



## School-wide Adoption of DP Courses

### Champlin Park High School

- Diploma Programme
- Career-related Programme

Principal:  
Michael George

First offered the DP:  
2006

IB Diploma Programme (DP)  
coordinator:  
Ashley Brown

IB Career-Related Program (CP)  
coordinator:  
Georgia Larson

## SEAMLESS SCHOOL-WIDE ADOPTION OF THE IB

### Impact and inclusion

Champlin Park High School, Minnesota, USA opened in 1992 under four innovative pillars: block schedule, state of the art technology, house concept and outcome-based education. It was these four focuses which, at the time, made the school unique within the state. To suit the varied needs of the learning community today, the school offers a number of different study options at 11th and 12th Grade, including the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP), which were authorized since 2006 and 2019 respectively.

Since its introduction, the school has worked hard to challenge the misconception that the IB is only for the most academic of students. In order to demonstrate the opposite and expand the IB education to all, in 2021 school leaders implemented the IB English Language and Literature as the framework for the English studies for all students in 11th Grade, without the requirement to take the assessment at the end of the year. With this approach, students who are not enrolled in the DP or CP, have access to the IB framework of studies in at least one course.

This has had such a positive impact on students, showing them that they are capable of the rigorous work of the IB curriculum. Katie Snell, who teaches a support class with a co-teacher specializing in inclusion, believes that through this change, the school has significantly boosted the confidence amongst students: "The way that the Language and Literature course is designed enables teachers to advance each student by meeting them where they are and showing them what they are capable of."

### Addressing challenges

Ashley Brown, the school's DP coordinator, says that one of the greatest challenges that the school had to overcome when introducing the IB was convincing the wider learning community of programme benefits. "We spent as much time as needed to explore all staff concerns thoroughly. Although time consuming, it meant that we generated the support for leadership approval and enabled the DP course adoption. For any school considering this venture, I

recommend including a wide variety of stakeholders and bring them along the journey of writing and designing the curriculum.”

Georgia Larson, one of the lead educators who has been central to the school’s DP expansion plan, adds: “The teachers who want to make it happen are the best advocates for the school-wide adoption of the IB. Investment in professional development is key so that teachers can fully embrace the creative flexibility of teaching a DP course on their own terms.”

### Through a global lens

For schools thinking about introducing global perspectives to education and offering the IB, Chris Baker-Raivo, the school’s former CP coordinator, reinforces the importance of working with all stakeholders to validate and address any concerns: “Our learning community was impressed by how well the school had considered all the potential challenges and that we already had solutions to overcome them so that as many students as possible could access the world-class education that the DP and CP provide.”

As the IB framework is less prescribed and introduces students to skills, such as critical thinking and interpreting written and spoken texts from a wide range of literary and non-literary work, the school had much more freedom to select themes that matter and engage the learning community. Georgia explains: “That’s how we get further buy-in from our parent community. Our students are responding in lessons and are enthusiastic, rather than dying on the vine. We are seeing much richer answers from our students, which makes teaching so much more enjoyable too!”

Katie further explains: “We are still teaching pieces of American literature but we are connecting them to global issues. For example, the ‘American dream’ isn’t actually specific to America, it is a global dream and concept.”

One of the concerns school leaders have for expanding IB courses to all students, is that the rigor and pace of the course could be out of reach for some students. However, at Champlin Park High School, as at most public schools, the DP course hourly system fits within the school’s required teaching hours. This meant that learning support for all students increased and was a selling point for the stakeholders concerned about student success.



Ashley says: “When concerned parties understood that DP courses easily fit into the schedule, they could see how the needs of all students would be met. This led to students having more time with their teachers, differentiated assessment support and greater opportunities to set goals and reflect on their own learning.”

### Looking forward

Champlin Park High School recommends that schools considering introducing IB programmes should have a robust implementation strategy in place that addresses all the potential concerns from all stakeholders in the learning community. For Champlin Park school leaders, this was a process over a number of years and involved drawing upon the experiences and advice from the global IB community of educators, coupled with professional development and the school’s local community. Ashley concluded: “For any school looking to progress through authorization, I wholly recommend ensuring that all the team is fully trained on delivering IB programmes to ensure that all the learning community understands the true power of an IB education. That’s the key to success.”