

NCREST



Final Report to

International Baccalaureate (IB)

**Collaborative Development of a Quality Assurance
Framework
for the IB School Authorization Process**

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Introduction

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization has developed a system for the authorization (and subsequent evaluation) of applicant schools interested in becoming IB World Schools. In this multi-phase process, a school first applies for candidacy, then begins implementing the IB standards and practices, and finally submits an application for authorization to become a full member school. The process generally requires about two years, and is guided along the way by a set of documents and supports carefully developed by the IB Global organization.

At this time of rapid change and growth in its global educational enterprise, IB has undertaken a series of efforts aimed at reviewing and strengthening core practices so as to assure the quality, consistency and fairness of their systems and procedures. Such efforts have been distinguished by their collaborative nature, in which IB has partnered with external sources that can provide additional expertise and support in the co-creation of new, useful resources and tools to meet IB's needs. For example, one such recently completed project involved the development of a quality assurance framework for IB's systems of professional development. Another project, which is the subject of this report, focuses on ensuring the quality, consistency and fairness of the IB school authorization process.

Researchers Elisabeth Barnett and Bethany Rogers from the Teachers College, Columbia University-based National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST) and independent consultant Gerard Calnin worked closely with Michael Dean and several other key IB staff between fall 2010 and summer 2011 to develop a *Quality Assurance Framework* (QAF) and plan of implementation for the IB School Authorization procedures. Specifically, according to the project contract, NCREST researchers gathered information about the IB School Authorization process and reviewed pertinent literature; created a QAF; drafted data gathering instruments; and provided recommendations for the implementation of the QAF.

In what follows, this report:

- 1) Briefly describes the process through which the collaborating researchers developed the QAF;
- 2) Reviews related scholarship to contextualize and support the elements and design of the QAF;
- 3) Presents and explains the features and intended operation of the QAF;
- 4) Provides drafts of recommended data gathering instruments;
- 5) Offers recommendations regarding the administration of the QAF.

Brief Description of the QAF Development Process

The development of the QAF involved a variety of steps and deliverables across three main phases: 1) investigation, 2) framework development, and 3) recommendations for implementation (including the design of data gathering instruments).

Investigation/Information Gathering

From December 2010 through February 2011, NCREST carried out data collection on the IB authorization process; between January and June 2011, NCREST completed a review of pertinent literature regarding quality assurance processes and mechanisms. Data collection included a review of IB documents, consultation and meetings with key IB staff (especially Michael Dean and Ralph Cline), and semi-structured interviews with IB staff members. Additionally, Elisabeth Barnett observed a global IB training session on the revised school authorization process at the IB Bethesda offices and Bethany Rogers attended a two-day school evaluation visit at the Farmington Woods Elementary School in Cary, N.C., in order to map and better understand the authorization process not only from the view of IB staff, but also from the vantage point of IB Educators and schools.

These activities resulted in a series of memos that summarized and synthesized findings (see Appendix C). Altogether, the meetings, interviews, and observations afforded NCREST researchers perspective on the aspects of the IB School Authorization process that could pose the greatest risks to quality, consistency, and fairness as well as the forms of data collection and analysis that the IB staff believed could best improve the performance of the authorization process.

At the same time, NCREST researchers were engaged in the process of contextualizing these particular understandings of the IB process and needs within relevant existing scholarship and produced a literature review that provides theoretical grounding for the design of the QAF. This examines the roots of Quality Assurance as a concept as well as the evolution of what we have come to call a “quality assurance of quality assurance” (see Appendix A).

Framework Development

Between late March and the end of April, NCREST researchers developed a prototype of a QAF for the IB school authorization process. Design of the framework, which proceeded from the theory of action supporting the IB authorization process, was organized by two framing topics:

- The alignment/consistency of the school authorization process as enacted with the intended design.
- The usefulness/value of different dimensions of the school authorization process to those involved with it.

Within this structure, the QAF is primarily organized by the stages of the school authorization process which include the following:

- *Request for Candidacy* – a school decides that it would like to offer one or more of the IB’s three programmes (Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme, and Diploma Programme) and submits an application to become a candidate for IB membership.

