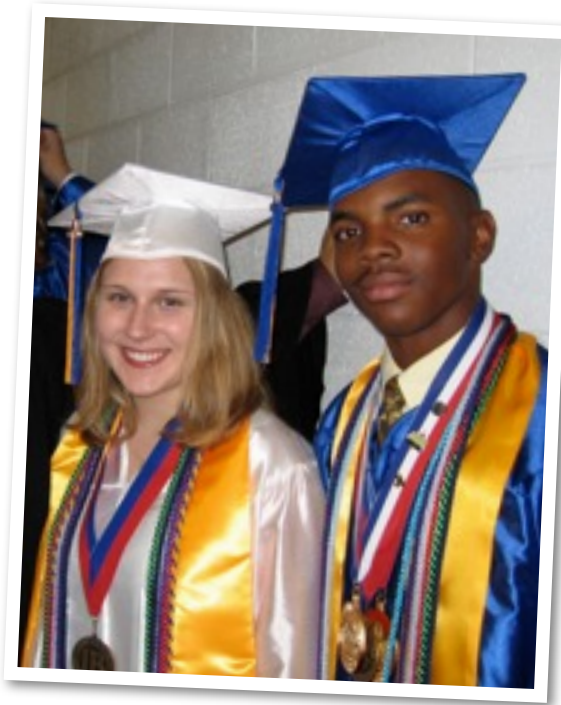




International Baccalaureate Class of 2006 Among the Best in the World



On November 13th, 2006, IBNA released the *Examination Review and Data Summary* for the May 2006 exam session. This report provides results for IBNA schools in the United States, Canada, and Caribbean Islands. World averages and pass percentages are also given in the report. Some highlights from this report include:

The Gar-Field Diploma pass rate (90%) exceeded the pass rates for VA (77%), the U.S. (72%), and the World (82%). The percentage of Gar-Field students earning a 4 or above on IB exams (83%) exceeded the VA (79%) and U.S. (78%) pass rate.

In the report, the Stonewall Jackson and Gar-Field HS IB Programmes were recognized by the IBO for ranking in the top 100 schools in the world taking the greatest number of IB exams (33rd for SJHS and 72nd for GFHS out of 1177 schools world-wide that sat for exams in May of 2006.)

Since IB scores are not known until July, IB Diploma and Certificate recipients are not awarded until the Winter Awards Ceremony. The class of 2006 will be awarded their official IB Diplomas and Certificates January 5th at 8:45 am in the auditorium. Parents, friends, and family members are invited to come celebrate.

IB STUDENTS MENTOR DALE CITY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

The Gar-Field Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS), program has partnered up with Dale City Elementary School to offer a mentoring program to 4th and 5th graders. Twenty-seven GFHS students have been paired up with over 20 elementary students and they get together every Tuesday from 3:30-4:30 pm. Any GFHS student interested in participating in the mentoring program should contact Mr. Hunniford, IB CAS Coordinator. Students do homework, play sports, work in the computer lab, hike on the nature trail, and play card games, as well as have conversations about school and other interests. Junior Sarah Kyrouac says, "It's a lot of fun working with the students because it reminds me of when, not too long ago, I was their age...I feel like I am making a difference in their lives; they always seem excited when we arrive." Mr. Hunniford says, "One interesting point about the students volunteering is that many of them have already met their community service requirements for IB. They are participating in community service in the true spirit of CAS."

"It is a good feeling to know that you are making a difference and a lasting impression on these kids...it makes us want to be better people in order to provide the best role model we can for them," says Kyrouac.





COORDINATOR'S CORNER

"My son is not a good test taker"

Have you caught yourself saying this to a teacher or guidance counselor? It is sometimes a true statement. Often when looking at student grades, tests, quizzes, and other assessments are the cause of poor interim and quarterly grades. As a science teacher, I recall working with students who honestly committed time to preparing for tests and quizzes. They reviewed notes, worksheets, quizzes, and handouts for hours, then took the test and were frustrated by the low grade they earned. Is this student not a good test taker? Maybe, but perhaps they are not good at *preparing* for tests. In other words: (lots of time spent studying) ≠ (good grade).

GAMING THE TEST

In helping students learn to study more effectively, I often use the analogy of an athlete who is preparing for a Friday night football game. Reviewing the



playbook is a crucial piece in preparing for your opponent, just as reviewing notes and handouts provides familiarity with key

vocabulary and concepts that will be assessed on a test. The piece that is lacking from most student preparation is simulating the "game day" experience of the test. The questions I often ask is, "How often do you practice *taking* the test?" That is, are you practicing the same skills that are assessed on your test? You would not walk into a football game with the only preparation having been a review of the playbook, so why would you walk into a test having spent the majority of your time reviewing notes? Good game preparation for a football player includes studying the playbook along with live, full-contact simulations against an opponent. The same applies to test preparation. After reviewing your notes,

follow up with drill and practice *without* the use of notes. Reducing your notes and key facts into note cards can be a helpful way of sorting items you know well and teasing out the ones with which you struggle with. Different strategies work for different students and learning styles. The internet provides numerous learning style inventories that can assist students in identifying their learning style and strategies that might work best for them.

WW?D

"What would (insert teacher name) do?" How often do you ask this question as you prepare for tests and quizzes? Do you review your notes *AFTER* taking a quiz or test to see possible relationships and patterns between what your teacher presents in lecture notes and handouts and what has emphasized on previous assessments? Smart test preparation includes asking yourself, "What kinds of questions would my teacher ask?" I encourage students to write their own tests and quizzes and then answer the questions without the assistance of books and notes. In fact, this can be taken one step further by studying with other students from the class, since you can then share and practice answering each other's "mock test questions." It is this kind of preparation that recreates the skills exhibited in real testing conditions.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED

The weight of assessments in your grade will not be reduced over time--if anything, assessments will be a much larger fraction of your overall grade as you move into more advanced classes. When parents mention that their child is not a good test taker, I remind them that, in college, the final grade for most courses is determined by about 2 or 3 tests, and perhaps a paper or two. Therefore we need to *address* a student's weaknesses--not simply *accept* them. If instead you just continue to do what you've always done, you have no reason to expect different results. So I encourage you to keep trying new techniques.

