



International Baccalaureate Class of 2008

On June 6th, 2008, 520 students received their diplomas from Principal Dr. Brenda Aiken. Among these graduates were 51 IB Diploma Candidates, 16 Gar-Field IB Scholars, and 110 IB Certificate Students. We would like to thank all of the students, parents, and teachers for making the four year partnership memorable. "The class of 2008 was huge...they really challenged themselves and took a large number of IB exams. They had tons of personality and certainly left their mark on Gar-Field!" said Mr. Bassett. We look forward to seeing all of you again on January 9th for the awarding of the official IB Diplomas and Certificates.



MAY 2008 DATA

Below is a summary of Gar-Field IB Examination results since being authorized to offer the IB Diploma Program in 2000. If the data holds true to past results, GFHS will have exceeded Diploma pass rates in Virginia, US, and the World for the seventh straight year. The IBO will soon be releasing a data summary to include world-wide results that will allow us to see how Gar-Field did in comparison to IB Schools throughout the world. Look for an update in future newsletters and also on www.IBatGF.com under the DATA tab on the left.

GFHS Diploma Programme Examination Results Since 1st Exam Session

Year	Number of diploma courses offered	Total number of candidates examined	Number of diploma candidates	Number of certificate candidates/anticipated*		Number of diplomas awarded	Number of exams administered (incl. TOK)	Number of exam scores between 4-7
2008	29	295	51	179	65	44	821 (872)	621
2007	25	247	44	142	61	36	649	481
2006	24	246	29	164	43	29	572	454
2005	27	208	26	151	28	22	510	372
2004	25	247	54	172	23	48	706	544
2003	27	304	65	178	48	59	824	643
2002	25	239	34	175	37	29	613	468





COORDINATOR'S CORNER

THE BALANCE BETWEEN RIGOR AND GPA

Each year during the months of February and March, Ms. Gordon and I meet with students from our feeder middle schools and current GF IB students. During our discussion, we ask students to reflect on their grades and teacher recommendations, and connect them with where they would like to be their senior year and beyond. Some of the students we meet with were caught in that “middle ground,” showcasing average grades in advanced classes.

When talking to students in this situation, we find ourselves having the old “GPA vs. Rigor” discussion. Most college admissions officers would say the top three admissions factors are:

- 1) Strength of Schedule = RIGOR
- 2) GPA (Grade Point Average)
- 3) SAT/ACT scores

For most students, the “Strength of Schedule” is the easiest to obtain: commit to the class and add the IB course to your schedule. It is the last two factors on our list that are the most difficult because they are measurements of performance and aptitude. That is why finding that balance between rigor and GPA is so important.

Several times each year I will hear a student (or their parents) say, “I would be better off taking all regular classes and getting As.” While this approach may ensure that you get into *some* college, it will not ensure that you get into the more selective schools in Virginia and elsewhere. Why? *RIGOR*. Colleges and universities know that Prince William County High Schools offer either AP, IB, or Cambridge courses in most subject areas, and your application is being compared to students from your school, and from high schools across the state and the country.

Just as a high GPA with no rigor is unlikely to impress admissions officers, lots of rigor with an average or below average GPA also looks bad. The key to creating the transcript that best represents your performance and work habits is finding just how much rigor you can handle while earning a GPA that falls within a range acceptable to the kinds of schools you would like to attend. (Remember the IB Diploma Level Courses are “weighted classes” offering bonus points to student GPAs because of the additional rigor.) I have always felt that colleges and universities evaluate applications by trying to figure out who they can *exclude*, not include, and this process is only getting tougher, given the nationwide push to offer more externally assessed courses at the high school level. The key here is *balance*. Course titles alone will not get you into the school you want; but finding the right *balance* between rigor and GPA will help you create the transcript that will open up the most opportunities for you.

Brian Bassett
Administrative Coordinator for IB

AVERAGE GPAs and SATs for VA SCHOOLS

(#) represents the admissions selectivity rating

SAT scores reflect math and verbal components

University of Virginia (97)

Average GPA: 4.10*

Average SAT: 1310^

College of William & Mary (97)

Average GPA: 4.0*

Average SAT: 1350^

Virginia Tech (89)

Average GPA: 3.76*

Average SAT: 1200^

Univ. of Mary Washington (87)

Average GPA: 3.70*

Average SAT: 1190^

James Madison University (88)

Average GPA: 3.70

Average SAT: 1140^

Christopher Newport Univ. (85)

Average GPA: 3.50*

Average SAT: 1170^

George Mason Univ. (83)

Average GPA: 3.50*

Average SAT: 1120^

Virginia Commonwealth Univ. (77)

Average GPA: 3.30*

Average SAT: 1060^

Old Dominion University (78)

Average GPA: 3.30*

Average SAT: 1055^

Longwood University (76)

Average GPA: 3.30*

Average SAT: 1070^

Radford University (71)

Average GPA: 3.20*

Average SAT: 1005^

SOURCE OF DATA:

*Princeton Review

www.princetonreview.com/college/research

^ Family Connections



GAR-FIELD ALUMNUS RECEIVES FULBRIGHT AWARD



Afra Saeed, a 2004 graduate of Gar-Field High School in Woodbridge, is the recipient of a Fulbright U.S. Student Scholarship in Psychology and credits her success to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme she attended at Gar-Field.

