

RESEARCH BRIEF:

International Baccalaureate programmes in Title I schools in the United States: Accessibility, participation and university enrollment

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BACKGROUND

With a growing number of low-income students in the United States, it is critical that US educational initiatives make targeted efforts to provide quality education and proper supports to these students (Southern Education Foundation, 2015). Low-income students have less access to social and economic capital, which can hinder educational attainment and exacerbate the cycle of poverty. In this study, we use the term “low-income” students to refer to students who receive free or reduced-price meals in US public schools.

Nationally, research suggests that students from low-income backgrounds are less likely to obtain the high school qualifications that are needed in order to access college and to persist and perform at a high level once there (Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca, and Moeller, 2008). Further, racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by poverty in the US, contributing to persistent gaps in educational outcomes (Barton and Coley, 2010).

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is committed to fostering a more diverse and inclusive IB community, enabling access to a rigorous education regardless of personal circumstances. One indicator of the IB’s commitment to expanding access is the availability of IB programmes in schools designated Title I. This study builds upon previous research (IB Global Research, 2012) to identify trends in Title I schools offering IB programmes, to explore issues of access to the IB, and to examine the postsecondary trajectories of IB students from these schools.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used school-level and student-level data merged from multiple sources: (1) the National Center for Education Statistics’ (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD); (2) International Baccalaureate Information System (IBIS), a database maintained by the IB; and (3) the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC).

- CCD Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey is a national survey that “collects and compiles administrative data from state education agencies covering ... all public elementary and secondary schools and school districts in the United States” (Keaton, 2014, p 1). The latest available data (2012–2013) was used for this study.
- IBIS is a database that includes demographic and assessment data for all students who take at least one IB exam as well as administrative data for all authorized IB World Schools. The school sample consisted of 1,405 public schools that are authorized to offer one or more IB programme (98% of all IB public schools in the US).

Title I schools

Introduced through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and amended through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002, Title I provides federal resources to schools with high numbers or high percentages of students from low-income families with an emphasis on supporting lower-achieving students. Title I aims to support learning and development among low-income students to improve academic outcomes (DOE, 2014; NCES, n.d.).

Title I programs can take two forms. Schools that have low-income student enrollment of 40% or more may offer a “schoolwide program”, meaning the funds can be used to support initiatives that benefit all students within the school. Alternatively, Title I schools with less than 40% of students from low-income families may offer a “targeted assistance program”, which focuses on students that are either not meeting state academic standards or are at risk of failing to achieve state standards (DOE, 2014).

- NSC is a national data repository on student postsecondary enrollment, graduation and degree attainment. NSC returned detailed enrollment data for 36,883 students (86% of the whole 2013 Diploma Programme (DP) cohort).

CCD, IBIS and NSC data were merged to identify IB students' postsecondary trajectories. The student sample used for these analyses included students from public high schools in the US designated Title I who graduated in 2013 and took at least one IB exam. Students who attended non-Title I schools or private high schools were excluded.

We used descriptive statistics to examine the presence of IB programmes in Title I schools and to discern how socio-economic status (SES) and race/ethnicity relate to IB students' postsecondary enrollment. Comparisons to national statistics are made when available.

FINDINGS

Title I schools offering the IB

Overall, 60% of all public schools that offered IB programmes in the US were designated Title I (targeted-assistance or schoolwide programs) in 2012–2013 (Figure 1, Table 1).

This represents an impressive 46% increase since the 2009–2010 school year. By comparison, 68% of all US public schools were designated Title I nationally, a 5% increase from 2009–2010. The number of IB World Schools that are designated schoolwide Title I programs has increased even more since 2009–2010, by 53%. Currently nearly half (46%) of IB public schools qualify for schoolwide Title I programs (Figure 2), which is comparable to the national average (52%).

At the programme level, analysis shows that 65% of all Primary Years Programmes (PYP) in the US are implemented in Title I schools, followed by 63% of Middle Years Programmes (MYP) and 54% of Diploma Programme (DP) (Table 2).

| | IB World Schools | Entire US |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Total schools | 1,405 | 102,890 |
| % increase from 2009–2010 | 36% | -1% |
| Title I schools | 837 | 69,758 |
| % Title I | 60% | 68% |
| % increase from 2009–2010 | 46% | 5% |
| Schoolwide Title I schools | 645 | 53,064 |
| % schoolwide Title I | 46% | 52% |
| % increase from 2009–2010 | 53% | 15% |

Table 1. Numbers and percentages of Title I schools, 2012–2013 (Source: CCD 2012–2013).

