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RESEARCH SUMMARY

Postsecondary Enrollment Patterns of IB Certificate and Diploma Candidates from U.S. High Schools

Based on a research report prepared for the IB by

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The International Baccalaureate (IB) aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. This process of preparing educated world citizens goes beyond a high school diploma. Given the increasingly complex demands of today's global economy, IB is also interested in preparing students to successfully enter and complete college.

In an effort to better understand the postsecondary outcomes of IB certificate and diploma students, the IB research department commissioned SRI International to examine whether IB's goal of providing rigorous preparation for college is reflected in high college attendance, achievement and completion rates. Data on IB students was compared to national averages¹ as benchmarks where available.

To this end, SRI researchers drew on the data sources shown in Table 1 to examine the postsecondary enrollment patterns (including college type and selectivity) and graduation rates of two cohorts of IB students: 11,653 certificate candidates and 12,834 diploma candidates.

	IB Data	National Student Clearinghouse	2005 Carnegie Classifications	IPEDS
Data elements	Results on IB assessments, program type (i.e., certificate, diploma)	Enrollment dates, status (full/half time), degree earned, institution level (2/4 year)	Selectivity, size, undergraduate program focus	4- and 6-year graduation rates for U.S. postsecondary institutions
Year	2000 and 2001	2000-2008	Classifications based on data from 2003 and 2004	2001 cohort

Table 1: Data sources²

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- 71% of all IB students enrolled full time at an NSC-participating postsecondary institution (2- and 4-year institution) as compared to the national average of 56%.
 - Most IB students enrolled directly in a 4-year institution. For 67% of all IB students, the first full time enrollment was at a 4-year institution.
 - Overall, 69% of IB students eventually enrolled full time at a 4-year postsecondary institution, regardless of whether they had previously enrolled full

¹ As context, the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics estimates that 56% of 2001 high school graduates were enrolled full time in college (2- and 4-year institutions) by the following October. Nationwide, 36% of first-time freshmen who entered full time into 4-year postsecondary institutions in 2001 graduated within 4 years, and 57% graduated within 6 years

² The IB data on cohorts are defined by students who took IB exams in 2000 and 2001; students who took IB courses but did not take any IB exams are excluded from the analysis.

time at a 2-year institution. This suggests that only 2% of IB students start full time at a 2-year school and then move to a 4-year school.

2. The majority of IB students attended selective colleges and universities. This proportion is higher for diploma candidates than for certificate candidates.
 - 68% of IB diploma candidates and 61% of IB certificate candidates enrolled full time at a 4-year institution classified as *selective* or *more selective*.
 - 53% of IB diploma candidates and 36% of IB certificate candidates enrolled full time at a 4-year school classified as *more selective*.
 - 39% of IB diploma candidates and 21% of IB certificate candidates had a first full-time enrollment at a 4-year *more selective* school that was classified as a research university, i.e., a comprehensive doctorate-granting institution with high research activity.
 - IB diploma candidates from public and private high schools have very different enrollment patterns. Specifically, IB diploma candidates from private high schools earned slightly higher mean exam scores than their peers from public high schools, but were also less likely to enroll at public 4-year institutions. However, for those students who did so, they were more likely to enroll in *more selective* arts and sciences colleges than almost any other group of students examined³.
3. Diploma candidates who do very well on IB exams in multiple subjects are more likely to attend *more selective* college and universities.
 - When the analysis compared diploma candidates who scored a 6 or higher on three or more exams to those who did not score this high in any subject, 62% enrolled in a *more selective* 4-year institution, compared to 44% with no scores above a 5.
 - Similarly, 6% of repeat high-scorers enrolled in small arts and sciences colleges and 46% in research universities, both of which fall into the *more selective* category, compared to 3% and 32% of students with no scores above 5.
4. The University of Florida had the most IB student enrollments of any NSC-participating institution, accounting for almost 9% of first full-time enrollments in 4-year institutions for all IB students and for 15% of diploma candidates. This reflects the high proportion (30%) of IB diploma candidates who come from high schools in Florida, as well as the weight given to IB courses in determining eligibility for merit-based scholarships to Florida's public university system, making the state system an attractive option for many IB students.

³ When considered as a proportion of students who enrolled full time at a 4-year institution, 65% of public high school graduates enrolled in a public college or university, compared to only 33% of private school students; in contrast, the percentage of private high school graduates who enrolled at an arts and sciences college was double that of public high school graduates (11% compared to 5%).

5. On the whole, 4- and 6-year graduation rates for IB students generally compared favorably to the national averages and institutional averages. Specifically:
- IB students' overall 4-year graduation rate (64%) and 6-year graduation rate (81%) were higher than the national averages of 36% and 57% respectively.
 - At college and universities with high numbers of IB enrollments, both 4- and 6-year graduation rates for IB students were generally higher than the institutional average. For example, 72% of IB students graduated from the University of Florida in 4 years compared to 53% of 2001 first-time freshman enrollees overall.

SOME LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study go some length to validate the rigor of IB exams and diploma requirements, particularly in terms of successful college enrollment and completion. It is important to note, however, that the design of this study does not permit claims about whether students achieved these postsecondary enrolment and achievement outcomes as a direct result of their engagement with the IB curriculum. For instance, in comparing college enrollment and graduation rates of certificate and diploma students, the extent to which the rates observed are directly attributable to students' participation in the IB curriculum cannot be clearly determined, as these rates may also reflect the differential achievement and motivation of students who chose to attempt the full Diploma Programme rather than enroll in only a few IB courses. In similar vein, when comparing enrollment and graduation rates of students who performed at different levels in the IB curriculum—whether comparing diploma candidates who did and did not successfully earn the IB diploma or comparing students who performed at different levels on IB exams—the results do provide validation for the rigor of the IB exams and the diploma requirements; however, it is not known if students who performed higher in the IB programme also started IB with higher level of preparation and achievement.

Despite these limitations, it is noteworthy that the overall postsecondary enrollment patterns and graduation rates for the 2000 and 2001 cohorts of IB diploma and certificate students from U.S. high schools compare favorably with national averages and in many instances, with institutional averages. Additionally, it can be inferred that the *selective* and *more selective* institutions included in this study do acknowledge performance within the IB as an acceptable standard by which to admit students. These findings lend some empirical support to the fact that IB is achieving its goal of providing rigorous preparation for college, as reflected in high college attendance, achievement and completion rates.

This summary was developed by the IB Research Department. A copy of the full report prepared by SRI International is available here: <http://www.ibo.org/research/programmevalidation/index.cfm>. For more information on this study or other IB research, please email research@ibo.org.