FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program?
A demanding, pre-university course of study that leads to examinations.

Who is the program designed for?
It is designed for highly motivated students who seek the challenge of a well rounded, liberal arts, and international curriculum.

How many years does it take to earn the IB Diploma?
The program is a comprehensive two-year international curriculum starting at Henry Foss HS at the eleventh-grade. Students prepare and gain the edge for the program by taking honors classes in the ninth and tenth grade.

What is the IB curriculum’s focus?
Humanities and sciences. Diploma candidates must select one subject from each of the six IB groups: Language A1, Second Language, Individuals and Societies, Experimental Sciences, Mathematics, and The Arts. An additional Second Language, Science or Individuals and Societies course may be substituted for the Arts. At least three but not more than four are taken at the Higher Level (HL), while the others are standard level (SL). HL courses represent a minimum of 240 teaching hours (2 year minimum) and SL courses over 150 hours (one year minimum).

Why are some courses taken at the higher level and others at the standard level?
This allows students to explore some subjects in depth and others more broadly, a deliberate compromise between the early specialization of some national systems and the breadth found in others.

What are the benefits of earning an IB Diploma?
The Diploma Program equips students with the skills and attitudes necessary for success in higher education and employment. The IB Organization’s goal is to provide students with the values and opportunities that will enable them to develop sound judgment, make informed decisions, and respect others in the global community. Just like Advance Placement, each university sets its own criteria for awarding college credit and/or scholarships. Students and parents can view each university’s IB policy for awarding credit by calling up the IBO web page, www.ibo.org.

How is the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program DIFFERENT from the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Program?
AP students can choose one or more AP exams/courses to take. IB students must take one course (which leads to an external exam) from each of the six IB subject groups. IB students must also write an extended essay of some 4,000 words, take a Theory of Knowledge course and complete 150 Creative, Action, and Service (CAS) hours during 11th and 12th grade years. AP assesses students with exams in May. IB also assesses students with exams in May, but IB also requires that students be assessed internally through the form of written papers, one-on-one oral examinations, portfolios, projects, etc.