emphasize the joy of learning in addition to the test scores to be earned at the end of the course of study?
- Does the school offer internships and mentorships that might enable your daughter to explore a profession or investigate questions of interest and importance?
- Does the AP program or the IB program offer a closer match between your daughter's talents and interest and the school's curricular

options? Is the content or instruction in one program or the other better suited to her learning styles?

There is no simple answer to your question. Either AP or IB is likely to provide more advanced content and greater challenge than other courses, as well as the opportunity to earn college credit, and success in these programs is highly regarded by college admissions offices. However, the true value of these learning opportunities depends on the fit between your daughter's learning style, motivation, and preparation for the challenges offered by AP and IB.

—*Carolyn M. Callahan, PhD*

Carolyn M. Callahan is chair of the Department of Leadership, Foundations, and Policy at the University of Virginia. She holds a doctoral degree in educational psychology with an emphasis in gifted education and developed the Summer and Saturday Program for gifted students at the university.

