



International Baccalaureate

GAR-FIELD STUDENTS ATTEND 2007 GREEN FESTIVAL

For the second year in a row, the IB Program at GFSH sponsored a field trip to the Green Festival at the Washington, DC Convention Center. The Green Festival is a two day festival with more than 200 speakers and 400 green businesses, how-to workshops, green films, yoga and movement classes, green careers sessions, organic cuisine and live music. Over 50 GF students attended the field trip with several students earning CAS hours for volunteering to help set-up on Friday and help run recycling centers on Saturday and Sunday.



GAR-FIELD INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM INFO NIGHTS

The IB program at Gar-Field High School will be hosting its IB Info Nights November 8th and January 8th. These info nights are a wonderful opportunity for rising 8th graders and current high school students interested

in taking IB courses at GF in the 08-09 school year to come visit GFHS, learn more about our IB Program, and speak with teachers, students, and alumni. Please come see what makes IB at GF such a special and unique educational opportunity in Prince William County.

GAR-FIELD IB - INFO NIGHTS

Thursday- November 8th, 2007

Tuesday - January 8th, 2008

Each session will start at 7:00pm in the Auditorium

*representatives from the Marine Corps JROTC and Engineering Programs will also be present



DO NOT FORGET TO CHECK OUT THE NEW GAR-FIELD IB WEBSITE FEATURING THE NEW VISUAL IDENTITY OF THE IB



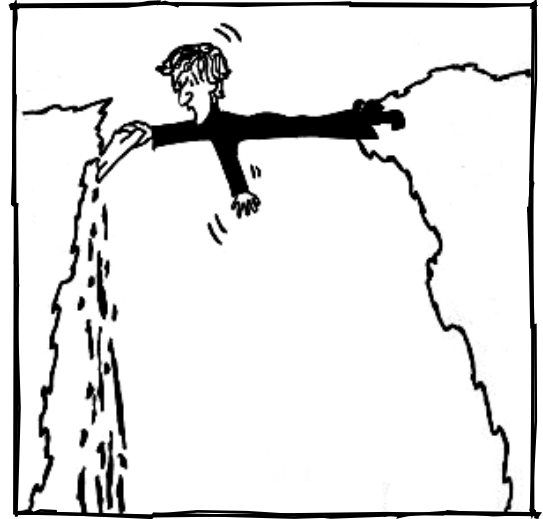
COORDINATORS CORNER

THE JUMP INTO IB AT GAR-FIELD

The magnitude of the transition or “jump” from middle to high school MYP courses, and from non-IB courses into IB level courses, varies depending on a student’s prior coursework and personal work habits. For some students it is a relatively small step and for others it is a motorcycle jump worthy of a pay-per-view event. Regardless of the magnitude, the difficulties faced by those who struggle with the jump can usually be attributed to two things:

- **academic maturity.**
- **grading practices in previous courses.**

For our rising 9th grade males, academic maturity tends to be the biggest challenge. While this is not exclusive to our males, both local and national statistics show a disproportionate number of females taking advanced courses in high school over their male counterparts (2007 IBNA Data Summary). I often tell the story of my 9th grade MYP Biology course and what usually happened when I announced homework to the class. The females would pull out their agenda books and make note of the upcoming task, while the majority of males would give me the head nod, as if to say, “We got ya, Mr. B.” When the assignment was due, it was not a surprise to find that most of my females had the assignment complete, but that many of my male students did not. This is a classic yet common example of the academic maturity issues many ninth graders struggle with, such as work habits, time management, and study skills. We can talk all day about a student’s academic potential, but if the student isn’t trying to develop academic maturity, the jump into IB courses will likely be too great.



The grading practices that students get used to in previous courses can also give students a poor sense of how big the gap usually is between course levels. Grades should be a reflection of skills and knowledge. But too often students receive a false sense of confidence based on the strong mathematical influence of “completion grades” (grades based on effort, not on accuracy) in a course. Students who enter an IB course from a classroom in which their grade was entirely or almost entirely based on their performance on assessments, as opposed to completion grades, will face a much smoother transition and have a better sense of how they’re performing and what they need to do in order to be successful.

The search for solutions to these challenges fall on the shoulders of our collective team of students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Students need to develop an appreciation for the process, as opposed to only being interested in finishing some specific product and getting a grade. They also need to own the responsibility of maintaining an agenda. Teachers need to introduce more assessments into their grading practices. One common concern is the time needed to grade assignments for accuracy, but an assessment need not be a major test. So teachers can investigate various types of assessments that can be graded for accuracy and returned to the student so that they receive feedback on their performance. Administrators can support this by focusing on the quality of assessments more than the quantity of grading opportunities. Parents can help by monitoring the student's agenda and helping students to develop good time management skills, so that students can find the right balance between academic, extracurricular, and recreational activities.

With the current climate that focuses on accountability through standardized assessments, it is important that parents, teachers, administrators, and students support teaching strategies and grading practices that develop and encourage higher level thinking skills. All of us have key roles in closing the gap that challenges success in IB.

Brian Bassett

Administrative Coordinator for IB



What Makes the MYP Unique?