In addition, 53% of Middle Years Programmes are implemented in schools designated schoolwide Title I, which is a higher proportion than the national average of 52%.

| IB World Schools | All | PYP | MYP | DP |
|---|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Total IB programmes in US public schools | 1,654 | 413 | 500 | 741 |
| % increase from 2009–2010 | 38% | 93% | 39% | 19% |
| Title I schools | 978 | 268 | 313 | 397 |
| % Title I | 59% | 65% | 63% | 54% |
| % increase from 2009–2010 | 52% | 69% | 50% | 43% |
| Schoolwide Title I schools | 756 | 212 | 263 | 281 |
| % schoolwide Title I | 46% | 51% | 53% | 38% |
| % increase from 2009–2010 | 59% | 77% | 51% | 55% |

Table 2. Number and percentages of Title I schools by IB programme, 2012–2013 (Source: CCD 2012–2013).

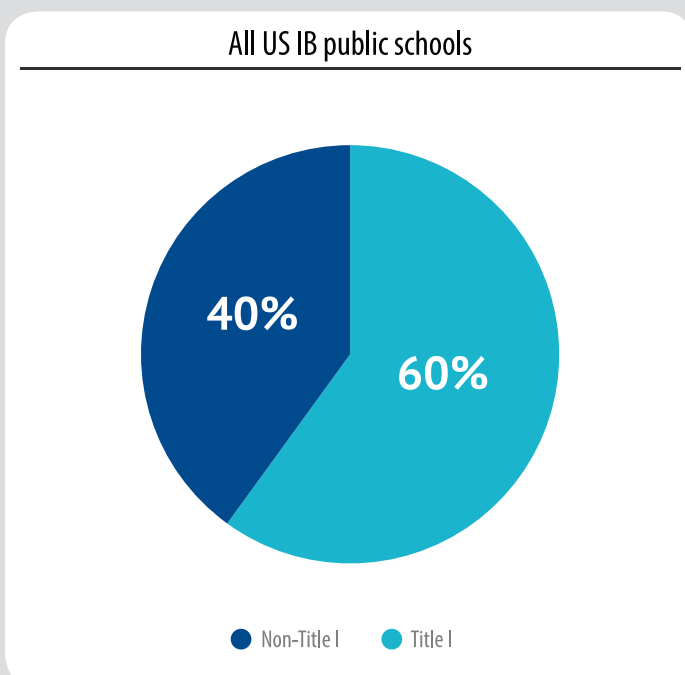


Figure 1. Percent Title I schools of all IB public schools, US, 2012–2013.

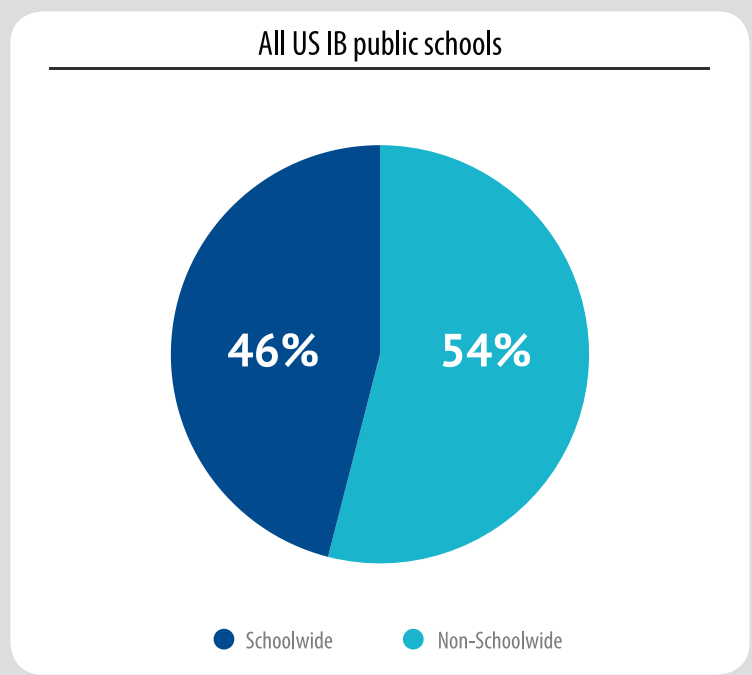


Figure 2. Percent schoolwide Title I schools public schools, US, 2012–2013.

