

FY 2009 QUESTION NUMBER: 23

QUESTION:

Provide a profile of the current IB program at Watkins Mill High School. How many students have been able to transfer in and participate? Is there excess capacity? What resources would be necessary to accommodate an additional 15 to 20 students?

BUDGET PAGE REFERENCE:

ANSWER:

During the first semester of this school year, over 150 students were enrolled in at least one IB course in the IB Diploma Programme at Watkins Mill High School. Last year, 18 Watkins Mill seniors earned an IB diploma. Twenty to thirty diploma candidates are expected to earn diplomas each year. There are 14 students, including seven potential diploma candidates, who attend Watkins Mill High School from outside of the Watkins Mill feeder area and take at least one IB course. Most of these students attended either Montgomery Village or Neelsville middle schools and had a change of school assignment approved based on continuation in the feeder pattern. Program selection is not an approved consideration for change of school assignment. Transportation is not provided for students attending a school that is based on a change of school assignment.

While expanding 15 or 20 seats may appear to have a limited impact, opening the Watkins Mill High School IB to nearby clusters on a voluntary basis sets a precedent for expansion to the three other local IB programs at Rockville and Bethesda-Chevy Chase high schools and the developing program at Seneca Valley High School. The IB programs at Springbrook and Albert Einstein high schools and the developing program at John F. Kennedy High School are currently part of regional consortia.

Opening IB programs beyond cluster and consortia boundaries will adversely affect schools that lose students. Although IB programs are designed for a wide variety of students, the programs attract accelerated students. The loss of accelerated students by a school could have a negative impact on course offerings and standardized test scores. Resources for IB fees, materials, professional development, and program supports would need to be added as well as central administrative costs associated with developing and managing an open enrollment process as well as for the review of appeals if more students apply than there are seats available.