

# Tri-County International Academy program going strong

Staff Report

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The COVID-19 pandemic has not dampened the enthusiasm of Tri-County International Academy's IB students this year, according to a news release from the International Baccalaureate program.

While this school year may look a little different, students have been busy engaging in the challenging curriculum and core elements that set IB apart from other college preparatory classes, the release stated, adding the program offered through the Tri-County ESC and located inside Wooster High School is known for the rigor of its coursework and appeal to colleges and universities.



Smithville High School seniors Kiley Young and Elizabeth Heeke are students in the IB program.

*Submitted Photo*

“The IB program has already begun to help me become more comfortable with things like presentations and discussions in class,” said Emma Chelf, a Wooster junior in the IB program, in the release. “I have made so many friends that I wouldn’t have known without IB. The relationships that IB gives you are like no other, it really feels like a family. We all help each other out, so when things get tough, you have all their support too.”

Comments from her classmates in the release echo similar sentiments.

“Even though I haven’t been in the program for very long, I’ve been very pleasantly surprised by the friendships I’ve built with the kids in my class and the relationships I’m building with my teachers,” said Oliva Snyder, a junior from Triway.

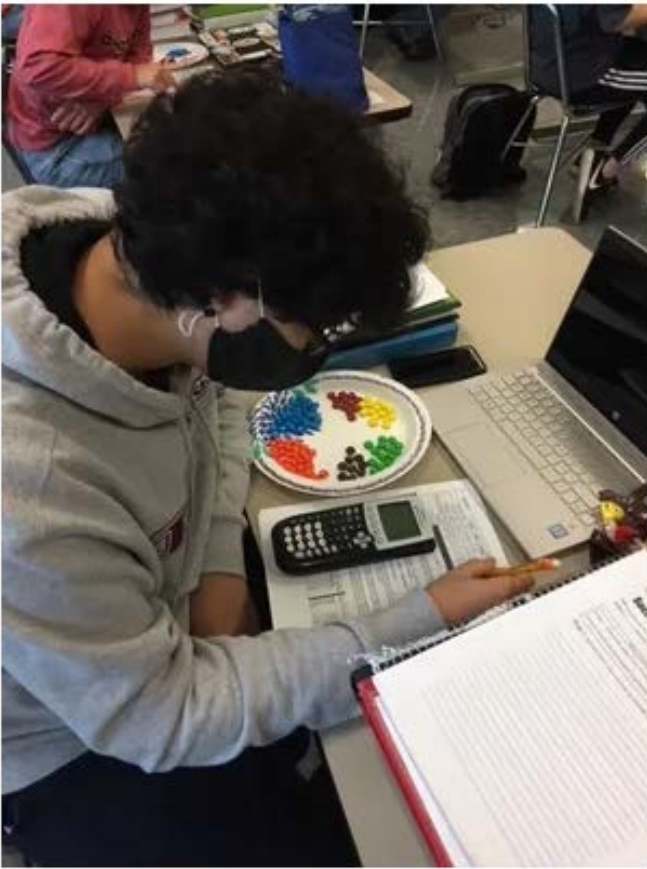


Wooster High School junior Marion Dix is a student in the IB program. *Submitted Photo*

Jude Cerniglia, a junior from Waynedale, commented on the beneficial workload of the IB program.

“I decided to do IB so that I could challenge myself academically,” he said. “My time spent in IB so far has caused me to develop strong critical thinking skills and allowed me to adapt to a larger workload. I would strongly recommend choosing IB as a stepping stone in your future. IB is a fun and challenging option that is academically and socially fulfilling.”

Until recently, students were able to meet in person four days a week, using Wednesday as a remote learning day. The facilities available to the IB program at Wooster High School have allowed students to remain 6 feet apart while enjoying a fairly regular classroom atmosphere.



Triway High School senior Sofian Dami is an IB student. *Submitted Photo*

Rising numbers of COVID cases among students and staff have necessitated that Wooster City Schools transition to remote learning, so the IB program followed suit.

According to the release, while learning remotely, students and teachers are making strong efforts to remain engaged with the IB curriculum via Google Classroom. Although face-to-face learning is preferred, students are following a synchronous schedule where presentations, discussions, labs and tests are occurring remotely.

Graduates from the class of 2020 have found the IB program greatly aided in their transition to college classes. Similar to the comments that Cerniglia made, former IB students said in the release the IB workload has enhanced their college capabilities.

“IB has prepared me for college in many ways,” said Laura Slabaugh, a freshman at Ohio State University. “I feel better prepared for the college labs and I can easily write a paper for class since we wrote so many in IB. The tests and internal assessments taught me how to study properly, and the assessments are similar to the ones in college. So far, college is going smoothly and I think the amount of work and stress in IB makes college seem more manageable and not as stressful.”



Waynedale High School junior Ian Lehman is a student in the IB program. *Submitted Photo*

Slabaugh graduated in the IB program from Ashland High School and entered college with almost a full year finished, due to her earned IB college credits.

Lizzie Meyer, a Wooster classmate of Slabaugh's in the IB program and now at OSU, made similar remarks.

"As a STEM major, I think IB helped me be prepared for my science classes and labs," she said. "While I have chosen to retake some of these classes, I was offered credit based off of my scores, so that has been really nice. I also received credit for English and history classes and because of that, I am on track to graduate a semester early for my major."

Zach Miller, a Triway graduate attending Florida Tech, shared this comment about the value of his IB education: "The abilities I've gained in concepts like communication, collaboration and stress management have empowered me to lead a more confident and balanced life."

Classmate Anne Straits from Hiland High School shared similar thoughts.

"IB was a big reason why my transition from high school to college was not nearly as rough as it could have been," she said. "In IB, I gained experience with key skills such as higher-level academic writing, laboratory exercise, good study habits, and stress management." Straits is studying at Case Western Reserve University.



Juniors Kyla Yarger (Wooster High School) and Colin Grundy (Mapleton High School in Ashland County) are students in the IB program. *Submitted Photo*

Students and parents are invited to join the IB program for an informational meeting at 7 p.m. Jan. 7 via Zoom. Participants will hear from students, parents and college representatives about the IB program. The link to the event is: <https://zoom.us>