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PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS GRADUATE IS THE DISTRICT’S FIRST TO EARN AN INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA

Valedictorian of International High School’s Class of 2019 now attending UPenn

***Photo attached: Aamya Perez speaking at the 2019 IHS graduation. ***

PATERSON – Aamya Perez was first in her class when she graduated from International High School in June, and now she has scored another first. Perez has received notification that she has earned the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma in recognition of her exceptional work in completing its rigorous requirements while a student in the IB program at IHS.

“Aamya Perez is the epitome of a student who makes the most of the opportunities that are presented to her,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer. “She worked very hard to earn the IB diploma and she will go down in the history of our district as the first to do so. I want to congratulate her, as well as her parents, her teachers, her administrators and all who supported Amaya in high school. We all wish her continued success at UPenn.”

“The IB program at International is a challenging yet rewarding program that truly prepares you for the level of work one experiences on the college level,” said Perez, who is now a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania. “The program has not only taught me to be open-minded to global issues but has allowed me to develop my interests outside of the classroom. As a graduate of IB, I can honestly say that the program and its rigor, allowed me to flourish and have an edge up in the college application process.”

To earn an IB diploma, a student in the IB program must take six exams in different subject areas during the junior and senior years of high school, and score a minimum of 24 total points. Each exam has a maximum score of 7 points. An IB diploma also requires a student to have completed an extended essay, the Theory of Knowledge course, as well as a Creativity, Action and Service project. One to three bonus points can be added for completion of the Theory of Knowledge course and the Creativity, Action and Service project. The extended essay and the exams are graded externally by the IB worldwide organization.

The highest possible score for an IB diploma is 45 points. Of the 166,465 students who are IB candidates, 275 students worldwide earned 45 points. Candidates can earn 45 points by getting the highest score of seven on all six of the required exams (for a total of 42 points), plus getting another three bonus points for the extended essay and the Theory of Knowledge course.

At the Board of Education’s retreat on Tuesday night, Interim Assistant Superintendent Joanna Tsimpedes reported that there were total of 44 students in the first graduating class of the IB Program at IHS in June. While Perez is the only member of the class so far to be awarded the IB diploma, there were an additional
five students who came within two points of qualifying for the IB diploma. Those students will appeal the decision by resubmitting their applications for the May 2020 testing window, Tsimpedes said.

By comparison, Tsimpedes noted that another New Jersey school district had a total of 108 IB students last May – more than twice the amount at IHS – of which two had earned the IB diploma.

International High School is the only school in Passaic County, and only one of 17 schools in New Jersey, to offer the IB Program. The other schools are Bergen County Academies in Hackensack, Biotechnology High School in Freehold, Donovan Catholic in Toms River, East Side High School in Newark, Howell High School in Farmingdale, Fort Lee High School, Freehold Township High School, Linden High School, Morris Knolls High School in Rockaway, Newark Academy in Livingston, Red Bank Regional High School in Little Silver, Salem High School, Science Park High School in Newark, Shore Regional High School in West Long Branch, West Morris Central High School in Chester and West Morris Mendham High School in Mendham.

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