- Brian Bassett

Administrative Coordinator for IB



FROM THE MYP COORDINATOR

Personal Project Update

Tenth grade MYP Certificate candidates now have contact information for their Personal Project Supervisors, who will guide them through the process of deciding on the form of the project, developing a plan, researching and recording resource data, reflecting and self-assessing on both the process and the product, drafting and revising the structured writing, and presenting the final product. Students and supervisors have also been given a revised Personal Project timeline and suggested guide for completing the Process Log, which will be an extremely useful tool in completing the structured writing. If your child is completing the Personal Project this year, I encourage you to talk with them about their progress and what they are learning throughout this process.

Revised Community Service Logs Now Available

For students pursuing the MYP Certificate, revised 2006-2007 Community Service Logs are now available in my office or online on the Gar-Field IB MYP web page. It's okay if students began documenting hours in the older version of the log. They should complete the reflection in the new log and submit both. It is not necessary to get duplicate signatures from adults who supervised previously completed activities. Completed logs should be turned in once students have fulfilled the 40 hour requirement and they are due no later than May 15, 2007.

9th Grade MYP Certificate Letters

Letters were recently sent home to parents of 9th grade students new to MYP who are taking full MYP schedules and are eligible to earn the MYP Certificate at the end of 10th grade. I will be meeting individually with these students soon to follow up. Certificate requirements include instruction in all eight subject groups, maintaining good standing in all courses, community service in 9th and 10th grade, and successful completion of the Personal Project in 10th grade. Students continuing the full MYP from Gowdin Middle School also received letters through their English classes reminding them of the program requirements.

Parents: Please Join!

I encourage you to join my IB MYP School Fusion web page, so you can utilize all of the features of School Fusion and to help ensure that I have accurate, up to date contact information for you. Also, if you don't already have an Edulink Intouch Online account to monitor student progress and attendance,

please register online through Gar-Field's home page. It's a wonderful tool to see how your student is doing and to foster dialogue about his or her classes.

- Della Gordon
IB MYP Coordinator



Calendar

January 5th, 2007

IB Diploma Award Ceremony

January 9th, 2007

Gar-Field IB Info Night

January 12th-13th, 2007

IB MARC Model UN Conference

February 5th and 6th, 2007

Teacher Recommendation Days

February 15th, 2007

GF IB Application Deadline

May 23rd-24th, 2007

GF Asian Century Model United Nations Conference

March 2007

Just World Conference

April 10th, 2007

MYP Personal Project Due

May 2nd-23rd, 2007

MYP Personal Project and DP Art Showcase

May 2nd-23rd, 2007

IB Exams



PARENTS - PLEASE HAVE A TALK ABOUT HONOR AND INTEGRITY WITH YOUR STUDENT

In 2004, the IB program at GFHS began implementation of the IB Honor Code. The Honor Code was developed to promote learning and provide an environment of trust. Students are required to pledge certain assignments stating they have neither given nor received help on an assignment. Since its inception, 9th graders have twice as many violations as 10-12th graders. Many violations have included students who willingly “shared” work or knowingly allowed someone to copy from them.

In our August newsletter, we shared some information about a recent *Reader's Digest* article which quoted a survey showing that 70% of high school students admitted to cheating on a major test or quiz. Since the beginning of the school year, the GF IB Coordinator has handled close to 20 honor code violations, with over 70% of them coming from 9th graders. Most parents are probably surprised by this figure, though I doubt that most *students* would be surprised by it. In an ethnography assignment in IB Social and Cultural Anthropology last year, students reported, “Cheating has become a cultural norm...everyone accepts cheating but not everyone cheats. Even though some students do not approve or resort to cheating, every student acknowledges that cheating is a common practice among peers.”

Mr. Bassett's Suggestions

1. Give credit where credit is due - CITE YOUR SOURCES.
2. If you have any doubts about what is appropriate or inappropriate...ASK your teacher!
3. Do not give your hard work away...*you* have more to lose than your buddy who didn't do their work. Under the Honor Code, students who let their friends “see” their work are treated no differently than the students who did the copying.
4. Do not cut and paste. “Mosaic Papers” are obvious to teachers.
5. Make sure you know the rules to group work and collaboration in your class for each assignment. See #2
6. Remember that cheating gives your teachers, your parents, and *you* a false sense of your skills and understanding. Cheating also makes learning impossible and devalues the course.
7. Help create a learning environment where academic privileges can be granted by teachers, based on the justifiable trust they have in their students' academic integrity.
8. Listen to your conscience.

This is not a Gar-Field-specific problem, it is a problem that faces schools across the nation. Why? I think we can attribute this to many things. Our Anthropology students reported that “pressures from parents, peers, and other activities drive students to excel in their work and lead to stress that tempts students to take an easier route to complete their work.” Most parents I speak to believe their student is part of the 30% who reported having not cheated on a major test or quiz, yet colleges nationwide have seen increases in honor board charges against incoming high school students. Plagiarism detection companies like *TurnItIn.com* are growing leaps and bounds as schools try to promote original work and develop academic integrity among their students.

Please take the time to review the GFHS IB Honor Code contract (available at IBatGF.com). Remember, the Honor Code is there to protect the certification you earn from taking rigorous IB courses.

