This list of frequently asked questions was compiled by the IB Parent Advisory Council (IBPAC) to answer the questions most often received from prospective IB parents.

**What makes the Myers Park IB Program unique?**
Myers Park is home to the first public International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma program (grades 11-12) in North Carolina and the first Middle Years Program (grades 9-10) program in the US.

**What are the advantages of enrolling in the IB Program?**
Students report that their involvement with the IB Program has given them the tools needed to succeed at college. In particular, students comment on their sense of preparedness, their self-confidence, their research skills, and their ability to manage their time. Even more importantly, they have developed a sense of the world around them and their responsibility to it.

**What is IBMYP - technically the IB program is just 11th and 12th grade. 9th and 10th graders are in the IB Middle Years Program (IBMYP).**

**What is the IBMYP Curriculum: grades 9-10?**
The Middle Years IB Program (IBMYP) curriculum is organized around three major concepts: Intercultural Awareness, Holistic Education, and Communication. Students take the core courses of English, social studies, mathematics, science, physical education, foreign language, visual and performing arts, and technology. A unique feature of the program is that it extends the traditional curriculum to include immersion in the five Areas of Interaction or themes - Approaches to Learning, Community and Service, Health and Social Education, Environments, and Human Ingenuity. Students also complete a Personal Project in 10th grade, which is an independent piece of work that may be an essay, an artistic production, or other form of expression.

**How do you earn the IB diploma?**
To earn the IB diploma, students must pass examinations in 6 subject areas, write an extended essay of some 4,000 words describing an independent research project, complete 150 hours of creative, action, and service activities (CAS), and take part in a critical thinking class called Theory of Knowledge (TOK).

**Do IB teachers receive special training?**
All IB Diploma level teachers have received official IB Organization subject area training. This is a requirement of authorized IB schools. Our Middle Years program (IBMYP) is in full compliance with teacher training requirements.

**What percentage of Myers Park’s students receives the IB Diploma?**
Historically, the global pass rate has been app. 80% (meaning that percentage of registered diploma candidates earned their diplomas). The Myers Park average is typically 10% above the global average.

**What does one accomplish in earning the IB Diploma?**
Pride, a credential that proves beyond argument that you rank among the very best in the world. Students who don’t earn the IB diploma are still edible for college credit. However, students who earn the IB diploma receive more college credit than those who don’t.
Do I have to be in IBMYP if I want to be full IB for 11th and 12th grade?  
No, besides the regular 9th and 10th grade English, 9th grade World History, and 10th Grade Civics and Economics, the only prerequisites to begin the full IB program in 11th grade are that you must have completed Level 3 of a foreign language, Algebra 2, Environmental Science and/or Biology, and Physics and/or Chemistry.

What is Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL)?  
To earn the IB Diploma, a student will take exams in six different subject areas at the end of senior year. Three of these exams will be in courses that are “Higher Level” and three are courses that are “Standard Level”.

Why does Higher Level and Standard Level matter for scheduling?  
Each IB diploma candidate must take at least three Higher Level exams. The courses to prepare for the Higher Level exams are at least two year courses. All IB students take two of their higher level exams in English and History. So - you have to plan ahead to get your third higher level course in your schedule. The third higher level options include two year science courses (Biology, Physics, Chemistry), foreign language (you must be at Level 6), math (very few students take this exam - to finish this three year class, you have to have finished Algebra 2 by the end of 9th grade). Other higher level possibilities are Art, Photo, Theater, Business, Geography, Psychology, Economics, and Philosophy.

What is a Block Schedule?  
Most 9th and 10th grade classes are taught on the block schedule - that is the full year of the class is taught in one semester. Each class meets every day for 90 minutes. This means, for example, that all of Algebra 2 or all of French 3 is taught in one semester.

What is a Hybrid Schedule?  
All 11th and 12th grade IB and AP courses are taught on an A day/B day schedule. This means you have these classes every other day for the whole year. Arts electives like Band or Drama, and classes like Newspaper or Yearbook are also taught on an A day/B day schedule. PE may be on a block or an A day/B day schedule. Many 9th and 10th graders will end up with a hybrid schedule - most block schedule classes, but a couple of A day/B day classes. The challenge in planning your schedule is coming up with A day/B day classes that pair up- if you are in Band in 3rd period on A days, you need another A day/B day class for 3rd period on B day. This is why students are asked to put lots of elective choices down on their proposed schedule.

How do I choose a math class for my child?  
Students who want to enter the diploma program in 11th grade must have completed at least Algebra 2. A typical path for most students would be to take Geometry in 9th grade and Algebra 2 in 10th. Some students come to Myers Park having already taken Geometry in 8th grade. These students would take Algebra 2 in 9th grade and then for 10th grade, choose a higher level math curriculum that would see them through 12th grade. See the Myers Park website for a detailed description of IB math. Some middle schools do not offer Algebra 1 in 8th grade. These students would take Algebra 1 in 9th and then take both Geometry and Algebra 2 in 10th grade - these are offered on a block schedule so could be taken one each semester.

