Center for Universal Education at BROOKINGS

CASE STUDY | JANUARY 2023

TRANSCENDING BORDERS
THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE'S SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO EDUCATING THE WHOLE PERSON

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Executive summary

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) is a system of organizations, some of which operate at the global level (e.g., IB Global Centre, The Hague), and some of which are more informal and regional (e.g., Mid-Atlantic Association of IB World Schools).[1] As such, IB functions as a networked education system (Peurach et al., 2019) in that IB system hubs collaborate with each other and with IB schools to continually improve instruction, simultaneously promoting fidelity to key IB tenets while also permitting local adaptation. IB also functions as a hybrid system (e.g., Spillane et al., 2019); from its beginning, IB has operated as a private sector *educational* system that seeks to organize and improve instruction, but it partners with both public and private *school* systems to do so.

The IB system endeavors to promote both challenging academic instruction and more holistic aims—namely, intercultural understanding and respect. While this balancing act between academic rigor and more holistic aims remains constant as IB students move from pre-K to grade 12, the ratio between these two aims varies over time. Indeed, one way the IB system managed this tension was to develop the more holistically-focused Primary Years Programme (PYP) (ages 3-12) as a precursor to its more academically-focused Diploma Programme (ages 15-18). Philosophically, the IB system aims to create a more peaceful world through education, and by way of increased respect for children.

1 This case study is a companion to "Transforming education for holistic student development: Learning from education system (re) building around the world" (Datnow et al., 2022), a summary report that explores the work of building and rebuilding education systems to support holistic student development in six education systems in Singapore, Ireland, Chile, Canada, India, and the United States and in one cross-national system (the International Baccalaureate). While different in many ways, the seven systems bear remarkable similarities in their efforts to (re)build education systems—each is working in policy contexts pressing for academic quality and equity, while also facing additional incentives to support holistic student development.

Pedagogically, the IB system advances a form of instruction that is challenging, transdisciplinary, and inquiry- and concept-based.

Throughout its history, the IB system has managed at least three ongoing tensions, which stem from its multifaceted aims and which the system has evolved to manage. These three tensions are between: 1) academic rigor and equitable access; 2) more traditional academic achievement and more holistic teaching and learning; and 3) providing supports to schools and teachers to promote fidelity of implementation and also permitting practitioners enough discretion for local adaptation. These tensions are especially apparent at three points in time throughout the IB system's reform journey: when IB began in the 1960s, when the Primary Years Programme was created in 1997, and when the PYP was enhanced in 2018.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IB SYSTEM

From its onset, the IB system could be characterized as both an open system and a learning system. These characteristics are made apparent, and are facilitated by, some of the IB system's defining features. The focus of this brief is on the PYP, but the IB system also offers three other programs: 1) the Diploma Programme (ages 15-18); 2) the Middle Years Programme (ages 11-14); and 3) the Career-Related Programme (ages 15-18). Across these four programs, the IB system cultivates internationally-minded students by encouraging teachers to continually and authentically bring the outside world into the classroom. Because IB endeavors to connect classroom learning to the broader world and because it has schools across the globe, the system has an open stance toward its broader environment. One chief way the IB system adapts to myriad national contexts is through its robust educational infrastructure, which balances providing guidance to teachers and schools that foster the system's desired outcomes while leaving space for local agency and adaptation. IB's educational infrastructure is not prescriptive; rather, the system guides teaching and learning by way of instructional frameworks, planners, and desired outcomes, which can be filled in with local context, culture, and criteria. IB's educational infrastructure permits it to function as a learning system as well as an open system; supports like the IB educator network (IBEN), an online platform, and standards and processes for ongoing verification visits all facilitate the cross-pollination of ideas and promote continual improvement and capacity building.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN SYSTEM AND PRACTICE

