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NEWS and INFORMATION

Students Gain International Perspective in IB Program

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (January 15, 2009) Scottsdale Unified School District's (SUSD) International Baccalaureate (IB) program, which is offered only at Desert Mountain High School, challenges students' thought processes and helps them gain an international perspective.

During this two year program, juniors and seniors are tested in six subject areas including English, Spanish or French, social science, a lab science, math and the arts. By doing well on the exams, students can earn college credit. The program has an international focus, and students learn about both United States and international affairs. There is also a pre-diploma program for freshman and sophomores.

"All of the teachers in the program, both pre-diploma and IB, have gone through extensive IB training and are familiar with the assessments the juniors and seniors take," said Laura Kamka, IB coordinator and teacher.

This year, there are 115 juniors and seniors enrolled in the IB program and 235 students in the pre-diploma program. This semester, junior and seniors will work on internal assessments, including papers, labs and presentations. These are graded by the teacher and then sent to the IB graders who moderate their marks to make sure the teachers are using the IB rubrics correctly. Freshmen will be starting their Nuremberg trial in the fourth quarter, The IB Student Association will host an International Day which will feature some of the cultures that are represented in the program. The students will set up booths and visual aids so other students from the school can come and learn about the different cultures. Desert Mountain's IB Parent's Association will host a recognition ceremony in May which will highlight the seniors' achievements. The freshmen, sophomores and juniors are also recognized for their contributions to the program.

In order to take IB courses, students must apply to the pre-diploma program when they are 8th graders, and then apply to the IB program when they are sophomores. Grades, test scores, teacher recommendations and writing samples are reviewed. Also, to be considered for the program, students must want to learn and be hardworking, have an interest in education and contribute to the class.

"One of the positive aspects of the program is the 'school within a school' atmosphere. It makes Desert Mountain seem a lot smaller and more personal," said Kamka.

These courses are taught at Desert Mountain High School and are open to all SUSD high school students. For more information about the program, please view the [IB Web page](#) or the High School Planning Guide.

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Scottsdale Unified School District is one of Arizona's most Excelling school districts, with 22 schools earning the state's highest rating—Excelling. All Scottsdale schools are rated as Excelling, Highly Performing, Performing Plus or Performing by the Arizona Department of Education. For more information about Scottsdale Unified schools, please visit www.susd.org.