

# International Baccalaureate Program Gives Prout Students Unique Advantage After Graduation

Most students in high schools across the United States take AP courses and get a pat on the back for their efforts. But at Prout, students can go a step – a big step -- further.

Prout is the only school in Rhode Island that offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma program. IB is now celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year.

International Baccalaureate programs, with their unique academic rigor and their emphasis on students' personal development, aim to do more than other curricula by developing inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed. More than 4,700 schools teach IB programs and there are more than one million IB students worldwide. In order to teach IB programs, schools must be certified by the IB organization. Certified schools are known as IB World Schools.

Prout became an IB World School in August of 1992, after what Prout's IB program coordinator and physics teacher Chris Bromley describes as a "long application process and visits by members of the international team." Twenty-six years later, Prout boasts a 95 percent diploma pass rate, 15.7 percent higher than the international average.

Prout currently offers IB classes in Spanish, Italian, French, Mathematics and World Religion at the Standard Level (SL) and English Literature, Biology, Physics, and History at the Higher Level (HL). HL courses span two years and SL courses span one year.

Students at Prout can pursue an IB certificate in a particular subject or pursue a full IB diploma. This year twenty-two juniors and fourteen seniors are pursuing a full IB Diploma, no small undertaking.

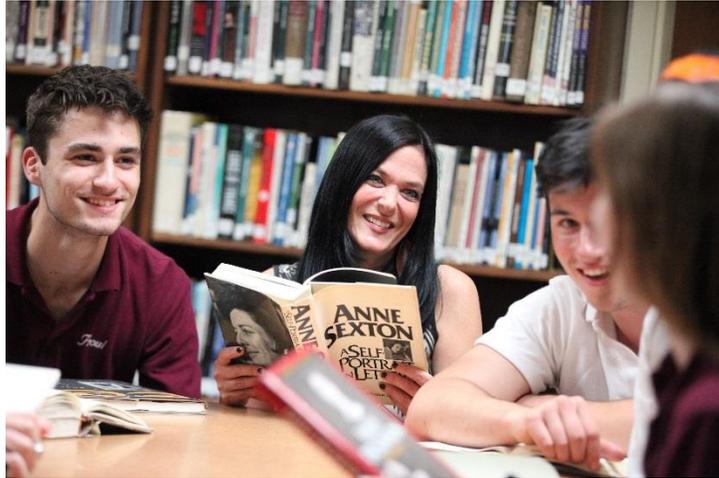


"Students are given the opportunity to apply to be in the full IB Diploma program in the spring of their sophomore year," says Bromley. "The application includes an essay, letters of recommendation and support and the student academic profile. The applications are reviewed

## The International Baccalaureate Program at Prout (continued)

by our principal, guidance counselors and me to determine if the candidate would be a good fit for the program.”

Once accepted, IB students are immersed in a two-year program that, Bromley says, requires them to have a strong work ethic and desire to learn. “There is little focus on memorization. Focus is, rather, on the higher skills of understanding and application. Students are asked to make connections throughout their courses and across disciplines.”



Ms. Nikki Kettle and Prout IB English Students

In order to receive an IB diploma, Prout students must take and pass tests in six IB categories (English, foreign language, history, religion, science and math), take a two-semester class called *Theory of Knowledge* (a student favorite that focuses on the metaphysics of learning), and complete a project that incorporates creativity, activity and service. The result is an IB Diploma, and one well-rounded student who thinks outside the box.

“IB courses ask students to be a lot more independent, and that helps when IB students get to college,” says Bromley. Prout students who have completed the program agree.

Rowdie McDonald ‘16, remembers first hearing about IB as a freshman at a formal presentation. Even though it sounded somewhat intimidating, McDonald decided to give it a go. “It seemed scary, but I have a ‘can-do’ attitude, and if there’s a challenge, I want to do it.” She threw herself into the program, and loved her classes and her teachers. And they loved her.

“Rowdie was an exceptional student across the board,” says Bromley. “She was meticulous in her work and did everything she could to better understand the material that was presented to her. I think the program helped give her a setting where her love of learning, and going beyond the basics, was not hindered in any way.”

Even during a tough senior year where, from December to the IB exam in May, her life could be summed up by the word “study,” she’s happy she chose the IB Diploma path. “It taught me how to think, and to not take everything at face value.” It also helped her get into Northeastern University, where today Rowdie studies business with a concentration in management. And, because the IB Diploma allowing her to get college credit, she was able to take a gap year between her freshman and sophomore year, during which she managed a restaurant in Back Bay. To Prout students considering IB, she says “It’s a lot to handle, but if you think you can handle it, go for it!”

## The International Baccalaureate Program at Prout (continued)

Kai Masterson '17 agrees. He heard about the IB program from his older sister, who received a certificate in the program, and was excited to join and become a part of a group of students who loved learning as much as he does.

“What had the most impact on me during my time at Prout were the last two years, when I was in the IB program. It was a great environment, with smaller, more focused classes,” says Masterson. “I took a lot from that, especially senior year, and I grew socially.” Masterson thrived in the IB program at Prout, rounding out his talents in mathematics and science with other subjects.



Kai Masterson '17

“Kai has a brilliant mathematical/engineering mind,” says Bromley, “however, the IB program also allowed him to see that he was talented in other areas, too. Kai was able to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of a wider variety of subjects at an international renowned level. I believe this truly set his [college] application apart.”

Indeed, his IB experience helped Kai get into MIT where he currently studies mechanical engineering. He hopes to one day use his engineering degree to work in the car industry, and can't thank his IB teachers enough for supporting him through high school, and helping get him where he is today.

“The teachers were really great; I become friendly with them and learned to rely on them,” he says.

Sam Slom '16 entered the IB program at Prout because he was drawn to the idea of getting college credit and placing out of general education requirements. But he was surprised to find just how intense it was. It was, in his words, “a baptism by fire.”

“Honors classes were nothing compared to IB; it was grueling at times, and I wasn't necessarily happy when I finished the program,” he says. “But, now I realize that it *really* prepared me for college, especially with writing. IB is a writing-intensive program and my writing skills are significantly stronger because of it.” Today, Slom is a junior at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina -- a double major in information technology and politics and international affairs. Because the IB program is so well-known in the South, Slom definitely thinks it helped him get into Furman.

And, while the IB program was intense, Rowdie, Sam and Kai all found time for other activities to round out their Prout experience. Rowdie was active in the French Club and played

## **The International Baccalaureate Program at Prout (continued)**

Crusader softball all four years, on the varsity team for three years. Sam played tennis and soccer and was active in the Italian Club. Kai's involvement in the school's nascent robotics program helped set the stage for the school's state championship. He also found time to be on the lacrosse, soccer and cross country teams.

The Prout School will soon apply to add the newest IB offering: the IB Career-related Program (CP). In development since 2006, the CP is designed to prepare students for employment, as well as college. Through a focus on work-related learning, the CP prepares young people to have the skill set and outlook required for lifelong 21st century employment. Currently, there are 218 schools offering the CP in 23 countries.

Prout's initial application will focus on STEAM-related careers, specifically those in engineering. Additionally, Prout will create an advisory committee to help create relevant job-shadow and internship opportunities.

Even as the IB program at Prout enters its twenty-sixth year, it remains a special offer that sets the school—and its students—apart. And it will continue to do so for the next 50 years.