Access to IB programmes

School-level analysis

To understand the population of students with access to IB programmes in Title I schools, we explored the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in these schools in 2012–2013 (Figure 3). Compared with national rates, Title I schools that offer IB programmes have higher enrollments of Asian/Pacific Islander students (6%) and African American students (24%). The rate of Hispanic student enrollment (25%) is similar to the national average, whereas the proportion of white students in Title I schools offering IB programmes is lower. In terms of low-income students, 50% of students in Title I schools that offer the IB qualify for free or reduced-price meals compared to 61% of students in Title I schools nationally.

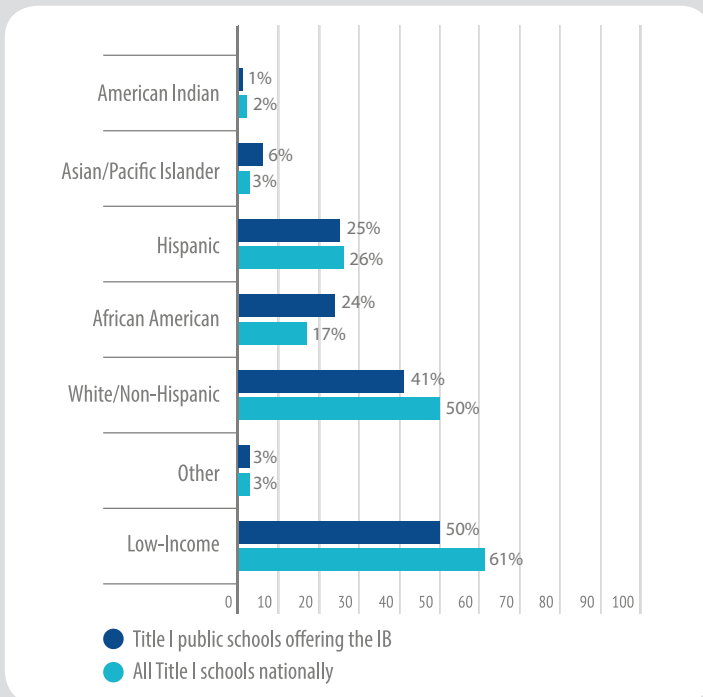


Figure 3. Race/ethnicity and SES of students in Title I public schools offering the IB, in comparison to national averages in Title I schools (Source: NCES, 2013).

Student-level analysis

To further understand the trends of access to and participation in IB programmes among low-income and underrepresented minority students, we explored the demographic characteristics of students from Title I schools that participated in IB programmes. We accomplished this by examining IBIS data for students who took at least one IB examination, which is available only for the Diploma Programme. Therefore, the following results are based on students enrolled in the DP who graduated in 2013 from Title I public high schools. Figure 4 shows that the highest percentage of DP exam takers in Title I schools are white (48%), followed by Hispanic (21%) and African American (13%), Asian (13%) and American Indian (1%). In addition, a third of the DP exam takers in Title I schools qualified for free or reduced-price meals. Compared to the national rates, African American students and low-income students are underrepresented among DP exam takers in Title I schools. Nevertheless, low-income and minority students still make up a notable pro-

portion of the DP exam takers in these schools. Results indicate that nearly 40% of the population who took at least one DP exam were minority students.

