



Letter to the Community from the Superintendent of Schools

As an educator, I have always worked to keep personal politics out of educational decisions made for the Monticello Central School District. Any decisions the administration and Board of Education make are based on fact, fiscal impact and a view to the future. When I read the March 16 letter to the editor concerning the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, it was apparent that a political point of view was being inserted into an educational conversation.

If at any time our educators, administrators or Board of Education members felt that any of the attributes described in the March 16 letter were true, we would not have implemented the IB program. When we were presented with this anti-IB point of view several months ago, we examined it thoroughly and found the claims to be more about politics than truth.

We began researching the IB program four years ago and we were impressed by those institutions with which it is associated, including the following:

- The Federal Education Department under former President George W. Bush endorsed the program.
- The IB is in many of the United States Military base schools.
- Every state education department in the country recognizes the IB program.
- In 2008, the American College Testing (ACT) College Readiness Report stated that the IB is one of the programs acknowledged as improving college success for students.
- In the ACT report, the IB was classified as a good way to prepare students for the global marketplace.
- Colleges and universities have conducted extensive research and reported that the IB has many positive attributes.

The claim that the IB program is anti-Judeo/Christian is false and the facts speak for themselves. The IB is accepted by the Christian school system, Catholic schools and

colleges, and the Yeshiva college system. The claim that the IB is overwhelmingly expensive is false. If the writer of the previous letter had taken the time to attend our last Citizens' Advisory Budget Committee (CABC) meeting, he would have seen that training teachers in the IB is actually very cost effective and in fact, less expensive than training teachers in Advanced Placement or many of the other initiatives in which we have participated during the last 10 years. We do think that both Advanced Placement and the IB are good investments for our children. At the CABC meeting, we also explained to the community that the funding for the IB program is taken from grants and that at no time has taxpayer money been used as part of this change process. This information was provided at our meeting and is available to the public. In addition, we are more than willing to hold another community meeting to discuss this again.

We were shocked by the claim that moving to international standards was “dumbing down” the curriculum. Every international test and report going as far back as the Ronald Reagan years and the *Nation at Risk*, state the opposite and recognize that we are faced with major changes in curriculum if our children are to have a chance to compete in today's global economy. The New York State Education Department realizes that our present curriculum does not prepare our children to compete internationally and is moving to make major revisions. The IB helps us position ourselves for these changes.

As part of our technology curriculum, we teach our children not to believe everything they read on the internet. We also caution them to be careful when they find a web site that may be promoting only one point of view and may be bending the truth to fit an agenda. I encourage people to visit any web site necessary to help them seek the real truth. Please be assured that when we make a decision about any curriculum, it is researched extensively and references are checked. When our research on the IB found positive support and accolades for the program from the U.S. Military, every state education department in the country, the Federal Education Department under two U.S. Presidents and the American Colleges and Universities systems, to name a few, we felt that their combined research, perspectives and reports were significantly more substantial than one or two web sites with an obvious political agenda and bias.

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Monticello Central School District