- *Consultation* – the candidate school is assigned a consultant who guides it through the process of aligning itself with the IB Standards and Practices.
- *Request for Authorization*—the school submits an application to become an official IB school.
- *Verification Visit*—if the application is considered satisfactory, a visit to the school is made by a team of people with deep knowledge about the IB. They submit a report to IB on the school’s alignment with the IB Standards and Practices.
- *Decisions*—The IB organization arrives at a decision on whether a school may be authorized.

The framework also specifies the sources of information for each of the major topics and sub-topics included. Key sources of information are: the schools (specifically IB Coordinators), IB Educators (Readers, Consultants, and Visitors), regional office staff, and key program files kept in IB Docs and elsewhere.

NCREST researchers shared this initial draft of the QAF with Gerard Calnin, Michael Dean, Ralph Cline, additional involved NCREST staff (Jacqueline Ancess and Fenot Aklog) and relevant IB staff. As a result, the framework underwent several stages of revision, in order to accommodate IB staff feedback and priorities and ensure the integrity of the items included.

Recommendations for Implementation

By mid-June, NCREST researchers, along with Gerard Calnin and Michael Dean, began creating instruments to gather data outlined by the framework. Work on instruments was organized primarily by information source. Along with the development of instruments, the team worked on a proposed strategy for their utilization including identification of the specific people who would administer and participate in them and the timing of their administration. The instruments are included in Appendix B.

Literature Review Summary

About Quality Assurance

To inform the development of the IB School Authorization QAF, NCREST drew on existing scholarly literature in order to examine historic and contemporary understandings and uses of “quality assurance.” At a very general level, “quality assurance” (QA) represents the quest across a variety of fields to ensure that products or services fulfill quality requirements. Traditionally associated with business, QA practices have in the last several decades begun to powerfully influence other fields, including education. Despite its growing popularity within education, however, QA lacks a clear and common working model, given the contested meaning of “quality,” the range of different purposes served by QA, the varied practices associated with QA, and the shifting locus of authority for QA.

Further complicating matters, most of the scholarship on quality assurance focuses on a primary QA process, i.e., the exercise of QA practices to assure the quality of educational

institutions; very little research examines efforts to ensure the consistency, fairness, and integrity of existing QA processes, as the IB QA Framework purports to do. A more detailed review of the relevant QA literature is presented in Appendix A; here we include information on the task at hand, i.e. assuring the quality of a school authorization process, which is essentially a QA process in itself.

A QA of QA

The current project essentially aims to assure the quality of a quality assurance process. While a wide body of scholarship exists concerning quality assurance, studies that specifically examine the quality assurance of existing QA processes are far more limited.

In his article, “The Quality of Quality Assurance Agencies,” Woodhouse (2004) promotes the idea of a voluntary code of practice or set of principles by which external quality agencies may learn from and/or measure themselves. According to the author, such practices for an organization such as IB might include:

- an explicit and relevant mission;
- independent, impartial, rigorous, thorough, fair, and consistent decision making;
- assessments carried out in relation to the organization’s own self-analysis and to external references;
- respect for integrity (and autonomy) of institutions evaluated (i.e., IB’s treatment of schools);
- efforts to inform and respond to the public;
- open reporting of institutional review decisions;
- in the case of explicit minimum standards (i.e., the IB standards and practices), distinction between threshold achievement and improvement;
- explicit, public policies, procedures, and criteria;
- adequate and credible resources, both human and financial;
- economical and efficient means of working;
- self-review procedures, based on data collection and analysis, including consideration of the organization’s own effect and value;
- collaboration with other like-minded external quality agencies;
- a provision for appeals against its decisions (Woodhouse, 2004, p. 80-81).

Along with this list of best practices, Woodhouse identifies benefits – to students, institutions, and graduates – that may accrue from establishing a network of mutual recognition among external quality agencies. This may apply more to state appointed or national agencies, but IB collaboration with other external quality agencies could yield like benefits for their students, schools, and IB educators.

However, there are clearly challenges associated with assessing QA processes. Perhaps one of the key issues concerns the ultimate impact of an agency’s QA processes – on teaching and learning, students, internal management, and institutional mission fulfillment (Frazer, 1997, p.