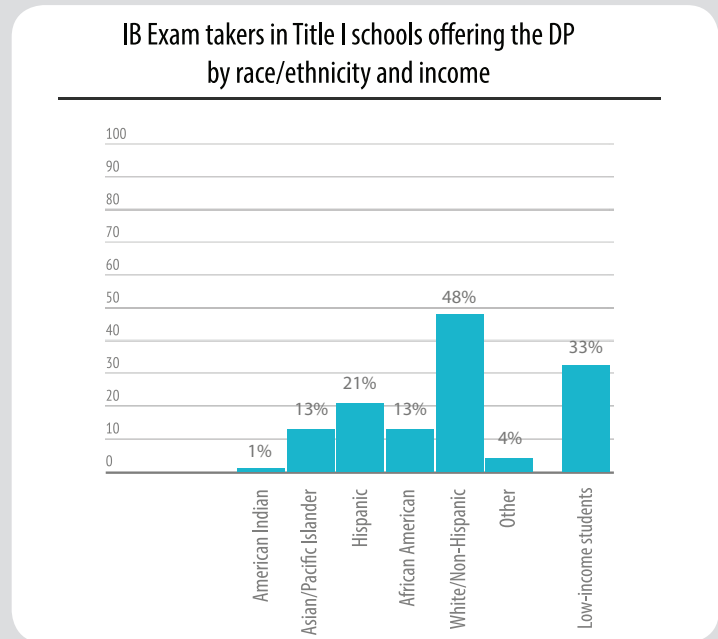


Figure 4. DP exam takers in Title I public schools, by SES and ethnicity (Source: IBIS).

As racial and ethnic minority families are disproportionately affected by poverty, higher proportions of minority students attend Title I schools and/or receive free or reduced-price meals (NCES, 2015). Our data also reflects this national trend. As seen in Figure 5, 67% of Hispanic students participating in the IB are low-income students, while only 11% of white students are low-income.

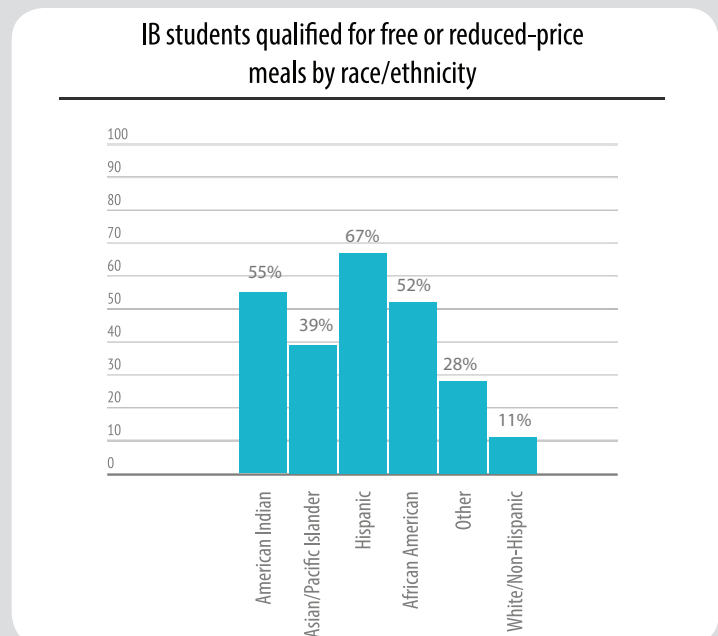


Figure 5. Percentage of IB students in Title I public high schools who qualify for free or reduced-price meals (Source: IBIS).

Postsecondary outcomes

As Figure 6 illustrates, DP students from Title I schools enroll in college at much higher rates than the national averages (Source for national averages: NCES Datalab, n.d.).

Additionally, it is worth noting that DP students from Title I schools enroll in college at the same rate as DP students from US public schools generally (82%). Low-income DP students from Title I schools also enroll at very high rates (79%). This rate is comparable to overall DP student postsecondary enrollment and substantially higher than the national average for low-income students (46%).