When a school decides to offer the PYP to its students, it must undergo—and pay for—a lengthy authorization process, which requires buy-in and input from its varied stakeholders. This process helps to transform the instruction, organization, and culture of the school—all in an effort to work toward more holistic student outcomes and, as part of that, to connect children to their broader world. Instructionally, IB teachers shift toward more conceptual- and inquiry-based instruction and function more as facilitators and provocateurs as students cycle through inquiry, action, and reflection. Organizationally, the IB system guides both teachers and students to

BOX 1

The summary report "Transforming education for holistic student development: Learning from education system re(building) around the world" lays out 10 key lessons for transforming education systems, which are all exemplified in this case study. In particular, this case study highlights the need to:

1. Engage the perceived tensions between equity and rigor in deliberation about holistic development.
2. Design educational infrastructure to support new visions for instruction, and mobilize this infrastructure to support instructional improvement.
3. Balance common systemwide conventions with the need for local discretion to promote and encourage reform.

relate to one another more collaboratively. Finally, schools undergo a cultural change when implementing the PYP, promoting international mindedness, a culture of ongoing assessment and reflection, and a series of holistic attitudes (e.g., being principled, open-minded, and balanced). Even as the IB system endeavors to impact nearly all facets of classroom life, there is room for adaptation at every level as students, teachers, and schools undergo the changes required by the IB system.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR POLICY

When designing a reform or system oriented around the whole child, policymakers may benefit from addressing:

1. the types of tensions the IB system has had to manage as it spreads across multiple, national contexts (i.e., managing fidelity and adaptability; demanding rigor while supporting equitable access; and leaving space for traditional academic achievement while supporting teachers' and students' efforts toward more holistic outcomes); and
2. the types of supports the IB system offers to teachers and schools—namely, a robust educational infrastructure that is more skeletal in nature—as a transnational program is adapted to its local context and culture.

Transcending borders: The International Baccalaureate's systemic approach to educating the whole person

While the focus of this brief is on the Primary Years Programme (PYP), which began in 1997, the International Baccalaureate (IB) system offers four programs in total: 1) the Diploma Programme (ages 15-18); 2) the Middle Years Programme (ages 11-14); 3) the Primary Years Programme (ages 3-12); and 4) the Career-Related Programme (ages 15-18). Across these programs, the IB system cultivates internationally minded students by encouraging teachers to continually and authentically bring the outside world into the classroom. Through an inquiry-based, transdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning, IB students learn to draw connections across different subjects and to act on local and global issues of significance to them. Through IB's emphasis on language learning and exposing students to diverse perspectives, it aims to prepare children for a globalized world and to instill in them an appreciation for experiences and perspectives different from their own (e.g., International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO], 2013; IBO, 2018c). The IB mission statement is as follows:

> *The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.*

In 2018, the IB system launched the enhanced PYP. Though the PYP has, from its onset, worked at cultivating holistic student outcomes, the enhanced PYP is the system's refined approach to such an end. Even as the IB system's pedagogical and philosophical underpinnings remain the same, some of the enhancements include an increased focus on student agency, coupled with greater flexibility and improved supports for IB teachers and schools (IBO, 2018a, 2018b). The PYP's concern with equitably supporting diverse learners is apparent in this sharpened focus on agency. A document explaining the enhancements to the PYP states that "honouring the concept of agency recognizes that [teaching teams] are best placed to develop the programme of inquiry to meet the needs of students in your unique school context" (IBO, 2018b, p. 4). In this way, equity is conceptualized as supporting

the needs of a diverse group of students, it is the work of teachers, and it is ensured by simultaneously promoting student agency.

Because IB endeavors to connect classroom learning to the broader world and because it has schools across the globe, the system works to adapt to its broader environment. The IB system understands different regulations exist within and across countries, both around learning standards and when such standards should be learned. Thus, rather than prescribing content, the IB system offers PYP teachers supports like an instructional framework, which is guided by six transdisciplinary themes of global significance, and under which teachers and schools may organize the standards they are obligated to teach. The IB system also guides teachers through its desired outcomes; for example, its learner profile consists of ten attributes (e.g., inquirers, open-minded, balanced) the system aims to develop in students. IB teachers are then encouraged to pull from a range of different curricula and classroom management techniques to suit the needs of their learners. Thus, through professional development and supports such as instructional frameworks and planners, the IB system guides teachers toward more conceptual, inquiry-based instruction, even as these supports leave space for local context, culture, and criteria to also shape classroom practice.

