

SAN DIEGO INTERNATIONAL STUDIES SCHOOL

PART III - SUMMARY 12CA24

The School of International Studies (IS) first opened its doors in September of 2004 as one of six small schools on the campus of the former San Diego High School, which formed the San Diego High Educational Complex. All of the former San Diego High Magnet Programs—the International Baccalaureate (IB), Writing Academy and Language Continuation—are located in the School of International Studies. When the schools were first formed, the San Diego High School staff examined several different models for inclusion of the magnet programs. Due to IB authorization requirements and specialized expertise necessary to teach in the language continuation magnet, the stakeholders determined that these two magnet programs should be in one of the small schools. The Writing Academy remains as a magnet program complex-wide.

IS encompasses the rich tradition of being part of the oldest secondary institution in San Diego County, as well as, being able to establish an innovative present with a focus on personalized instruction and academic rigor. The IS School is one of 26 comprehensive high schools located in the San Diego Unified School District, and provides educational programs and services to 562 students in grades 9-12 supported by 37 staff members. The student body comprises 3 percent English learner, 43 percent GATE identified, 98 percent IB, 46 percent magnet, and 6 percent special education.

Approximately 54 percent of our students are resident students, and 46 percent of our students are nonresident magnet students. 98 percent of our students take one or more IB tests and approximately 26 percent of our students take the AP U.S. History test. These percentages have remained relatively consistent over the past three years. The district provides transportation for magnet and special education students to the San Diego Complex.

The School of International Studies faculty consists of 28 certificated staff members. Approximately 90% have completed the equivalent of a Master's Degree or higher. Five faculty members are National Board Certified, one was named the 2005 California Teacher of the Year, three earned the title of San Diego Unified Teachers of the Year, and two other faculty members served as alternate San Diego Unified Teachers of the Year.

From the moment that a person steps onto our campus, he/she is engulfed by the positive attitude. From the welcoming office team to the teachers, counselors, aides and administrator, the concept of *Learning is the Main Thing* is deemed as a priority. With this priority in mind, our Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes are opened to ALL students. The idea that all students can achieve with support from programs such as Advancement via Individual Development (AVID), IB Support, after school tutorial sessions staffed by teachers, parent, community members and peers is at the core of our philosophical beliefs.

When one moves into the classrooms, he/she will see how the concept of *Learning is the Main Thing* is integrated into the rigorous Advance Placement and International Baccalaureate curriculum. In the Humanities classrooms, (AP History or Theory of Knowledge), the student engagement can be seen in a series of interactive discussions, Socratic Seminars, lectures and writing assignments that meet or exceed CA and IB standards. The need to offer IB classes to our diverse student population became the rationale for adopting the IB for all. IB's emphasis on interdisciplinary learning requires that students study courses across six disciplines, including mathematics, individuals and societies, and the arts. Part of the diploma process involves submitting an Extended Essay (EE), completing the Theory of Knowledge course, and participating in creativity, action, and service projects (CAS). IB coursework also meets and exceeds California's high school graduation requirements. Students may choose to take individual IB courses and exams and earn IB certificates or complete all the components to attain an IB Diploma, which are recognized for credit at most colleges and universities. Currently, 35 seniors are in the process of earning an IB Diploma. This sequence of classes fulfills the California requirements for graduation: Four years of English Language Arts; Three years of Mathematics; Three years of Science; Three years of History; Two

years of Foreign Language; One year of Creative and Performing Arts and One year of College Preparatory Elective. This scenario fulfills the “a-g” University of California admissions requirements.

When a person enters our front office, his/her eyes are drawn to the myriad of plaques that were awarded to our school for excellence in education. The list includes, but is not limited to, US News and World Report--America’s Best High School (2008-2011); California Distinguished School (2011); and Title I Academic Achievement Award (2011). In addition, the school received an API Score of 873. We are one of three high schools in the San Diego Unified District to achieve this goal. These awards reflect the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders to create an environment in which all students can succeed in rigorous classes.