353). In other words, to what degree do its processes actually allow an agency or organization to assess the aspects of educational institutions that most influence the quality of education provided? From the QA processes that exist, is the agency able to make a reliable determination of quality, as they define it? In the parlance of IB, this might translate to a concern with the Authorization process itself: even if performed to the letter, does it effectively determine the quality of candidate schools?

Other issues that Szanto (2005) identified for evaluators of existing QA processes include:

- The need to develop success or performance indicators for agencies or organizations such as IB, against which their activities can be measured internally (by agencies themselves) and externally;
- The need for agencies to regularly monitor whether and how well they achieve their goals (in fact, Stensaker, 2008, p. 10 suggests that QA agencies should have internal reflection mechanisms integrated into their accountability procedures, meaning that they should have a process for reflecting upon the “outcomes of the implemented quality assurance schemes”);
- The need for agencies to take corrective measures when necessary;
- The need to pay attention to dissemination activities – particularly regarding good practice related to quality assurance at the institutional level;
- The need to establish cyclical external evaluations of agencies or organizations such as IB, as a critical element of their internal quality assurance system.

Regarding the latter, and given that he believes that the impact of QA activities is “generally not deep and far-reaching enough,” Szanto (2005, p. 189) argues that “[r]egular monitoring and follow-up of institutional and programme reviews could help institutions in implementing quality enhancement measures and, especially, in stabilizing them, in creating a quality culture.” (p. 190)

While several of these latter recommendations lie beyond the scope of the IB QAF project, they suggest promising directions for the further shaping and improvement of IB QAF processes.

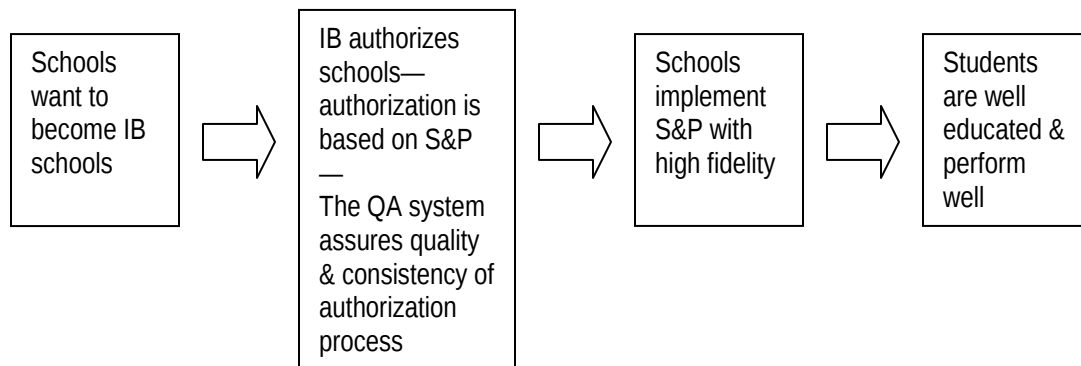
IB School Authorization Framework

Description of the QAF: Features and Operation

In addition to the theoretical justifications provided by scholarly literature and researchers’ understanding of the particulars associated with the IB School Authorization process, the QAF is built as well on the theory of change that animates the IB process. Specifically, IB authorization is awarded to candidate schools that are able to demonstrate in action IB standards and practices. According to IB, if schools are successful in implementing the IB standards and practices with a high degree of fidelity, then students will be well educated and perform well. The QAF is meant to assure the quality and consistency of that very process by which IB determines whether or not schools are enacting the standards and practices that will not only

qualify them for membership in IB, but which indicate the likelihood of success in helping students to achieve. The graph below displays the theory of action driving this QA process.

Theory of Action – IB School Authorization QA (S&P= IB’s Standards and Practices)



As described earlier, the QAF is designed to address two core objectives:

- To verify the **alignment/consistency** of the actual School Authorization (SA) process with the process as it was designed.
- To understand the **usefulness/value** of the SA process, i.e. its contribution to attainment of IB’s Standards and Practices (S&P).