“IB taught me not only to excel and be the best academically, it taught me time management and a whole new way of thinking. I will always remember that,” said Saeed. She entered the five-year IB Middle Years Programme at Godwin Middle School and continued when she arrived at Gar-Field, where she completed her IBMYP Certificate and pursued an IB diploma.

“I believe IB has helped me with all my accomplishments over the last four years, both personally and academically. I have been able to manage a part-time job and go to school full time, be president of organizations on campus, do well in school, and graduate with honors by doing research and an honors thesis in my major, and in the end get a nationally recognized award.”

This recent George Mason University graduate will join over 1,450 U.S. Citizens traveling abroad for the 2008-09 school year under the Fulbright Program. Saeed’s scholarship was awarded based on her academic achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in her field of psychology. The program operates in over 155 countries and Saeed will travel to the United Arab Emirates under the United States Department of State’s “Bureau of Educational, and Cultural Affairs” program.

“I definitely credit IB with being a strong basis in my life accomplishments,” said Saeed.

Article taken from the 10/10/08 PWCS Press Release - Irene Cromer - Supervisor, Community Relations

GAR-FIELD IB STUDENT RECOGNITION

* 2009 IB Diploma Candidate

Governor’s School

Academics

- Kara Arbogast
Bibashwan Chhetri*
Chelsea Davis
Caitlin Henry*
Sabrina Lightfoot*
Melanie Simon*
Ahad Subzwari*

Arts

- Carol Farn*
Ryan Maniquis*
Tiffanie Thomas*

Boys State

- Scott Norman
Kevin O’Shea*
Byron Odom

Girls State

- Kassy Alvarez
Saaleha Faruk *

Youth Salute

- Bibashwan Chhetri*
Collin Hayward*
Magdelin Hamid*
April Jung*
Shazia Naemm*
Melanie Simon*
Veitvuong Vo*
Antonia Warren

- Anne Wendland*
Abbesi Akhamie*
Alexandra
Bartholomew*
Carol Farn*
Saaleha Faruk*
Kevin O’Shea*
David Ruffner
Yi Zhao*

National Achievement Semifinalist

- Sabrina Lightfoot*



Youth Salute students with Principal - Dr. Aiken



SHAPING THE PRESIDENCY WITH COKIE ROBERTS AND GAR-FIELD STUDENTS

On October 14th, six Gar-Field students were invited to Mount Vernon to participate in a television taping of "Shaping of the Presidency" with historian and Pulitzer Prize recipient Joseph Ellis; ABC news correspondent, Cokie Roberts; and the Director of Education for the White House Historical Association, John Riley. These students were members of the studio audience and asked the panelists questions throughout the taping. Students were given a copy of Joseph Eliss's **His Excellency** and signed copies of Cokie Robert's **Founding Mothers**. We would like to thank Gar-Field Alumna Ms. Nancy Hayward, Director of Programs at Mount Vernon, for offering us this special opportunity. The program will be aired nationally on October 23rd at 1:00p.m. EST.



Gar-Field student Kristina Medlock, talks with John Riley and Cokie Robert in between taping.

GAR-FIELD STUDENTS SET TO VISIT PARTNER IB SCHOOL IN BRISTOL, UK OVER THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

While many Gar-Field students and teachers will be relaxing with family and friends over the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be 23 Gar-Field IB students and 3 teachers visiting an IB school in the United Kingdom. This group will depart on November 21st for a ten day visit that will provide them the opportunity to do a home-stay with with families of students participating in the IB program at The Ridings High School. Student will attend classes, tour Bath and Bristol, spend a night in London, and participate in video conferences seminars with schools in other countries. And there's no need to fear that our students will miss out on our great American Thanksgiving tradition--the Ridings families have arranged a special Thanksgiving Day meal at a delightful country mansion in the beautiful Gloucestershire countryside that will give the GF students an opportunity to share the historical relevance of the holiday. Look for their return trip to the US in February/March.

Calendar

October 21st, 2008

Specialty School Fair - Hylton HS

November 8th, 2008

Field Trip: Green Festival

November 13th, 2008

Gar-Field IB Program - Info Night

November 14th - 16th

William and Mary Model UN Conf.

November 22nd - Dec. 1

Trip to Ridings High School - Bristol, UK

December 9th

Gar-Field IB Program - Info Night

January 9th, 2009

IB Diploma Program Ceremony

January 16th and 17th

IB MARC Model United Nations Conference @ Gar-Field HS

January 5th

IB Diploma Award Ceremony

January 12th-13th

IB MARC Model UN Conference

February 13th

Specialty School Application Deadline

February 27th

IB Just World Conference

@ Annandale HS

February - March

Ridings High School (Bristol, UK) visit to Gar-Field HS

March 11th

Group IV Project Day of Show

May 4th-22nd

IB Exams