In addition, the May 2006 issue of Newsweek magazine recognized our efforts for access and equity by ranking the school as number 22 in the nation based on the Newsweek Challenge Index measuring academic rigor. The article entitled *Class Struggle* commends the top 100 public high schools for their willingness to give as many students as possible the opportunity to do the most advanced work. Newsweek also highlighted IS among the top 100 public high schools in 2007. The school was named as one of San Diego’s Top Schools in San Diego Magazine, July 2006. In the November 2009 issue of U.S. News and World Report, the School of International Studies was awarded a gold medal for being one of the top high schools in the United States.

While we are very proud of the accomplishments of our students, we are also keenly focused on providing supports for struggling students. Based on current research and theoretical models, the staff developed a design for success with a focus on the concept that our school will be an IB for all school. The need to create a school-wide culture of high expectations and access to IB classes for all students was the basis for collaborative discussions between all stakeholders. In the end, the IS community’s philosophy centers on the belief that access and equity will be extended to all students. Student supports systems would be in place with the AVID methodologies serving as the core program. It is the adherence to this concept of inclusion that meets the criteria for admittance into the Blue Ribbon Program.

The School of International Studies has focused on learning as we strive for excellence. We offer students the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for their present and future success through sound teaching practices. The mission of the School of International Studies is to “engage, enlighten, and empower all students to live successfully in a global community”. The vision statement of the School of International Studies envisions an academic environment where:

Students learn, achieve, and demonstrate mastery of district, state, and International Baccalaureate standards.

Teachers provide a rigorous positive learning environment that motivates students to achieve.

Parents make educational excellence a priority and actively support their children’s education.

All stakeholders value a community of teaching and learning as demonstrated by the student achievement that results from their cooperation, collaboration, and collegial relationships.

In addition to the excellent academic program, the School of International Studies provides opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities and clubs, athletics, student government organizations and academic support/tutoring programs. Students engage in a wide variety of clubs and sports, complex wide and site specific. Leadership roles are enhanced through participation in a multitude of school groups and clubs (International Studies Ambassadors (ISA), National Honors Society, and International Studies Student Coalition ISSC) which help all students feel an integral part of International Studies.

Our supportive staff encourages and empowers students to be active, lifelong learners who value other people. The school is uniquely structured to produce innovative, principled, culturally aware, and insightful leaders. With the IB curriculum and an involvement with the global community at its core, the School of International Studies graduates students who are well prepared for post-secondary education or to enter the workplace.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS 12CA24

1. Assessment Results:

A. The School of International Studies gathers data from the California Standards Test (CST), California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE), and the results of AP/IB tests. The data used for analyzing the trends is the CST scores as all of our students take the tests.

The results of the CST tests provide the staff with an individualized student achievement record in the core subjects. Results identify the weaknesses in each area and the teachers use this data to craft individual support lessons. At our site, if the student scores at the Advanced level, the student has an in-depth understanding of the rigorous subject matter and is able to solve complex problems. If the student scores at the Proficient level, then the student has a solid understanding of the challenging subject matter and can solve a variety of problems. Students are provided with the strategies and knowledge to perform at these levels.

If the student is struggling with the content area and scores basic, below basic and far below basic then a series of interventions are offered to students in the support classes, after school and on Saturday. A variety of test prep materials are used—books, internet sites, and one on one tutoring.

Overall, the students perform well on the CAHSEE with a pass rate of 99% in English and 98% in Math. B. Our students also perform exceptionally well on the ELA and Math CST. The recent results—Spring of 2011-- five year trends, and subgroup disparities are discussed below:

Math CST: 49% of our 9th graders scored Advanced or Proficient on the CST between 2009 and 2010. A slight decline occurred from 2009 (39.9) to 2010 (34.0) due to changes in curriculum. Changes in instructional strategies (Promethean Board and technology) led to an increase in 2011 to 49%. In the 10th grade, the statistics show an increase each year that has remained fairly constant (2006- 4.8% to 21.6% in 2010. In the 11th grade, the students showed a steady increase from 18.6% in 2006 to 28.6% in 2010. The students in the subgroups generally reflect these trends with the greatest improvement found in the free and reduced lunch grouping of a 36.7% increase in the 9th grade. Overall, the cumulative gains were indicated in all of our subgroups at every level.