The first consideration fulfills the purpose of accountability: is the process, as designed, being operationalized faithfully? The second speaks to the aim of improvement, asking whether the process might be improved to better achieve the desired ends. A third framing aspect of the QAF, which comes into greater play in the process of analyzing rather than gathering data, consists of the analysis of patterns and relationships between the School Authorization process, schools’ attainment of IB standards and practices, and outcomes.

The following provides the basis for all of the topics and sub-topics included in the QAF:

Objective 1: To verify the **alignment/consistency** of the actual School Authorization (SA) process with the process as it was designed. This would include an assessment of:

- a. Procedures followed in relation to IB standards (e.g., timeliness, access to documents, hours spent)
- b. The consistency and accuracy of judgments and the acceptability of evidence used in judgments
- c. Adherence to approved roles and responsibilities of all involved in the process.
- d. The selection, training, support of IB educators¹

¹ This sub-topic is not currently in the framework. It will be included once additional documents from IB become available.

Objective 2: To understand the **usefulness/value** of SA process, i.e. its contribution to attainment of IB's Standards and Practices (S&P). This would include an assessment of the:

- a. Clarity/ease of use of SA process and documents
- b. Contribution of each stage of SA to preparation for next stage
- c. Perceived value of SA Process in helping school to meet S&P
- d. Perceived accuracy of feedback in relation to self perception (school)
- e. Usefulness of SA training and documents to IB educators.
- f. Quality of support provided to schools by regions and IB educators.

Across both objectives (alignment/consistency and usefulness/value) and within each of the five organizing stages, the QAF outlines data to be gathered from a variety of sources and through a variety of instruments. The final list of instruments developed to address the topics and sub-topics included in the QAF is as follows (see Appendix B):

- 1) A School Survey
- 2) IB Educator Surveys
 - a. Reader's Survey
 - b. Consultant's Survey
 - c. Visitor's Survey
- 3) A Regional Staff Survey
- 4) A Double Readers Protocol
- 5) Two File Review Protocols
- 6) Three Focus Group Protocols.

IB School Authorization Quality Assurance Framework

Request for Candidacy

ALIGNMENT/CONSISTENCY		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Procedures followed in relation to IB standards	- Schools.... - Were able to access all needed materials to apply for candidacy. - Had a point of contact at the Regional Office. - Had questions answered (if any) by Regional Office. - Were able to submit documents easily. - Schools received support in arriving at decision to apply for candidacy. - Schools obtained needed documents and templates without difficulty.	<i>School survey</i>
	Reader was able to access all needed documents for reviews of candidacy.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	- Schools received a timely response to request for candidacy. - Readers completed <i>Feedback on Application for Candidacy</i> form and letter and returned it to Regional Office in a timely way. - Schools had an assigned contact person at the IB Regional Office.	<i>File review</i>
	- Schools had an assigned contact person at the IB Regional Office. - Schools received support in arriving at decision to apply for candidacy. - Readers of candidacy applications were assigned based on IB criteria.	<i>Regional survey</i>
Consistency and accuracy of judgments and acceptability of evidence used	Readers deferred to Regional Staff when making difficult judgment calls.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	Readers deferred to Regional Staff when making difficult judgment calls.	<i>Region survey</i>
	- Readers' judgments were aligned with IB expectations and the S&P. - The judgments made by readers were based on clear evidence.	<i>Double readers</i>
Adherence to approved roles and responsibilities	- Readers adhered to the IB job description. - Readers communicated with the Regional Staff as needed. - The Regional Staff performed their roles as expected under IB guidelines.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	- Readers adhered to the IB job description. - Readers communicated with the Regional Staff as needed. - The Regional Staff performed their roles as expected under IB guidelines.	<i>Region survey</i>
	Readers performed their roles as expected under IB guidelines.	<i>Double readers</i>