The IB system functions in at least two ways. First, it is a networked education system (Peurach et al., 2019) in that IB system hubs collaborate with one another and with IB schools to continually improve instruction—simultaneously promoting fidelity to key IB tenets and also permitting local adaptation. The IB system also functions as a hybrid system (e.g., Spillane et al., 2019), because IB is a private sector agency, but one that operates education subsystems within both public and private schools. Currently, over 85% of the schools offering an IB program in the United States are public, and thus free to students and families (IBO, 2022b).

The IB system is not directly affected by educational policy and legislation in that its reform efforts are intended to transcend the policies of varied national contexts. However, the system does design its supports in such a way where IB teachers and schools can abide by local policies and standards, even as they implement IB guidance around teaching and learning. For example, when describing a PYP enhancement that strengthens the programs of inquiry students undergo, an IB document states that there are now more flexible timeframes. Local teaching teams can now determine when each unit of inquiry begins and how long it lasts, which permits "the flexibility to incorporate local and national requirements" (IBO, 2018b, p. 4).

As alluded to above, even as the PYP continues to refine its efforts to promote holistic student outcomes, some of its philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings remain constant across time and the various contexts in which the IB system operates. Philosophically, the IB system aims to create a more peaceful world through education and by way of increased respect for children. Pedagogically, the IB system continues to advance a form of instruction that is challenging, transdisciplinary, and inquiry- and concept-based.

THE IB SYSTEM REFORM JOURNEY

Throughout its history, the IB system has managed at least three ongoing tensions between: 1) academic rigor and equitable access; 2) more traditional academic achievement and more holistic teaching and learning; and 3) providing supports to schools and teachers to promote fidelity of implementation, while also permitting practitioners enough discretion for local adaptation. These tensions are especially apparent at three points in time throughout the IB system's reform journey: when IB began in the 1960s, when the PYP was created in 1997, and when the PYP was enhanced in 2018.

IB began as an educational alcove for an elite group of students. This approach to teaching and learning emerged in Switzerland in the 1960s, and catered specifically to diplomats' children or other families living internationally who needed a diploma that would grant students admission to universities in their home country (Nugent & Karnes, 2002; Tarc, 2009). A key tenet of IB is challenging instruction, which initially fueled the assumption that IB was one of the primary educational options for gifted and motivated students in the United States (Hertberg-Davis & Callahan, 2008).

Eventually, however, IB evolved to become a widely agreed upon and recognizable pathway to college for all students (Kyburg et al., 2007). With this reputation, the IB system garnered increased amounts of federal and state support, both in terms of resources and legitimacy (Callahan, 2003; Kyberg et al., 2007).

In the United States in particular, a mutually reinforcing relationship soon developed between IB and its broader environment. State and federal funding incentivized schools to adopt IB as a means of preparing students for college (Kyberg et al., 2007; Hertberg-Davis & Callahan, 2008). Simultaneously, IB was incentivized to expand minoritized students' access to their programs. By developing the PYP in 1997, the IB system could manage at least two tensions that had become endemic to its reform efforts: 1) prepare a more diverse group of students, ensuring they could access the challenging Diploma Programme; and 2) allow more latitude within PYP relative to the Diploma Programme to cater to the progressive ideals of the IB system, because there is less concern with university admission requirements (Tarc, 2009). Be it at the high school or elementary school level, however, IB endeavors to offer and require more than academics to its students:

> *The aim of the IB is to transcend achievement of particular content-related goals in specific subject areas to achieve the more comprehensive goal of developing "to their fullest potential the powers of each individual to understand, to modify and to enjoy his or her environment, both inner and outer, in its physical, social, oral, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects (IBO, 2004, p. 4).*

The enhancements made to the PYP in 2018 address a different tension in the reform effort—the tension between fidelity of implementation and local adaptation. That is, these enhancements aim to support teachers in authentically executing the IB approach to teaching and learning even as these teachers adapt that approach to their local context and culture. The same agency that was being emphasized for IB students was extended to IB teachers: "In the enhanced PYP teachers will, as creative professionals, have greater freedom to design learning engagements and teach in ways that enable their students to take greater control over their own learning" (IBO, 2018b, p. 1). Some examples of this improved flexibility for teachers include: teaching teams can choose the timeframe for each unit of inquiry; teaching teams can develop their own unit of inquiry planner, and; science and social studies no longer need to be fully embedded within the program of inquiry.

At the same time that it permitted increased agency to IB teachers and schools, the IB system also endeavored to offer teachers improved clarity and supports with its 2018 enhancements. Some examples of such support include providing materials that demonstrate: inquiry in action; translanguaging strategies (i.e., strategies that permit and honor students' full linguistic repertoire); a school using the IB planning process to design its own planners, and "a learning story of a school embracing flexible time frames" (IBO, 2018b, p. 4). In these ways, the IB system used PYP enhancements to promote spread and local adaptation while also supporting quality control.

Despite the ongoing tensions with which the IB system is faced, system leaders would likely describe IB to be in an established phase of its reform, with efforts focused primarily on sustainability and continual improvement. As of January 2023, there are over 7,700 IB programs offered worldwide, across over 5,600 schools in 159 countries (IBO, 2022b). In the United States, 1,907 schools offer at least one of the IB programs, and the PYP is offered in 634 schools. The IB foundation office is located in Geneva, and IB global centers are located in the Hague, Cardiff, Singapore, and Washington, D.C. It is these global centers that—after soliciting feedback from experienced IB practitioners—make big, system-level changes, such as the PYP enhancements. Then, more local IB practitioners are charged with training teachers around these changes, and guiding their process of adapting system guidance to their own local contexts.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURES FOR CHANGE

Compared to many reform efforts, the IB system has a relatively developed educational infrastructure, which promotes—and is continually revised to ensure—quality control. On the one hand, this infrastructure balances

providing guidance that fosters the system's desired outcomes while, on the other hand, leaving space for local agency and adaptation. As mentioned previously, some of the ways the IB system strikes this balance is through designing infrastructure that is less prescriptive and instead guiding by way of instructional frameworks, planners, and desired outcomes. Then, to support teachers' use of this infrastructure in practice, the IB system assists by way of professional development and standards around having certain roles (i.e., the PYP coordinator) and routines for teachers' collaboration within each IB school (IBO, 2018c).

The IB system uses its educational infrastructure to build capacity from within. These system-level supports became increasingly vetted and consistent across regions with the 2018 enhancements, even as PYP schools, teachers, and students were offered more flexibility and agency. The IB educator network (IBEN) is comprised of IB-trained educators who, in addition to their classroom teaching, can take on roles to support other teachers and schools in their implementation journey. These educators can become consultants to candidate IB schools, trainers of future IB educators, online or in-person workshop facilitators, school visit team members (for verification and evaluation visits), and much more (IBO, 2022c). Because many of these roles require one to be a current or recently retired IB practitioner or administrator, this ensures that the IBEN members possess in-depth knowledge of problems of practice, even as their own practice grows and deepens as they receive professional development in order to train others.

Recent changes to IBEN demonstrate how the IB system is continually designing for quality control within its infrastructure. In a personal communication with an IB classroom teacher and IBEN member (March 30, 2022), the member reported that, over the years, it is becoming increasingly difficult to become part of IBEN and the training process for IBEN members is becoming increasingly rigorous. Additionally, IBEN workshop leaders used to be able to design and lead professional development as they saw fit whereas, in recent years, there is much more standardization of those workshops that all aspiring IB teachers and schools must experience. The IB system now has a standardized PowerPoint for IBEN trainers to use and certain activities that must be included in each workshop.