The increase in performance levels of the subgroups was due to aligned curriculum, assessment and differentiated instruction. The dedication of the teachers in the math department is reflected in the student's success on internal and external assessments.

ELA CST: 86% of the 9th graders scored Advanced or Proficient on the CST. 82.4 % of our 10th graders scored at this level while 80% of the 11th graders scored at the Advanced or Proficient level. Overall the 9th grade students showed an upward trend with a dip in 2008. The 10th grade students increased steadily with a dip in 2009. Note that this original 9th grade group of students showed a decrease in 10th grade but rebounded in 11th grade. Overall, the data reflects an upward trend.

Of the subgroups, the Hispanic students reflected the largest gain of 19%. In addition, the Asian student scores reflected a slight dip from 2007-2008 followed by steady increase. A slight dip in the performance of all of our subgroups in 2007-2008 can be partially attributed to budget cuts, increased class sizes and increased student population. Adjustments were made including but not limited to differentiated instruction, student support systems and modification in instruction.

The data reflects an upward trend for all students with the largest disparity occurring between the white students (90%) and Hispanic students (64%). However the Hispanic students have made the largest gains at 19% over 5 years so the gap between the student achievements is narrowing, and in most cases is less than 10%.

In the area of student achievement in math for the 9th graders, the achievement level remained at a constant level-only the Hispanic subgroup scored 12% lower. At the 10th grade, all the students performed at the level. At the 11th grade, two groups scored at a lower level—African American and multi-racial

data reflected that 0% were deemed as Advanced or Proficient. These groups are small—10%. At this level, the focus on IB level math maybe reflected in the low scores.

In the area of student achievement in ELA for the 9th graders, the African American students scored 10% below the average (75%). In the 10th grade, the Hispanic students scored 10% below the level. In the 11th grade, all students grew steadily. The subgroups made steady gains in Math and ELA.

To close the achievement gap, a series of support systems were put in place—after school/lunchtime tutorials, AVID and IB Support. Bilingual student mentors organized study groups in the classroom or on the web and set up blogs for review. Saturday sessions for review and enrichment are held each month. Teachers hold regularly scheduled office hours for conferences or additional help. Parent Connect group meetings include distribution of handouts that outline study strategies and discussions on creating a leaning environment in the home.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Schools that belong to the IB organization must undergo a rigorous authorization process. The organization constantly scrutinizes and evaluates their own programs in order to be certain that they measure up to IB standards. Each year, the International Baccalaureate Curriculum and Assessment Center provides schools with feedback about student and teacher performance that helps schools to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in each subject. The IB organization also carries out periodic reevaluations of member schools and provides ongoing teacher training. The teachers use this assessment data to vertically align instructional practices. Teachers embed the IB instructional practices into their curriculum using a variety of written and oral assignments. Given that some of our students struggle with timed writing, the English faculty has decided to introduce the analytical components of the IB Commentary at the sophomore level. Given the complexity of the standard, the teachers have developed differentiated lessons to teach students the skills to deconstruct the prompt and to write within the time limit. These differentiated instruction strategies are shared with the support teachers so the procedure is addressed in all areas.

The IB assessment of student performance is conducted over the two years of the program using internationally accepted performance standards. The philosophy underlying the IB assessment process is aimed at giving students the opportunity to express what they do know, rather than finding out what they do not know. The method that is used to achieve these objectives is based on the theory of criterionreferenced assessment, which has both internal (by the teacher) and external (by an IB examiner) assessment components. Student performance on the IB tests are reported to the parents and the class results are posted on the school website. Student performance on the CST is also communicated to the parents through a report that outlines the rationale for the test, the student's performance on individualized test question responses in each content area and compares the student's results to the school's and district's performance levels. Test results are explained during monthly parent meetings and/or during individual parent conferences.