USEFULNESS/VALUE		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Clarity/ease of use of SA process and documents	- The school found that: - The request for candidacy procedures were easy to understand. - Possible outcome(s) of the candidacy process were easy to understand. - Documents were easy to understand and use.	<i>School survey</i>
	- Readers found <i>Feedback on Application for Candidacy</i> forms clear and easy to use. - Readers found the IB Docs system easy to use. - Readers were able to get help if needed in the use of forms and IB docs.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	- There were no undue difficulties in: - Guiding schools through the request for candidacy stage - Identifying and assigning readers - Obtaining and finalizing the <i>Feedback on Application for Candidacy</i> forms and letter. - Making decisions about the candidacy.	<i>Region survey</i>
Contribution of each stage of SA to preparation for next stage	Following approval of candidacy, schools were clear about next steps to be eligible for authorization.	<i>School survey</i>
	Following approval of candidacy, schools were clear about next steps to be eligible for authorization.	<i>Region survey</i>
Perceived value of SA Process in helping school to meet S&P	The letter/feedback in response to the request for candidacy was useful in taking steps to meet S&P.	<i>School survey</i>
	Readers believe that the candidacy process helped the school to align itself with S&P.	<i>Reader survey</i>
Perceived accuracy of feedback in relation to self perception (school)	- The feedback provided made sense to the school. - The feedback provided was aligned with school's view of itself.	<i>School survey</i>
	The judgments made by Readers were aligned with those considered correct by Regional Staff.	<i>Region survey</i>
Usefulness of SA training and documents to IB educators.	Readers believe that they have received the training needed to perform their role.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	Training offered to Readers appeared to prepare them well for their role.	<i>Region survey</i>
Quality of support provided to schools by regions and IB educators.	The school's needs for support were met in candidacy stage	<i>School survey</i>
	- Readers believed that they had received the support needed to perform their role. - Readers were able to obtain guidance from the Regional Staff in dealing with complex situations.	<i>Reader survey</i>

Consultation process

ALIGNMENT/CONSISTENCY		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Procedures followed in relation to IB standards	The school was informed in timely manner that consultant was assigned (with candidacy letter).	<i>School survey</i>
	- The school was assigned a consultant, matched to their particular needs, in a timely way. - The consultant's first contact with the school, following approval of candidacy, was made within 3 weeks. - The time spent by/with consultant was 20 hours per candidate year on the phone or by e-mail, and a 2-day visit. - The consultant completed a report on the visit, providing feedback on the practices that must be in place at the time of authorization, and submitted it to IB. - The school received the consultant's report following the visit in a timely way. - The school received Regional recommendations on next steps in the SA process in a timely way.	<i>File review</i>
	- The consultant was assigned to schools for which they felt qualified to provide support. - The consultant was able to access all needed documents for the consultation process. - The consultant received a letter from IB with guidelines for consultation process. - The consultant gained access to the school in a timely way. - The consultant was contacted by the region about three months after being assigned regarding the process. - The consultant completed a report on the visit, providing feedback on the practices that must be in place at the time of authorization, and submitted it to IB.	<i>Consultant survey,</i>
	- The consultant provided guidance to IB on whether the school was ready to submit the <i>Application for Authorization</i>. - The school had an assigned contact person at the IB Regional Office during the consultation process. - The consultant was assigned to a school for which he/she was qualified to provide support. - The consultant was able to access all needed documents for the consultation process.	<i>Region survey</i>
Consistency and accuracy of judgments and acceptability of evidence used	- The judgments made by the consultant were based on clear evidence. - The consultant's understanding of the school is aligned with that of the Regional Staff.	<i>Region survey</i>
Adherence to approved roles and responsibilities	- The consultant was clear on steps needed and how to handle interactions with school. - The consultant adhered to the IB job description. - The consultant communicated with the Regional Staff as needed.	<i>Consultant survey</i>
	The consultant developed an appropriate and helpful relationship with the school.	<i>School survey</i>