In addition to system-level efforts at capacity building, informal and formal IB infrastructure facilitates the cross-pollination of ideas across IB schools. These supports have also undergone increased vetting since 2018. For example, the IB system enhanced its Programme Resource Centre. Not only is this online platform now much easier to use, but it contains all official IB documents, along with a forum for IB teachers to communicate. In the past, IB teachers could upload resources and lesson plans, but to ensure consistency and quality control, there are now more official examples and resources on the platform. PYP teachers and leaders alike report this Programme Resource Centre to be an instrumental support in their first few years of implementing IB.

More informal and regional supports—such as the Mid-Atlantic Association of IB World Schools or IB Schools of Ontario—also facilitate collaboration among member schools and with IBO. These regional networks are typically led by a board of PYP coordinators and/or IBEN members. IBO often refers schools to these regional chapters for added supports, even as teachers and schools must go through the formal IB training on their journey toward authorization. These chapters offer regional workshops that are less expensive than official IB training. They also facilitate the networking of PYP coordinators within a given region as many as four to five times a year. As with everything else, these supports became more virtual during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, the IB system uses educational infrastructure to support teachers and schools with their ongoing responses to their broader environment. For example, the system provided communications and resources to schools around navigating IB and the Common Core, or IB and COVID-19 (IBO, 2022a). In a focus group with IB system leaders in 2017, one leader evidenced the IB system's relatively open stance toward resources and reforms in its broader environment when stating:

> *IB has always offered some type of response to reform changes…when it was Common Core, [IB was] definitely instrumental in being involved, and messaging how do IB and Common Core align?*

What does that look like? So I think that's pretty amazing, because sometimes the decision for some other programs or frameworks is just stay out of it, because it's always changing, let's just take a step back, it'll fade out. But that doesn't really support teachers that are in the moment of having to deal with and address the change that has been dropped on them. So I think IB has been pretty phenomenal in that way.

Such resources and communication help IB schools to work toward fidelity, even if their local context is proving constraining.

IMPACT ON DAILY LIFE IN SCHOOLS

Unlike other reform efforts where a subset of students may opt in or out (e.g., Advanced Placement), an entire school is meant to implement and to be affected by the PYP reform (Taylor & Porath, 2006). When a school decides to offer the PYP to its students, it must undergo—and pay for—a lengthy authorization process, which requires buy-in and input from its varied stakeholders (Callahan, 2003). This process helps to transform the instruction, organization, and culture of the school, all in an effort to work toward more holistic student outcomes and, as part of that, to connect children to their broader world.

Regarding instruction, IB teachers are encouraged to adjust both the content of what they teach, and how they teach it. IB teachers discuss letting go of the need to cover all material, and instead focusing on concepts, or transdisciplinary themes, that students can apply to many disparate events. An IB teacher in Washington, D.C. described this process in an interview in 2017:

If you've ever looked at the D.C. social studies standards, they are this huge list where you're basically teaching from the Civil War through modern day. And you're like, how will you ever do this? You can't. So we group [standards] into big areas, and then used the IB framework of the transdisciplinary themes and thought, ok what of these groupings could we put underneath the themes? And that's where that started, and then from there, looking at … what are the big concepts that are within that? Because you can't teach every single fact and issue in history, even when you've grouped them…so now [in our "Who We Are" unit] we focus more on World War II, but we teach the concept of what causes wars? And why do people go to war? And how does it affect people? And then we'll bring examples from other wars out, and [students] can see how they align.