Additionally, we looked at our results from the California State Standards (CST), the PSAT, AP and the California (CAHSEE) tests. As a result of our CST data, the English department decided to use a baseline writing assignment followed by a midyear sample to measure growth and achievement, and an end of the year assessment to determine students' ability to write under time constraints. In this manner, the methods used to enhance timed writing strategies for IB are infused into the various modes of writing required for standardized tests. In order to teach research skills that are deemed necessary for college, the sophomore English and History teachers have designed a research paper that illustrates the ability of the students to apply and synthesize the learned information. At the end of the first semester, the teachers met to read the research papers. Then the teachers work to align the strategies, review the components that need to be revisited in the classroom and then, address the skills in a variety of modes. In order to ensure that the students have reached the curricular mastery, students complete another research paper in the spring. After reviewing the data, the math teachers addressed weaknesses in their math scores. The decision to

vertically align the classes with the assessment component focusing on mastery of the skills came out of a collaborative effort to provide students with the knowledge necessary to succeed at the high school level and in college. The teachers have added a weekly *Skills Test* to ensure mastery. The students retake the *Skills Test* until they receive a passing grade. Using this strategy, the teachers can monitor the students' ability to analyze data, and apply the skills to problems. The science teachers also reviewed their data in the areas of recording lab results. Following a series of collaborative meetings, the teachers focused on writing lab results using the academic scientific language and teaching strategies for understanding standardized test questions.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

During the yearly AP/IB *Super Saturday* professional development day sponsored by the county, teachers presented strategies for effectively writing an IB Commentary. The teachers modeled answering a series of guided questions that were developed at our site to guide the student into answering the *SO WHAT?* analytical component of the IB external test. Additionally, these skills can be easily transferred to student use in understanding the AP prompts.

In addition, the AP history teacher presented a session on writing Document Based Questions (DBQs) and the use of primary sources. Using resources from district approved sites to develop open ended analytical questions about history was the crux of his session. The computer teacher shared strategies for researching valid sites for classroom use in the areas of art and science. Also the *Super Saturday* venue lent itself to sharing such topics as supporting the students with IEPs, the SDAIE strategies used to support the ELL in honors/ advanced classes, and the use of differentiated instruction to enrich the learning of our GATE students. Many of the teachers have presented on these topics and others at Symposiums, district professional development meeting and complex wide sessions. The audience includes high school teachers of humanities and middle school teachers.

The topic of equity and access has been addressed by the faculty, the AVID Coordinator and the IB Coordinator during on-site and off-site sessions. In the fall, the coordinators, a teacher and the principal presented the research, the theories and the practical strategies at the College Board meeting in New York City. The focus of this interactive session was Equity and Access: Academic Achievement in an Urban High School. We shared data, student testimonials, and overviews of our support systems. that correlate with student success in rigorous classes. The question and answer period allowed teachers to ask specific questions that led to spirited discussions.

In the winter, the presentation was shared with AVID Coordinators in the district and county. A shortened version was presented to the staff and parents at our site. The AVID Coordinator and the staff attended summer sessions to increase knowledge in honing AVID methodology. During these sessions, groups of AVID teachers have presented sessions on College Competitiveness, essay writing, FAFSA, and tutoring. Math and science teachers have presented district and site workshops on analyzing data, statistics and strategies for discussing complex ethical dilemmas that are surfacing at an alarming rate in our world.

The IB and AP teachers have attended workshops at other sites which allowed them to network with teachers across the country and the world. While posting on the internet does not replace the personalized contact, it broadens our scope of contacts and allows for a quick response or suggestion in a multitude of areas. Updates are shared with staff, students and families via email so that everyone has full access to the information at the same time.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

To complement the academic environment, the parent component (Parent Connect) supports the programs through participation in fund raisers, attendance at college and IB workshops, and support of their children in the educational process. Parents make educational excellence a priority and actively involved in their children's education. Parents can access their student's grades and homework through Zangle, interact with teachers via email, and confer with teachers and counselors.

A monthly parent group meeting is held in the library which features speakers, relevant workshops—parent child relationships, dealing with stress, peer pressure, time management and leadership. Pertinent information about the school issues and changes are discussed with the parents — bell schedule, lanyards and a-g requirements. The information is recorded and included in a monthly newsletter to all parents and posted on the school website. The information is written in English and Spanish and a translator is present at the meetings. Many of our staff members speak Spanish so the information is translated diligently. Within the small school structure, staff has the opportunity to serve in many capacities: Governance Team, School Site Council (SSC), department chairs and instructional leaders. Parents, students and community members serve on the Governance and SSC committees.