	• The consultant performed his/her role as expected under IB guidelines. • The Regional Staff perform their roles as expected under IB guidelines. • The consultant communicated with the Regional Staff as needed.	<i>Region survey</i>
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USEFULNESS/VALUE		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Clarity/ease of use of SA process and documents	• The school was able to interact with the consultant as needed/wanted (within the limits placed by IB). • The consultant's report was clear and useful.	<i>School survey</i>
	• The consultant found the consultation log and report templates clear and easy to use. • The consultant found the IB docs system easy to use. • The consultant was able to get help if needed in the use of templates and IB docs. • The consultant was able to gain necessary understanding of school. • The consultant was satisfied with the type and quality of interactions with the school.	<i>Consultant survey</i>
	• There were no undue difficulties in: • Guiding the school through the consultation process. • Identifying and assigning a consultant. • Overseeing the consultation process. • Obtaining and finalizing the consultant's report. • Resolving problems that occurred during the consultation process.	<i>Region survey</i>
Contribution of each stage of SA to preparation for next stage	• The consultation process was perceived as useful in preparing an <i>Application for Authorization</i>	<i>School survey</i>
	• The consultant felt able to support the school in becoming ready for authorization. • The consultant believed that the consultation was successful in preparing the school for a request for authorization.	<i>Consultant survey</i>
	• Following the consultation process, the school submitted an <i>Application for Authorization</i>.	<i>File review</i>
Perceived value of SA Process in helping school to meet S&P	• The consultant's recommendations on how to meet the S&P were clear. • The consultant's recommendations were helpful to the school. • The school understood how to address practices that needed further development noted in the consultation report.	<i>School survey</i>
	• The consultant felt able to assist the school in aligning itself with the S&P. • The consultant helped the school meet the practices that must be in place for authorization.	<i>Consultant survey</i>
	• The consultant was well versed in IB practices/norms/expectations/culture.	<i>Region survey</i>
Perceived accuracy of feedback in relation to self	• The consultant accurately understood the school's strengths and needs/challenges.	<i>School survey</i>
	• The judgments made by consultants were aligned with those	<i>Region</i>

perception (school)	considered correct by Regional Staff.	<i>survey</i>
Usefulness of SA training and documents to IB educators.	- The consultant felt that he/she possessed a clear understanding of the S&P and IB expectations. - The consultant believed that IB training and documents supported him/her to carry out consultations effectively. <i>The Guidelines for Consultants</i> document was useful to the consultant in defining his/her role in relation to the school. - Training offered to the consultant prepared him/her well for the role.	<i>Consultant survey</i>
	Training offered to the consultant prepared him/her well for the role.	<i>Region survey</i>
Quality of support provided to schools by regions and IB educators.	The school's needs for support were met in the consultation process.	<i>School survey</i>
	- The consultant believed that he/she received the support needed to perform their role. - The consultant was able to obtain guidance from the Regional Staff in dealing with complex situations.	<i>Consultant survey</i>
	The consultant was able to obtain guidance from the Regional Staff in dealing with complex situations.	<i>Region survey</i>

Authorization - Application

ALIGNMENT/CONSISTENCY		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Procedures followed in relation to IB standards	- The school received support in arriving at a decision to apply for authorization. - The school obtained needed application documents and templates without difficulty. - The school submitted application documents without difficulty. - The school received timely feedback on the <i>Application for Authorization</i>.	<i>School survey</i>
	The reader was able to access all needed documents to conduct a review of the <i>Application for Authorization</i>.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	- The school had an assigned contact person at the IB Regional Office during the request for authorization stage. - The school received support in arriving at decision to apply for authorization. - The Reader of the <i>Application for Authorization</i> was assigned based on IB criteria.	<i>Region survey</i>
	- The time between the end of the consultation process and the submission of request for authorization is within IB expected guidelines. - The time between the submission of the <i>Application for Authorization</i> and completion of the feedback report is within expected guidelines. - The feedback on the <i>Application for Authorization</i> was sent to schools in a timely way.	<i>File review</i>
Consistency and accuracy of judgments and acceptability of evidence used	The Reader deferred to Regional Staff when making difficult judgment calls.	<i>Region survey</i>
	- The Reader's judgments were aligned with IB expectations and the S&P. - The Reader's judgments were based on clear evidence.	<i>Double readers</i>
Adherence to approved roles and responsibilities	- The Reader adhered to the IB job description. - The Reader communicated with the Regional Staff as needed. - The Reader performed his/her roles as expected under IB guidelines. - The Regional Staff performed their roles as expected under IB guidelines.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	- The Reader adhered to the IB job description. - The Reader communicated with the Regional Staff as needed. - The Reader performed his/her roles as expected under IB guidelines. - The Regional Staff performed their roles as expected under IB guidelines	<i>Region survey</i>