In terms of *how* IB teachers deliver instruction, many report transitioning from being a "sage on the stage" to a "guide on the side." Each unit of inquiry begins with some sort of provocation, which is an activity used to provoke students' questions. With the end goal in mind, teachers then guide students as they pursue answers to their own questions. As part of this ongoing inquiry, students are expected to continually take action and reflect on their own learning (IBO, 2018c). When asked about commonalities across IB classrooms in focus groups with IB teachers in Washington, D.C., teachers discussed features such as: oscillating between teacher- and student-led discussions, weaving in concepts and transdisciplinary themes throughout the day, and helping students see links between historical and more current events.

Organizationally, the IB system guides students and teachers to relate to one another differently. When discussing guidance from the IB system around how students should be organized, an IB school leader in Washington, D.C. shared in a 2018 focus group:

It is loosely stated as a learning space should be organized in a way that allows for collaborative groups, work that is not all and only individual. And work that's not all and only facilitated by a teacher, and so it's not stated, 'you may not have desks in rows,' but it's also hinted at that desks and rows are going to lead to that type of teaching.

Similarly, to be authorized by the IB system, a school must re-organize to enable teachers' ongoing collaboration and reflection. This collaboration must ensure vertical and horizontal articulation (IBO, 2018c). This means, for example, that a 4th grade teacher must vertically collaborate with teachers who teach other grades, to ensure the math taught to students throughout their elementary career follows a logical and coherent sequence. Further, this same teacher might work with her grade-level team to ensure

connections are drawn within and across different subject areas. The IB system also requires each school to have a PYP coordinator, who helps to facilitate and guide such collaboration among teachers, and to support teachers as they facilitate collaboration among their students.

Schools also undergo a cultural change when implementing the PYP. One way the IB system promotes international mindedness is through encouraging a culture of language learning in schools. With the enhanced PYP, teachers received improved resources to employ practical translanguaging strategies with their students. PYP teachers and schools focus on the "interplay between learning language, learning through language, and learning about language" (IBO, 2018b, p. 7). Other enhancements to the PYP focus on strengthening an existing culture of assessment and reflection, so that both are embedded throughout students' daily experiences. Finally, alongside more content- or skill-based learning outcomes, IB students are working to embody the IB learner profile, in which they are: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective. The intent of such cultural change is apparent in the following statement, "We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national, and global communities" (IBO, 2018c, p. 5).

Even as the IB system endeavors to impact nearly all facets of classroom and school life, there is room for adaptation at every level as stakeholders undergo the changes required by this reform. When authorized by the IB system, diverse stakeholders within the school collaborate to determine how to adapt the PYP program to their context (e.g., if the school had a dual-language program, they then consider how to make this work with IB's standards around language learning). When planning the details of instruction, PYP teachers collaborate in their teaching teams to determine how to align local standards and resources to IB's instructional framework. For example, in a 2018 focus group in Toronto, an IB teacher discussed what informed the decision to move away from letter grades and toward written commentary:

> *We use a lot of [government] resources to support, as well as the IB resources…because if we're trained in Ontario, we're trained with the Ontario government documents and resources. So we have all of that training, and then now with our IB training, most of us merge a lot of the two things together.*

Finally, after experiencing a provocation, IB students determine what questions they want to pursue throughout a given unit. In this way, the IB system provides the skeleton—or framework—that guides changes to daily life, but it is students and practitioners who flesh out these changes.

MEASURING CHANGE

As mentioned above, the IB system encourages a culture of assessment in PYP schools. However, while the system offers planners and other resources that support teachers'—and students'—ongoing assessment, the IB system makes clear that "Schools will determine when and what type of assessment is appropriate to generate the data they need to inform learning and teaching" (IBO, 2018b, p. 5).

Though many details of assessment are left to schools' discretion, there are two common ways to measure change in students' learning across PYP schools: 1) the PYP exhibition; and 2) student-led conferences. In their final year of the PYP, students partake in an exhibition where they work in groups to develop a presentation they will share with the broader community. This presentation demonstrates students' inquiry into a local problem (that often relates to a broader, more global issue), and their ideas for how to take action in addressing this problem. In this way, the PYP exhibition is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning across the entire PYP curriculum, not just in terms of skills and concepts, but also in terms of attitudes and behaviors. Another common way that changes in student learning is measured is through student-led conferences, in which PYP students present to their teachers and guardians the ways in which their learning has evolved over the course of the school year.