IS has always celebrated students success with parents and community members in assemblies on our campus—academic awards, athletics, art shows and artistic performances. Members of the San Diego Foundation, the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis organization and owners of various local businesses have attended celebratory events in Balboa Park’s Museum of Art.

IS showcases student achievements during the district wide Magnet Showcase for recruitment purposes. Faculty, staff and students answer questions posed by perspective parents, local media and newspaper journalists. During the course of the year, visitors from the community /district and prospective parents visit our classrooms, speak to students –IS Ambassadors — staff and faculty during our Magnet Mondays. Often times, community mentors and volunteers are on campus and willing to answer questions.

Our school’s faculty works on projects with professors at the local universities — CREATE at UCSD, Educational Policy at USD and research at SDSU — to enrich the learning experience of our students. Student teachers from these universities teach our students in the areas of Math, English, Social Studies and Foreign Languages with astounding success. The collegial sharing of pedagogy has enhanced our teaching styles and improved the learning for our students.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION 12CA24

1. Curriculum:

The International Baccalaureate Diploma is recognized for its superior educational program, as the program prepares students through its rigorous academic work so that they may succeed at postsecondary institutions around the world. The program encourages students to think and analyze using an international perspective while developing an understanding of their own cultural and national identity. Students learn a second language and, additionally, develop skills to live and work with others internationally—essential for life in the 21st century. Given this scenario, the rigorous and relevant Theory of Knowledge class is a requirement for all of our juniors. Therefore, our school became an IB for all school.

The need to offer IB classes to our diverse student population became the rationale for adopting the IB for all. During meetings and individual conferences, the counselors explained the IB course sequence, rationale and mission to parents and students. IB’s emphasis on interdisciplinary learning requires that students study courses across six disciplines, including mathematics, individuals and societies, and the arts.

Part of the diploma process involves submitting an Extended Essay (EE), completing the Theory of Knowledge course, and participating in creativity, action, and service projects (CAS). IB coursework also meets and exceeds California’s high school graduation requirements. Students may choose to take individual IB courses and exams and earn IB certificates or complete all the components to attain an IB Diploma, which are recognized for credit at most colleges and universities.

English Language Arts—Adhering to CA and IB standards, teachers have developed curriculum that is applicable to a student centered program that integrates literature, presentation, oral, composition, language and research. The goal of this program is to prepare the students for college and beyond.

Mathematics—The teachers have created a standards aligned curriculum that helps students succeed in rigorous courses and electives that are needed to meet a-g requirements—IB Math and AP statistics. Teachers use specially designed differentiated curriculum to support varied learning styles of student.

Social Studies—The department offers rigorous IB, AP and college prep courses: Grade 9—Big History—Pilot program: Grade 10—World History (Honors and college prep): Grade 11—U.S. History (AP and college prep): Grade 12— IB Economics, IB History of the Americas, Government and Economics. The programs are closely aligned with California standards and IB standards.

Technology—Classes offered in this field are Virtual Enterprises, an introductory business course where students develop a business and learn to use programs to support their efforts. Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint along with Google Sketchup, Adobe Photoshop and Flash are emphasized. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Technologies is an advanced course which focuses on the application of GIS to the collection, visualization and evaluation of data to analyze issues with geographic relationships. Students learn to use ESRI's ArcMap, Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint to support their investigations. These courses support CA standards in English, Mathematics and History as well as ROP industry sector standards.

Art and Drama—Teachers use resources in the San Diego area: art shows, visiting actors from the Light Opera Company and the Old Globe (San Diego). Each year the Drama students produce, act and choreograph two plays while our art students display their work at museums and local art galleries. These classes meet CA and IB standards.

Foreign Language—In addition to IB French and IB Spanish, IS offers Mandarin Chinese. The Arts and Foreign Language departments employ creative measures to enhance student learning: cultural and literary exploits such as, music, literature, drama and art. Oral language skills are developed through project presentations and field trips. Students who study Mandarin Chinese benefitted from a three week intensive language class in Beijing and Shanghai. The Foreign Language classes all meet CA and IB standards.

