



William A. Kowba
Superintendent

May 7, 2012

Drew Deutsch
Director IB Americas
7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 200 West
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Re: San Diego Unified Commitment to International Baccalaureate (IB) Program

Dear Mr. Deutsch,

The San Diego Unified School District is proud to be a part of the International Baccalaureate Program. Our District has eight IB World Schools, which serve over 5,400 preschool through twelfth grade students from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. All of these schools have excelled in terms of increasing enrollment, increasing student achievement, and increasing participation and enthusiasm among all stakeholders. These schools continue to receive national and international recognition as exemplified by San Diego High's School of International Studies rating as one of the top 100 schools nationwide five-years running, and its receipt of the 2011 California Distinguished School *and* Title 1 Academic Achievement awards, and the Pacific Beach Middle School's award of California IB teacher of the year and student of the year award from the California Association of IB World Schools.

Unfortunately, the IB schools in our district, and throughout California, face a serious challenge because of the multiyear series of severe budget reductions that have impacted the full range of K-12 educational programs in our state. However, even in the face of the unprecedented budget crisis that we are facing, I want to assure you that San Diego Unified is unequivocally committed to the singular rigor, relevance, and academic excellence of the International Baccalaureate Program.

This commitment is demonstrated by our ongoing operation of two very successful high school IB feeder patterns in California's second largest school district. These include the following IB schools:

San Diego High School Feeder Pattern

- Birney Elementary School.
- Jefferson Elementary School.
- McKinley Elementary School.
- Roosevelt Middle School.
- San Diego High School of International Studies.

Mission Bay High School Feeder Pattern

- Sessions Elementary School.
- Pacific Beach Middle School.
- Mission Bay High School.

With this letter, I not only wish to definitively state our support of the IB vision but also share with you the sobering reality of K-12 education funding in California in which we must operate. Over the past five years, the economic woes of California have forced state government to dramatically decrease funding for public

schools. In the case of San Diego Unified, this has resulted in nearly \$500 million in General Fund budget cuts and the reduction of our work force from about 16,000 to 14,000 employees since 2008.

The year-over-year additional loss of revenue has placed ever increasing pressure on balancing needs, goals, and program viabilities in every sector of the district. Even in this setting, the district remains dedicated to supporting our outstanding IB schools. This is demonstrated by the fact that during our current layoff process, the district took the unprecedented step of advocating "skipping" with an Administrative Law Judge to protect more junior IB-trained teachers in seniority-driven layoff proceedings.

Even with this kind of effort, we recognize that our IB programs have been challenged by resource reductions that have impacted all of our schools. We are requesting that you recognize the tension between IB sustainability and affordability with the budget realities that California schools must face over the next few years. It will likely take that long for this state to stabilize K-12 funding and actually start to restore revenue to school districts. In the meantime, please consider the following recommendations to financially safeguard California IB programs.

- Temporary flexibility in loading classrooms utilizing a combo/multi-age class structure where needed.
- Payment of annual fees in bulk that includes a discount.
- Bundling training group costs and discounting workshop fees.
- Scheduling additional on-site training and training in southern California to mitigate transportation costs.
- Adjusting the timing and periodicity of training to avoid conflict with spring testing.
- Extended time to meet "Matters to be Addressed" regarding staffing issues related to funding shortfalls

I am prepared to address these and any other options for maintaining IB programs and reducing costs in the midst of this deep and prolonged state budget crisis. It is my understanding that you will be visiting San Diego during the June 15-19 time frame. I extend an invitation for us to meet one-on-one for a conversation about protecting the well-being of the San Diego Unified IB World Schools, a real jewel of our district. My executive assistant will contact your office to coordinate this meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bill Kowba
Superintendent

Cc: Michael Clifton, PYP Director
Ted Williams, MYP Director