

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2019 A16

Advertising produced by the Globe Content Studio. The Globe's editorial department was not involved.

PROGRAMS THAT NURTURE EXCELLENCE

Private education offers advanced study options that challenge, enrich and prepare students

PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND THEIR EDUCATORS are increasingly blending in advanced study programs that incorporate a strong, rigorous academic core.

Parents are interested in seeing options that best challenge their children and develop skills that will be relevant to the careers their children intend to move into. Programs that give students a competitive edge when applying to universities are highly sought after.

What's important is not just whether private schools offer students a high volume of advanced study programs, but how those programs meld with the school's overall mandate or curriculum.

Advanced study programs are meant to be there as a guide for the child. No student is mandated to go into these. Students aren't recruited. Educators will tell you it's about getting to know the student, what his and her passions are, and ensuring there are options and choices for the student to enrich themselves, and dive deeper into a subject area of choice.

That will make them even stronger candidates for acceptance into Canadian, U.S. or U.K. post-secondary institutions.

"What we are hearing from universities is that more is not necessarily better," says Angela Terpstra, Head of School at The Bishop Strachan School in Toronto.

"Universities want to know about that student, why they chose to take a particular course. You should be doing things that are more about your passion, not accumulating [advanced study program credits] like badges.

"We know our students really well. Part of our job is to help them find a level of balance, what will stretch them, what will be the right mix for them."

The Bishop Strachan School, as well as Holy Trinity School in Richmond Hill, Ont., offers the Advanced



The International Baccalaureate, offered at TFS – Canada's International School, challenges students in academics and personal development. Many private schools offer a variety of advanced study programs. JASON MORTLOCK PHOTO FOR TFS – CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Placement Program for its students. TFS – Canada's International School in Toronto and Mississauga, Ont., and Ridley College in St. Catharines, Ont., are International Baccalaureate World Schools.

Other programs offered that are non-academic, and concentrate more on personal development and leadership traits, include Round Square, offered by St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School in Oakville, and Duke of Edinburgh, a leadership-in-action program.

Duke of Edinburgh is offered by many private schools, including Bishop Strachan (which offers opportunities for students to achieve the varying levels of the program), Ridley College, TFS – Canada's International School, St. Mildred's Lightbourn and St. Clement's School in Toronto.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

Renowned for its rigour, the International Baccalaureate (IB) is a continuum of international education for ages three to 19, in four programmes, integrated seamlessly.

One of those, the IB Diploma

Programme, is a comprehensive, two-year curriculum with an international focus in which the standards are applied equally to all students in all schools.

"The programme allows a rigorous assessment without statistical interference (i.e. criteria-referenced), combines breadth with depth, emphasizes analytical, critical and compassionate thinking and promotes a global perspective – a valuable quality to embody in this rapidly growing global economy," says Kathy Anderson, Assistant Head of Upper School, Academics IB Diploma Co-ordinator, at Ridley College.

TFS – Canada's International School is one of nine schools (out of 2,790 IB schools worldwide) involved in a pilot project offering the advanced bilingual IB diploma. When the pilot project comes to an end at the completion of this academic year, only 164 schools in the world will be eligible to offer it.

"IB is not an elitist program in my view, in the sense that you don't have to have a high IQ to succeed," says Khalid El-Metlaal, Deputy Head of Teaching and Learning at TFS – Canada's International School.

"Students who have the right study skills, who have certain strength of will, will always have success in the IB Diploma."

ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM

AP is a program that consists of college- and university-level courses, each one culminating in a standardized post-secondary-level exam. Students can earn college- or university-level credits by completing this program successfully.

"AP is great as an advanced study program because students can really cater it to suit their goals," says Elena Hotelet, Director of Admissions at St. Clement's School.

"It's a program that really shows both domestic and international university admission officers the calibre of student you are."

DUKE OF EDINBURGH

This is a program offered around the globe to people age 14 to 25, helping youth develop more of a sense of themselves and their community, in

such categories as physical recreation, community service, an expedition, and one of 200 hobby or vocational skills.

It was founded in the United Kingdom in 1956 and encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards. Many of Canada's private schools are embracing the program.

ROUND SQUARE

Round Square was initiated by renowned German educational philosopher Kurt Hahn in the 1960s, with the objective of having students learn how to be compassionate and courageous leaders, in part by creating authentic partnerships with other students and communities worldwide either in person, through conferences, exchanges and service projects, or via online projects.

"SMLS embraces this type of program to offer a holistic education in addition to academic excellence," says Kristin Read, Director of Global Studies at St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School.

"Character education is a fundamental part of success."