Science— Biology, Chemistry and Physics are offered at the college preparatory to the IB Higher Level in all three subject areas. All of our science courses meet or exceed state standards. All of our science courses are laboratory based and students become proficient in data collection and analysis. The teachers take part in symposiums hosted by the scientific community and attend training and collaboration sessions at Scripps Research, and UCSD.

Physical Education- In collaboration with the Biology classes, our Physical Education department provides instruction in nutrition and physical well being (eating disorders, drug awareness and healthy choices) along with the California mandated physical activity and fitness test.

While we are very proud of the accomplishments of our students, we are also keenly focused on providing supports for struggling students. The AVID program meets the needs of our least served students as its purpose is to increase school-wide learning and performance for students. To develop a foundation, the site team instructed teachers in the AVID methodologies to be used in the classroom. The staff reiterated the commitment to open access to the IB curricula/Diploma Program with the idea that this policy will ensure four-year college eligibility for almost all students. In addition to the academic component, the staff focused on encouraging the least served students to take part in mainstream activities so they will become educated and responsible participants and leaders in a democratic society.

2. Reading/English:

Adhering to the IB and CA State Standards and the Framework, teachers use a variety of instructional approaches that include analytical and creative writing, group presentations, projects—technological and/or creative, reading of functional documents, historical essays—primary and secondary sources, and debates in a student centered classroom.

In addition to these learning modes, the English department teachers use the Promethean Boards to

engage students in interacting with the texts (expository and fiction pieces that are part of the IB list). Assessments, writing samples and student work are completed individually, in small groups or in whole class seminars. Student centered projects, research papers, discussions and oral presentations focus on the connection between the global world, the literature, and the student.

Our struggling readers and second language students receive support through differentiated instruction in the areas of mechanics—grammar, syntax, literary features, diction, and vocabulary (SAT Prep)—and through the use of understanding contextual clues and word derivations. The AVID Strategy of Cornell Note taking allows the students to interact with the text, pose questions and infer the meaning. The students interact with the literary text through the use of color coding strategies to highlight data for analysis. All of our students use these classroom and at home. Tutoring sessions are offered after school and on Saturdays for support. AVID and IB Support classes also offer one on one tutoring. Our GATE students participate in contests—Ann Rand’s Anthem essay contest; lead Socratic Seminars; research topics of interest for presentation—Jazz during the study of Harlem Renaissance poetry--and mentor/tutor students.

After reviewing the data, the teachers have aligned their curriculum with the goal of using common assessments to guide instructional practice at all grade levels. A series of three writing prompts are given through the school school—a baseline, a growth and mastery, and a final for analysis and synthesis. In addition, IB analytical writings are assessed through internal/external essays—World Literature Paper II (Grade 12): World Literature Paper I (Grade 11): Poetry Log and Reflective Statements (Grade 10): Expository writing and Literary Analysis (Grade 9). External assessments are taken at the end of senior year.

The writing process is an integral component of our instruction—prewriting, writing, editing and revising strategies are completed individually or with peers. Using IB/CA rubrics, students deconstruct the prompt before they embark on writing their responses. Various IB and AP writing styles are used to analyze literature—IB Commentary, Reflective Statements, and Stephen Toulmin’s Claim, Data, Warrant, Data, Warrant analytical style.

3. Mathematics:

Adhering to IB and CA State Standards and the Framework, the math curriculum includes rigorous required courses and electives to prepare students for college. These courses fulfill the “a-g requirements” as mandated by the state universities and our district. Students are required to pass three years of math—Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 11. In addition to the college prep classes, our students can opt to take honors courses in Geometry, Algebra 11, Pre-Calculus, AP Statistics, IB Math Studies (Standard Level) and IB Math (Standard Level), IB Math (Higher Level). In the Honors and IB/AP classes, the pace is accelerated and the mathematical concepts are studied in greater depth. In the IB/AP classes, the students are presented with topics that blend their analytical and conceptual knowledge and provide them with the strategies to be able to communicate, rationalize, and apply these concepts to real world problems. Also, the focus on the role of a mathematician in the global world in areas of ethics and statistics is discussed. The teachers have vertically aligned the courses and use a variety of assessment strategies to gauge the knowledge of their students. Using data, the teachers decided to focus on each student’s mastery of a concept before introducing another concept. The students are assessed through a series of Skills Tests. Each student must pass the test before they are deemed proficient in understanding and applying the concept. Using this strategy and differentiated instruction should support our struggling math students and increase their standardized test scores—CST, SAT and ACT.