USEFULNESS/VALUE		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Clarity/ease of use of SA process and	The school found the <i>Application for Authorization</i> materials easy to use.	<i>School survey</i>

documents	- The Reader found the feedback form used to review the <i>Application for Authorization</i> clear and easy to use. - The Reader found the IB Docs system easy to use. - The Reader was able to get help if needed in the use of forms and IB docs.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	- There were no undue difficulties in: - Guiding schools through the request for authorization stage. - Identifying and assigning a reader. - Obtaining and finalizing the feedback on the <i>Application for Authorization</i> form. - Making a timely decision about the request for authorization.	<i>Region survey</i>
Contribution of each stage of SA to preparation for next stage	- The feedback on the <i>Application for Authorization</i> and letter provided clear information on what needed to be done prior to the verification visit. - The school had adequate information to make an informed decision about whether to go ahead with the verification visit.	<i>School survey</i>
Perceived value of SA Process in helping school to meet S&P	- MTBA identified in the feedback to the <i>Application for Authorization</i> were clear to the school. - The school knew what to do about any barriers to meeting MTBA.	<i>School</i>
Perceived accuracy of feedback in relation to self perception (school)	The school understood the reasons for the identification of any MTBA found.	<i>School survey</i>
	The judgments made by the Reader were aligned with those considered correct by Regional Staff.	<i>Double readers</i>
	The judgments made by the Reader were aligned with those considered correct by Regional Staff.	<i>Region survey</i>
Usefulness of SA training and documents to IB educators.	The Reader believed that he/she had received the training needed to perform the role.	<i>Reader survey</i>
	The training offered to the Reader appeared to prepare him/her well for their role.	<i>Region survey</i>
Quality of support provided to schools by regions and IB educators.	The school believed that its needs for support were met in request for authorization stage.	<i>School survey</i>
	- The Reader believed that he/she had received the support needed to perform the role. - The Reader was able to obtain guidance from the Regional Staff in dealing with complex situations.	<i>Reader survey</i>

Authorization – Verification Visit

ALIGNMENT/CONSISTENCY		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Procedures followed in relation to IB standards	- The team leader and team were assigned in a timely way. - The school prepared a draft agenda for the visit in a timely way. - The visit happened in a timely manner. - All necessary segments of the visit were completed. - The visitors used the correct template to write a report containing commendations, recommendations, and/or MBTA. - The school received the report in a timely way.	<i>File review</i>
	- The team leader and visitors were assigned to conduct the verification visit according to IB criteria. - The school had an assigned contact person at the IB Regional Office during this stage. - The team leader had an assigned contact person at the IB Regional Office during this stage.	<i>Region survey</i>
	- The team leader planned the agenda and visit logistics in consultation with the school in a timely way. - The team leader provided team members with necessary instructions and tools prior to the visit. - The visitors were able to obtain all needed documents from IB docs or other sources. - The visitors read the <i>Application for Authorization</i>, the Reader's feedback, and the consultant's report prior to the visit. - The visit included all components expected according to IB guidelines. - The visitors made appropriate use of IB forms and templates during and following the visit. - The visitors used the template provided to produce the report and submitted it to IB. - The team leader had an assigned contact person at the IB Regional Office during this stage.	<i>Visitor survey</i>
Consistency and accuracy of judgments and acceptability of evidence used	- The visitors worked together to insure that their judgments were aligned with each other and with IB guidelines. - There is alignment of findings between the exit interview and report.	<i>Visitor survey</i>
	If authorization was denied or candidacy was to continue after the verification visit, reasons for this decision were clear and aligned with IB guidelines.	<i>File review</i>
	- The judgments made by the visiting team were aligned with those considered correct by Regional Staff. - There is alignment among consultant, reader, and visit team findings.	<i>Region survey</i>
	There is alignment of findings between the exit interview and report.	<i>School survey</i>
Adherence to approved roles and responsibilities	The visitors carried out their roles in accordance with IB guidelines.	<i>Visitor survey</i>

