

Classes for the Masses

IB COURSES SHOULD BE MORE INCLUSIVE

Stony Point is one of two schools in the district to offer the International Baccalaureate program to its students. IB is a rigorous international education program that, according to the program's website, "develops the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world."

The students who are able to dedicate their high school career to the program and work towards an IB diploma agree with the program's mission and see an educational benefit. Other students who, for one reason or another, are not able to fully dedicate their time to pursue an IB diploma can see the opportunities created when enrolling in some of the IB classes as well. Yet, non-IB program students are not allowed to take a select few IB classes to enrich their school experience.

Keeping in mind that some students have to work and help pay their family's bills and

some students are involved in multiple co-curricular activities that take up their course selections, the school should allow students to take individual IB classes instead of having to participate in the entire diploma program.

The school highly promotes taking more advanced courses, such as AP and IB. Yet, non-IB program students who are interested in an IB course that doesn't have an AP or regular level equivalent are denied the opportunity to extend their knowledge. Promoting advanced courses but then turning away interested students is not a healthy practice for the school or the students. Instead, this practice discourages students who have a sincere interest in specialized topics.

Think about a general education music student whose life revolves around his trumpet. This student may not want, need or be educationally ready to take AP and IB core courses, but he would be successful and

challenged in the IB Music Theory course that doesn't have an AP or regular education equivalent. Refusing to let the student take the Music Theory course denies him of another opportunity to connect to his future career goals.

Even when AP course versions for IB courses exist, the curriculum is not the same. Take for example a student who wants to pursue a career in psychology. She should be able to have the opportunity to challenge herself by taking the IB Psychology instead of, or along with, AP Psychology, since the courses are different.

Along with educational reasons, there are also financial reasons why some students avoid a full AP load or an IB diploma program. AP exams cost \$95 per exam and an additional \$15 for late fees. The IB exams, however, cost around \$200, without late fees. This can be an extreme hardship on students attempting to complete the IB program, considering the

fact that students have to take a minimum of 5-6 exams. By allowing students to only take advanced level courses in areas they need, administration can help allow students learn new skills while keeping cost to a minimum. No student should have to deal with hardships in order to complete their education when they are highly motivated to learn.

One reason administration may oppose changing the IB curriculum is it can alter the financial aspect of the program. However, according to the official IB website, IB courses could still be offered individually, without having a large loss of finances for the campus and district.

The school should allow students to take IB courses without being a part of the IB diploma program. Students interested in this option should make their voices heard by speaking to campus administrators and the IB coordinator.