In addition to using the strategies listed above, the math department engages students through the use of projects as deemed academically sound and meets or exceed CA standards. Field trips, guest speakers from related fields, and media presentations enhance the learning experience.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class offers students and their teachers the opportunity to: reflect critically on diverse ways of knowing and on areas of knowledge and to consider the role and nature of knowledge in their own culture, in the cultures of others and in the wider world. In addition, it prompts students to: be aware of themselves as thinkers, encouraging them to become more acquainted with the complexity of knowledge and to recognize the need to act responsibly in an increasingly interconnected but uncertain world (IBO). The structure of the class allows students to discuss various topics in a calm environment. The need to express and defend an idea is an integral part of the high school experience. TOK is intended to give students the tools to sort out and deal with that knowledge. Time needs to be spent on reflection on the knowledge gained, how it was gained, and where it fits into the larger sphere of what we know.

TOK also has an important role to play in providing coherence for the student as it transcends and links academic subject areas, thus demonstrating the ways in which they can apply their knowledge with greater awareness and credibility. Access to IB classes was the initial rationale and goal for incorporating TOK into every junior's schedule and an increase in the number of students taking the IB tests was an outcome that the staff envisioned and it came to volition.

The TOK class is a regularly scheduled class taught by two IB trained social science teachers. All of the IB juniors take the class. Support is provided to students in the form of tutorials, AVID and IB Support. Socratic Seminars, Fishbowl, oral presentations, journal entries and written responses are used to explore global issues relevant to the students.

In many cases, the socio-economic status of our students prevents them from participating in external testing in this urban school. The school community in conjunction with Federal and State incentive programs is being extended to students in financial need thus allowing for access to all students. The methodology used focuses on the underlying notion is that the student is responsible both as a learner and as a teacher. The rigorous curriculum follows the standards listed in the IB guidelines. Topics are presented in a structured sequence and assigned readings and provide activities to stimulate discussion. The students must be willing to think in this class – reflect on their beliefs, challenge assumptions, assert opinions, respect differences. Students make connections between discussions of knowledge and learning in other classes.

Research based discussions that focused on increasing rigor were the foundation for the decision to include TOK in every junior's schedule. After reviewing data, the staff elected to offer the TOK experience to every student, therefore, every student that attends IS is an IB student.

5. Instructional Methods:

On a daily basis, the teachers use a variety of teaching and learning modes in order to address all of the learning modes—visual, oratory and kinesthetic. Teachers will use a combination of group and individual instruction to explain a concept. Use of graphic organizers, graphing paper and the Promethean Board allows the visual learner to see the concept explained through a series of steps. Students in our subgroups benefit from group work or peer share so that they can “talk through” the process. In order to heighten the listening skills of our students, teachers will write the main topic on the white board or provide an outline of the topic, and the students will take Cornell notes from the lecture. Since this skill is necessary for success at the college level, the teachers structure their lectures to fit the schema. For example, the history teacher uses the Power Point model to highlight the main ideas or topics and the students take Cornell notes from his lecture. The Honors Chemistry teacher models the academic language and format for writing a lab on the Promethean Board, the students complete the writing with a partner before they write record their findings in an individual lab report.

As the teachers check for understanding either orally or in a written format, they may modify their instruction to increase understanding. Students in our subgroups benefit from revisiting concepts during collaborative group work or by offering a creative way to understand difficult material. For example, the

demise of the tragic hero and his impact on the other characters may be understood if the students take part in role playing or acting. Changing the mode of instruction often adds clarity and allows the student to understand difficult concepts. Understanding the nuances of language is strengthened by the visual recreation of the concept.

Using data to drive instruction and to reassess the needs of our students is a daily topic of discussion. Given that the teachers network with other IB/AP teachers, the teachers interact with each other and discuss strategies to aid in understanding and comprehension.

