



Q&A: HFCA International Baccalaureate Candidate

WHAT IS IB?

The International Baccalaureate Organization (“IB”) is an educational foundation that has developed a framework for schools throughout the world to use to implement curriculum. IB has developed four programmes of international education: the Primary Years, Early Childhood - Grade 5 (PYP); the Middle Years, Grades 6-10 (MYP); the Diploma Programme, Grades 11-12 (DP); and the International Baccalaureate Career-related Certificate, Grades 11-12 (IBCC). Each Programme has its own candidacy process.

IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed. The IB framework:

- encourages students to think independently and drive their own learning,
- provides academic rigor to all learners,
- emphasizes students’ personal development, and
- engages students with people in an increasingly globalized, rapidly changing world.

Learn more at www.ibo.org.

1) Why pursue IB Certification?

Committed to our goal of continual improvement, HFCA and our teachers will benefit from a professional network of schools that is committed to the same educational philosophy. IB provides training and professional development for our dedicated teachers, identifies research-based resources to enhance our curriculum, provides a network to expand our students’ global awareness, and aligns with our Catholic Christian values.

IB Certification is a logical next step in our effort to take HFCA to the next level. Many of the IB requirements (e.g., transdisciplinary themes, inquiry learning, and foreign language instruction) are actually already part of our “thinking curriculum.” The IB framework will provide our teachers and staff with:

- significantly more professional development,
- access to IB’s online curriculum centre with publications and teaching materials,
- the opportunity to participate in worldwide online forums with other IB practitioners, and
- the ability to incorporate educational best practices from a range of international frameworks and curricula.

2) How will this change the HFCA curriculum?

Simply stated, IB provides an infrastructure platform from which to strengthen and enhance **our** curriculum and instruction. IB’s comprehensive framework, standards and practices will be used to further improve the quality of our curriculum, and ensure that we consistently focus on the knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and actions that young students need to develop to be productive and successful in the 21st

century. **What** we teach is determined by HFCA; **how** we teach is enhanced by IB.

IB certification is **process driven**, and may actually be transparent to students and parents. As a PYP Candidate School, HFCA is responsible for:

- implementing the Primary Years Programme so all students in 3-year-old preschool through Grade 5 are engaged with the same method of teaching,
- implementing deliberate collaboration both at the grade level and content area (i.e., Collaboration will take place among all teachers at each grade level, and all teachers that teach math, English, social studies, etc. across grades)
- employing transdisciplinary themes in our teaching (i.e., integrating multiple subject areas within a given unit.)
- using inquiry learning as the method of teaching; a teaching method HFCA has employed in K-8 since 2006, and
- continuing to provide foreign language instruction.

As an IB Candidate, HFCA will:

- work to meet the requirements for authorization as an IB World School, including implementing the PYP for at least one full academic year,
- continue to be solely responsible for determining the content of our curriculum,
- continue to be responsible for the hiring of our teachers, and
- clearly retain our Catholic identity as part of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The IB framework will strengthen and enhance the qualities that have made HFCA an innovative 21st century school. We will remain first and foremost a Catholic school, dedicated to developing leaders, thinkers grounded in faith.

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3) How does IB impact our Catholic identity?

Our Catholic faith complements the IB framework. The Catholic Church is a universal church with over 1 billion members worldwide. As Fr. Terry states, "IB status is consistent with our calling to be one, holy, Catholic church." Many of our current inquiry learning units are tied to Catholic Social Teachings, and that will continue. HFCA's pursuit of IB Candidacy is fully supported and encouraged by the Archdiocese of Chicago's Office of Catholic Schools.

4) Why not pursue all-school certification, including middle school?

It is clearly our intent to have all HFCA grades receive official IB certification. Pursuing candidacy for the Primary Years includes applying the IB framework to the curriculum of eight grade levels (3-year-old preschool through Grade 5). This is a significant undertaking. Our middle school teachers will be part of the process of the PYP candidacy. As a school community, we will all begin using terms and teaching methods consistent with the IB framework. This will ensure that students from the PYP grades transition seamlessly to middle school.

5) Most IB schools in Chicago charge extraordinarily high tuition. Will our tuition go up?

HFCA was required to pay a \$4,000 application for candidacy fee. The most significant expense incurred in obtaining IB World School authorization is increased professional development and training for our teachers. This expense is highest in the first year of candidacy. We planned for these fees, and this was considered in arriving at our 2015-2016 tuition. After authorization is completed, there is an annual fee charged to all IB World Schools. This fee will be part of our annual budget, however it is not anticipated to dramatically increase tuition costs.

6) What does the Candidacy Process look like? How long before HFCA is recognized as an IB World School?

HFCA was accepted as a Candidate for the Primary Years Programme. The Candidacy phase usually lasts 2-3 years. During this time, IB will provide HFCA with continued support. We will be assigned a consultant to mentor us through the process and conduct a two-day on-site consultation visit, as well as, provide us with 20 hours of remote consultation.

It should be noted that as a candidate school, the implementation of the IB Primary Years Programme is not being offered under IB authorized status, but only on trial implementation during the candidacy phase. Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes, visit <http://www.ibo.org>

We will keep you informed when the two-day on-site visit has been arranged, as this in-service teacher training will impact the 2015-2016 school calendar.

7) How many Catholic schools in the Chicago Archdiocese are IB certified in the primary grades?

HFCA is the first school in the Archdiocese of Chicago, the country's largest private school system, to be recognized as an IB Candidate School for the Primary Years Programme.

8) Will there be parent information sessions?

Over the summer, we will be getting more involved in the process and share monthly updates with our parents. In addition, throughout the 2015-2016 school year, we will schedule meetings with our parent community to share specific aspects of the IB framework.

IB World School By the Numbers

Primary Years Programme (PYP)

Countries with IB schools	141	PYP Schools -NW Suburbs*:	HFCA, Candidate
PYP Schools --U.S.	444	PYP Schools--Archdiocese:	HFCA, Candidate
PYP Schools--Illinois	11		

(9 private/magnet schools in Chicago, 1 Springfield, 1 Freeport)

* No others known.