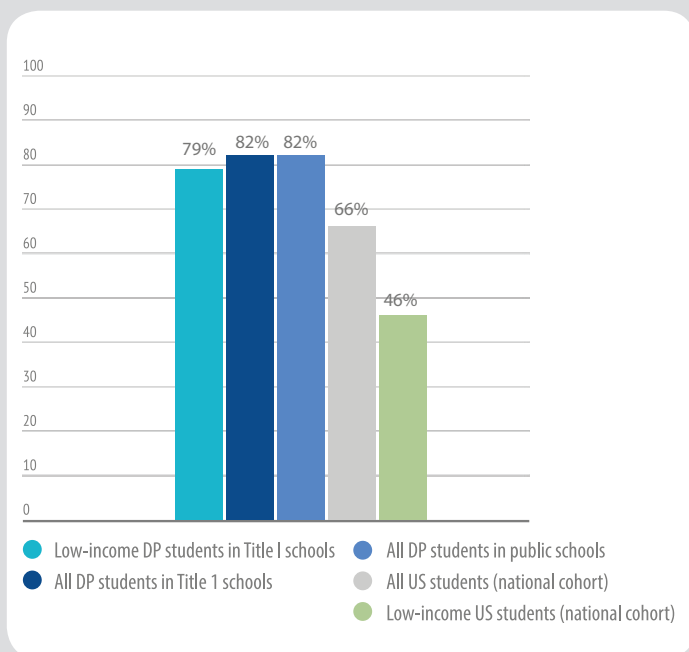


Figure 6. Immediate postsecondary enrollment at four-year and two-year institutions (Source for national averages: NCES, 2015).

Next we consider whether SES and race/ethnicity are related to postsecondary enrollment for DP exam takers from Title I schools. Interestingly, as Figure 7 shows, African American DP students from Title I schools have the highest postsecondary enrollment rate among the racial and ethnic groups represented in this study (87%), while nationally the college enrollment rate of African American students is the lowest (57%). Additionally, 84% of low-income African American DP students enroll immediately in college, the same percentage as white students who are not low-income. While Hispanic students make up 21% of the DP exam takers and qualify at the highest rate for free and reduced-price meals (67%), they enroll in college at similar rates to other races/ethnicities in the sample.

Based on these findings, the race/ethnicity and SES of an IB student has limited effects on his or her college enrollment, with students of all racial/ethnic groups enrolling in college at rates of 74% or above. Furthermore, IB students enroll at higher rates than the national average by racial/ethnic category.

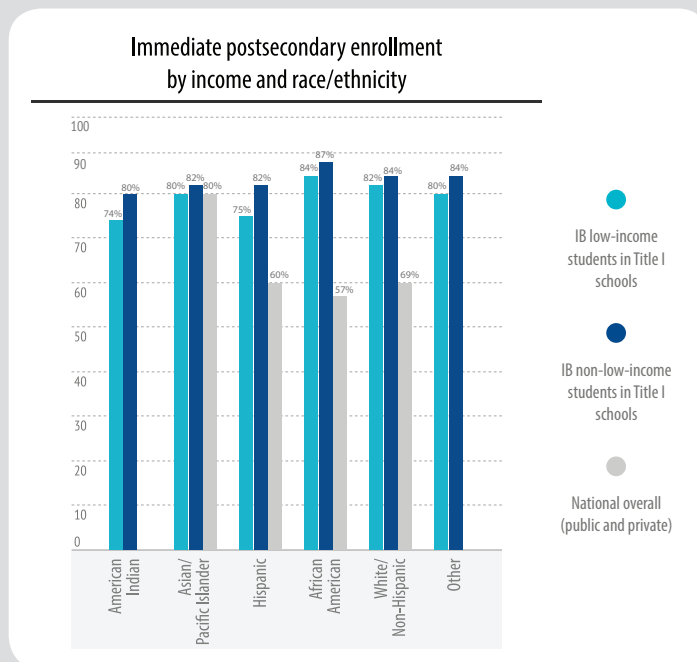


Figure 7. Immediate postsecondary enrollment for IB students in Title I public high schools by ethnicity and SES (Source for national averages: NCES, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this analysis indicate that nearly two-thirds of the IB programmes implemented in public schools in the US are available to low-income students through Title I schools. Low-income and minority students represent a notable proportion of students who take DP exams in Title I schools. However, the participation of these students in the DP remains an area for growth and development for the organization. Further research will be required to investigate how IB and school-level policies can foster greater participation among low-income and minority students.

The findings related to college enrollment from this study are interesting and unique in the field. For those students who participate in the DP, race/ethnicity and SES are not strongly related to college enrollment. In particular, results show that African American students enrolled in college at higher rates than any other racial/ethnic group, even after taking SES into account. These findings suggest that students from many different backgrounds who participate in the Diploma Programme are similarly successful in terms of postsecondary enrollment.

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