In addition to measuring change in student outcomes, change is also measured in terms of a school's

implementation of the PYP. Similar to their students, IB teachers and school leaders are encouraged to engage in ongoing reflection and self-assessment in their journey with IB. Four years after a school's initial authorization and at five-year intervals thereafter, IB schools must be evaluated by the IB system (IBO, 2018d). As part of this process, schools engage in a collaborative self-study, in which they identify areas of growth to deepen their expertise with the IB reform. Then, during the verification visits, representatives of the IB system work with the school to decide on recommendations for continued change and improvement. Schools must take action in response to these recommendations.

In the context of the United States, IB's measures of success do not necessarily align to broader ways of measuring student or school achievement. Teachers who work in public IB schools report that, relative to those working in private IB schools, it is challenging to balance standardized tests with the skills, attitudes, and assessments that are valued in the IB system. Preparation for these standardized tests takes up valuable instructional time. What is more, the federal or state standards by which students are being evaluated are often more skill- and content-based, whereas the PYP program emphasizes conceptual learning. Finally, the IB program values formative and self-assessment alongside summative assessment, whereas standardized tests are often more summative and evaluative. Thus, normative ways of assessing change and student outcomes can be somewhat constraining to IB schools, particularly those in the public sector.

LESSONS FOR POLICY

When designing a reform journey oriented around the whole child, policymakers may benefit from addressing: 1) the types of tensions the IB system has had to manage as it spreads across multiple, national contexts; and 2) the types of supports the IB system offers to teachers and schools as they adapt a transnational program to their local context and culture.

As mentioned throughout this brief, one way the IB system offers and cultivates respect in its students is by continually exposing them to their broader world—and the myriad perspectives and issues therein. This system-wide goal remains constant, as does the goal of a reform that can be applied across multiple contexts, reaching students the world over. In taking on such aims, the IB system assumes certain, endemic tensions, which include: 1) managing fidelity and adaptability; 2) demanding rigor while supporting equitable access; and 3) leaving space for more traditional academic achievement, while supporting teachers' and students' efforts toward more holistic outcomes.

As enduring as these tensions may be, the IB system also offers policymakers lessons on how to manage them. Namely, the IB system has developed robust educational infrastructure, which is more skeletal in nature, thereby allowing practitioners' adaptation of IB to their local context, culture, and criteria. Throughout this brief, it is evident how the system guides IB practitioners using instructional frameworks, planners, and desired outcomes, which teachers can then flesh out using local standards and resources. The IB system supports teachers' use of these materials through ongoing professional development, verification visits, online platforms, and by demanding and facilitating the cross-pollination of ideas across IB schools. In this way, the IB system ensures quality and expects continual improvement, even as it builds in room for local discretion and adaptation at every stage of the implementation journey.

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Appendix: Methods

Whitney Hegseth began studying the IB educational system in 2015, often comparing IB to other types of systems (e.g., Advanced Placement, Montessori, or traditional public schools). In addition to her review of the literature on IB, Hegseth has conducted two comparative studies of educational systems, which included IB schools and the IB system. For these studies, she engaged in-depth with IB practitioners in different regions of the U.S. and in Toronto, Canada. This brief draws on both the literature and data sources from Hegseth's previous projects, which include: IB school and system documents (e.g., evaluation rubrics, curriculum binders, and system standards for IB classrooms and schools); ethnographic observations in IB schools; semi-structured interviews with IB teachers and school leaders, and; video-cued focus groups with IB students, teachers, and school and system leaders.

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

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Brookings gratefully acknowledges the support provided by the BHP Foundation and the LEGO Foundation.

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