6. Professional Development:

The teachers in the School of International Studies are actively involved in the professional development sessions that focus on meeting the goals of the WASC document, the School-Wide Plan, and district and state standards. Additionally, the teachers attend nationwide IB conferences, core course seminars, district meetings that explain support strategies for students with special needs, ELLs, GATE and enrichment programs.

As Tuesdays are modified schedule days, on-site meetings are held during this contractually mandated time for teachers. PDs include, but are not limited to, analyzing data, discussion of research, analyzing student work, planning curriculum and sharing lessons. Teacher led sessions include such topics as formative and summative assessments, instructional strategies, student centered classrooms, technology, college and counseling information, and sharing student success. The PD planning committee has set aside time for departments to meet together to review student work in order to strengthen teaching practices. In addition to teacher led sessions, content level specialists focus on aligning course content standards with the state standards. While this alignment is crucial, the specialists also address any concerns that the teachers may have in providing instruction to our sub-group, ELLs, and students with special needs. The teachers agree that this focused small group setting is far more beneficial than the larger district meetings. Teachers leave these sessions with materials, internet sources and interactive student lessons for the Promethean Board.

Also the IB Coordinator shares changes in the assessment process, scheduling of IB/AP tests, and information gleaned from meetings with other IB Coordinators in the district and nationwide. The AVID Coordinator shares data, addresses any issues with tutors, and celebrates college admittance statistics. The principal leads discussion forums on current research and methodologies. The collegial conversations centered on hot topics such as content design, relevance of SAT scores, changing best practices, student engagement strategies, STEM Education, and assessment. Presently, many of our teachers have researched new theories, best practices and ideas for increased support and they have led the discussion. This interaction is just one example of the collaborative and supportive tone found on our site. The combination of district support, content specialists, reading specialists, resource teachers, teacher leaders and the principal support has lead to an increase in reading comprehension, higher test scores, higher pass rate for students taking IB/AP tests, and knowledgeable students who will succeed in college and in the global society.

7. School Leadership:

The first item that our principal shared with the staff was his credo "Learning is the Main Thing!" While the concept seemed simplistic at first, we integrated this concept into every aspect of our school's philosophy. The leadership team comprised of teachers and department chairs from every department, embraced this vision as it provided the school community with a direction and a focus. In addition to the teachers who embraced a leadership role, the school's leadership team is comprised of the AVID Coordinator, IB Coordinator, Governance Chair, School Site Council Chair and Peer Mentor Coordinator. Under his direction and support our test scores and API has increased, but more importantly, all of the stakeholders have been actively involved in the education of our students. In his daily interactions with the students, the principal comments on their success in individual classes and encourages them to seek support if they are struggling. In order to support student learning, he visits classrooms on a daily basis.

Often times, he will participate in a discussion or individually tutor a student. His hands-on individualized approach has been heralded as the single most valued aspect of his leadership role.

In addition to interacting with the students on our campus, the principal has been instrumental in providing students with enriching artistic or academic experiences in our community. From arranging seminars in the study of Mexican art at the Museum of Art to accompanying the AVID and AP U.S. History students on a five day research trip to visit UC and private colleges, the principal espouses his belief that all students can succeed and achieve their goals. Under his direction, our students are involved with college students and professors in completing projects in the areas of math and science. Our IB Biology HL students earned a first place award at the American Society of Hematology symposium. In respect to the staff, the principal believes in transparency and shares his rationale for decision making. Collaborative decision making is the marker of his leadership role as he asks for input from all stakeholders in the Governance and School Site Council committees. While he is ultimately responsible for the decision, he is respectful of other opinions and listens.

In his evaluation of teacher performance, the principal uses the district rubric but he also encourages teachers to share their insights on strengths and weaknesses. Using this mode of evaluation, the teachers reflect on their teaching style and realigns her/his style to fit the ever changing learning style of our students. Adherence to district and school rules and safety issues are another element that our principal, staff and the IS Community treat as a priority. As our school borders the changing downtown area, security cameras, required lanyard policy and increased visibility of the security staff promotes a feeling of safety on our campus.