In the August IB Newsletter, Mr. Bassett explained that our IB Programmes seek to develop in our students the qualities of the *IB Learner Profile*. IB learners strive to be **inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced and reflective**. Whether you are taking a few MYP classes in your areas of strength or the full certificate program, you benefit from the unique features of the Middle Years Programme that provide a framework of academic challenge and encourage you to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers. Unique features of our IB Middle Years Programme are the framing of instruction through the areas of interaction, community service, the personal project, and external program accountability.

The eight subject groups are integrated through the five *Areas of Interaction* which provide a framework for learning within and across the subjects. I'd like to focus on one in particular. **Community and service** is a special feature of the program that starts in the classroom and extends beyond it. The emphasis is on developing community awareness and concern, a sense of responsibility, and the skills and attitudes needed to make an effective contribution to society. MYP certificate candidates document at least 40 hours of community service in both grades 9 and 10. All Gar-Field students are encouraged to participate in community service including opportunities organized by the GFHS IB Programme like the IB Model United Nations Conference scheduled for January 11th and 12th, 2008, the Just World Conference field trip scheduled for February 29th, 2008, and the Clean the Bay Day field trip scheduled for June 7, 2008. We also support our students' community service by maintaining a Community Action and Service web page through Gar-Field's web page. There you can find upcoming community and service opportunities and links to community service organizations in Prince William County.

The **Personal Project** is another unique feature of the MYP. It is the culminating work of the program and is completed in grade 10. It is an independent work chosen and completed by MYP certificate candidates outside of class with the help of a supervising teacher. The Personal Project is an opportunity to explore a topic that is truly of interest to you and to make choices about the process used and product created to achieve a goal. This opportunity for personal growth and reflection also prepares students with skills needed to successfully complete the Extended Essay in the Diploma Programme. This year, 38 students have begun their Personal Projects, with topics ranging from exploring the reasons and impact of loss of animal habitat, to creating a Punjabi bilingual book to educate others about the culture, to educating others about the civil war in Sierra Leone, to comparing high school and professional theatrical productions.

The final feature I'd like to address that makes the MYP unique is **accountability**. Gar-Field High School is an authorized IB MYP World School. As such, periodic program evaluation by IB is required. Last year our program, in partnership with Godwin Middle School successfully underwent evaluation which included an in depth self study, review of all MYP curriculum documents, and a visit from an evaluation team from IB. Simultaneously, Beville Middle School joined the partnership through an authorization visit. In addition to periodic evaluation, another way in which our program is accountable is through MYP assessment practices. Our teaching and assessment practices are aligned with our partner middle schools and with those of our Diploma Programme in grades 11 and 12. MYP assessment is criterion referenced so rather than students being measured against each other, their progress is measured against pre-specified criteria for each subject group. Teachers discuss the assessment criteria to be used when MYP assignments are given. The assessment rubrics are tools you should use to reflect upon your progress as you work on the assignments as well as at the end when you complete them. Since MYP assessment tasks are assessed internally in our school, we have chosen to send sample assessments for monitoring by IB examiners. This provides us with feedback to ensure that we are consistently meeting the worldwide standards of IB.

I hope that this information has helped you to better understand what makes the IB Middle Years Programme at Gar-Field High School so special. If you'd like to speak with me about any aspect of the MYP or about your progress in the program, I am available on blue days in my office at the top of the stairs near Door 17. I can also be reached via email at gordondk@pwcs.edu.

Ms. Gordon
IBMYP Coordinator

Calendar

November 8th, 2007

Gar-Field IB Info Night

November 16th - 18th, 2007

Field Trip: William & Mary Model UN Conference

<http://www.wmhsun.org/>

January 4th, 2008

IB Diploma and Certificate Award Ceremony

January 8th, 2008

Gar-Field IB Info Night

January 11th - 12th, 2008

IB MARC Model UN Conference

(Gar-Field is the host school)

www.IBatGF.com

February 27th, 2008

PWCS Fall Classy Awards

February 29th, 2008

Field Trip: Just World Conference

Annandale High School

April 8th, 2008

Personal Project Display and IB Art Show

May 5th - 23rd, 2008

IB Diploma Program Exams

May 29th, 2008

PWCS Spring Classy Awards

June 7th, 2008

Field Trip: Clean the Bay

Mason Neck or Leesylvania State Park



DIRECTOR GENERAL SHARES THE IB's 2020 GOAL WITH GF IB COORDINATORS

Gail Hubbard, Brian Bassett and Della Gordon attended a special luncheon meeting with IB's Director General, Jeffrey Beard and fellow Mid-Atlantic Region Coalition of IB Schools members on October 2 at George Mason High School. Jeffrey Beard became director general of the IB in January 2006 and is based at the IB Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. At the luncheon, Mr. Beard discussed the IB's rapid growth since the early 80's and the infrastructure needed to support the projected 2.5 million students in over 10,000 IB World Schools by 2020. He shared the IB's plans for the Director General's Circle, a new initiative that will help support the IB and its mission as they continue to grow and evolve as an organization.



INTERNATIONAL CLUB EID CELEBRATION PHOTOS