Are IB students isolated from other students?  
No, although the IB program currently has over 500 students, IB students are exposed to students outside of IB in their electives, sports, and extracurricular activities.
How does my child complete the 3rd level of a foreign language by the end of 10th grade?
Many students have taken the first year of a foreign language in middle school and therefore just need the 2nd year in 9th grade and the 3rd year in 10th. Students, who haven’t begun a foreign language before 9th grade or want to choose a new foreign language to study, would need to fit in 3 semester courses of the language in 9th and 10th grade. Remember, foreign language courses up to level 4 are taught on a block schedule or one year in one semester. For example, your student could take French 1 in first semester of 9th grade, French 2 in first semester of 10th grade, and French 3 in second semester of 10th grade.

Why does the Myers Park IB program recommend that sophomores take Physics and Chemistry in the same year?
This all goes back to the Higher Level testing that will happen at the end of senior year. Many students choose to take their third Higher Level exam in one of the sciences like Physics, Chemistry, or Biology. You can’t begin the higher level coursework unless you’ve taken the introductory class. By taking Biology in 9th grade and Physics and Chemistry in 10th, the student has been exposed to all three higher level IB science possibilities so he/she can choose any one of the three for his/her higher level course/exam.

Can I do band (or Orchestra or Art or Newspaper) all four years and still be full IB?
Yes - usually! Students in these courses have to juggle a bit - it’s not usually possible to fit in both Environmental Science and Biology in 9th grade and still be in Band or Art. It’s also not usually possible to fit in both Physics and Chemistry as a sophomore. Many students taking Band, etc. will opt to take Environmental Science and Physics as an elective in their junior or senior year. Where you might run into trouble with scheduling is if you take one of the less popular foreign languages that aren’t offered as many periods. For example, if Jazz Band and German 5 are at the same time, you may have to choose!

What are Quality Points?
Each course at Myers Park is assigned a certain number of quality points, depending on the relative difficulty of the class. Quality points are assigned on the following scale: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0. One additional quality point is assigned to all Advanced, Honors, and IBMYP courses. All foreign language courses receive an additional quality point after the second level. Two additional quality points are assigned to IB and AP courses. For example, an A in a standard level English class would earn 4 quality points, a B would be 3 points, etc. An A in Honors English would earn 5 points, a B 4 points, etc. An A in IB or AP English would earn 6 points, a B 5 points, etc.

Do IBMYP/IB students receive more quality points than Honors/AP Students?
No, it’s a level playing field (see previous question!).

Why do Quality Points matter?
A student’s weighted grade point average is used to compute class rank.

Does Class Rank matter?
That is a matter of opinion!! Obviously, everyone would like to have a great class rank. Some large universities seem to use class rank as part of their admissions decision. On the other hand, many colleges these days recompute each applicant’s GPA to their own specifications. The college may not include electives like PE or Student Council in their recalculation of GPA. They may also completely discount Myers Park’s quality point weight of each class.
My student loves Art but it’s only a 4 or 5 point class. Should she quit Art to take a higher quality point class? 
Colleges love students who are well rounded and show a passion for something - be it art, music, newspaper, a sport, etc. While taking art might hurt your student’s class rank a little bit, it also adds interest and depth to your student. It may be your student’s talent in art that is the key to a college’s affirmative admissions decision.

I’ve heard IB has a community service component. How does that work? 
Students must complete 35 hours of community service during 9th grade and 40 during 10th grade, for a total of 75 hours. Students may count 10 hours for summer service activities completed between 8th grade and 9th grade and 10 hours for summer service activities completed between 9th grade and 10th grade.

In 11th and 12th grade, the requirement changes to require CAS hours - Creativity, Action, and Service. Students complete 75 CAS hours in 11th grade and 75 hours in 12 grade. Creativity hours can be things like singing in a choir, Odyssey of the Mind, music lessons, helping with a play. Action can be playing on a school or recreation team. Service is traditional community service.

Can IB students take AP courses? Can AP students take IB courses? 
After meeting IB diploma requirements, IB students can take AP courses as electives. However, AP students can’t take IB courses? Why? Because IB is a Holistic or Total Program. AP is Cafeteria Style in which students choose AP courses that fit their strengths and that are independent of one another.

Is IB better than AP? 
Both are excellent! Either AP or IB is likely to provide greater challenge than other courses offered at Myers Park, as well as the opportunity to earn college credit, and both programs are highly regarded by selective colleges. However, the true value of either AP or IB depends on the fit between your child's learning style, motivation, and preparation for the challenges offered by AP and IB. Bottom line- let your child decide! Each student is different! Myers Park students are lucky to have two great programs pushing them to higher levels of learning!

Should I play the Class Rank Game - or how to get a high class rank? 
Students in the top 10% of the class at Myers Park will have taken the majority of their classes with the highest number of quality points available and will have made A’s in most of those classes. These top students will take all of the required classes for the IB Middle Years Program (grades 9 & 10) and IB Diploma Program, and then take an additional IB or AP course to get additional high quality point classes, which adds to their GPA. This approach is not for the faint-hearted! The volume of work required for 6, 7, or 8 IB or AP classes is tremendous!! The decision to go after this class rank goal has to be driven by the student!

IB sounds like a lot of work!! Do IB students have a life? 
While academic achievement, and therefore studying, is a priority, IB students enjoy a very rich social and extracurricular high school experience. IB students are represented in most sports, demonstrate they are school leaders on IB Student Council and Myers Park Student Government, are active in school clubs, and participate in community activities. The Community Service (grades 9 & 10) and CAS (grades 11 &12) requirements guarantee a very respectable level of non-academic involvement.