USEFULNESS/VALUE		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Clarity/ease of use of SA process and documents	- The team leader worked effectively with the school to plan and implement the visit. - Arrangements for the visit went smoothly. - The visitors were able to complete the activities needed to perform their role effectively. - The report was clear.	<i>School survey</i>
	- The team leader worked effectively with the school to plan and implement the visit. - The team worked productively to plan and implement the visit. - The visit protocol allowed visitors to gain adequate understanding of the school and to identify commendations, recommendations, and/or MBTA. - The visitors were able to complete the activities needed to perform their role effectively.	<i>Visitor survey</i>
	- There were no undue difficulties in: - Guiding the school through the verification visit stage. - Identifying and assigning visitors. - Overseeing the visit. - Obtaining and finalizing the verification visit report. - Resolving problems that occurred during the verification visit stage.	<i>Region survey</i>
Contribution of each stage of SA to preparation for next stage	If there were no MTBA, the school knew what to do to continue strengthening its practice.	<i>School survey</i>
	Final decisions were made easily based on the results of the verification visit.	<i>Region survey</i>
Perceived value of SA Process in helping school to meet S&P	- The visit report clearly specified ways that S&P were met/not met and any MTBA. - The recommendations provided were linked to the S&P and appropriate for the school.	<i>File review</i>
	The visit helped the school to identify and address the MTBA.	<i>School survey</i>
Perceived accuracy of feedback in relation to self perception (school)	The process was optimal to allow visitors to understand the school, given the timeframe.	<i>Visitor survey</i>
	The visitors presented an accurate picture of the school in their report.	<i>School survey</i>
Usefulness of SA training and documents to IB educators.	The visitors felt that they had the training, knowledge, and understanding needed to effectively carry out the visit and write the report.	<i>Visit survey</i>
	The training offered to visitors prepared them well for their role.	<i>Region survey</i>
Quality of support provided to schools by regions and IB	The school's needs for support were met in verification visit stage.	<i>School survey</i>
	The visitors felt that they had the support that they needed from the IB Regional Staff to conduct the visit effectively.	<i>Visitor survey</i>

educators.	• The visitors felt that the IB Regional Staff was available to help them to figure out complex situations, if any. • The school's needs for support were met in verification visit stage.	
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Decision

ALIGNMENT/CONSISTENCY		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Procedures followed in relation to IB standards	- IB's authorization decisions were given to the school in a timely way. - If MTBA, specific ways to address and related deadlines were provided to the school.	<i>File review</i>
Consistency and accuracy of judgments and acceptability of evidence used	- If authorization was denied or candidacy continued, reasons for this decision were clear and aligned with IB guidelines. - There was alignment of reader findings, visit team findings, and the final decision to/to not authorize.	<i>File review</i>

USEFULNESS/VALUE		
Major topics	Sub-topics	Source of data
Clarity/ease of use of SA process and documents	The decision letter to the school regarding the authorization was clear.	<i>School survey</i>
	The school did not express a lack of understanding about the decision made.	<i>Region survey</i>
Contribution of each stage of SA to preparation for next stage	If MTBA were identified, the steps to resolving them are clear to the school.	<i>School survey</i>
Perceived accuracy of feedback in relation to self perception (school)	The school considers the authorization decision to be correct.	<i>School survey</i>
Quality of support provided to schools by regions and IB educators.	If MTBA were identified, support from the Region was helpful in finalizing the authorization process.	<i>School survey</i>

Implementation

The following table provides an overview of the stages of the QA process and where each of the data gathering tools fits in the process. The instruments themselves may be found in Appendix B.

Stage of process	Instrument	How completed?	Timing	How many schools?	
				All	Sample
Request for Candidacy	Reader survey	Completed by reader	After finishing task	x	
	Double readers procedure	Second reader completes	After finishing task		x
Consultancy	Consultant survey	Completed by consultant	After finishing consultancy	x	
Request for Authorization	Reader survey	Completed by reader	After finishing task	x	
	Double readers procedure	Second reader completes	After finishing task		x
Verification Visit	Visitor survey	Completed by all visitors	After completing report	x	
Decision	School survey	Completed by IB coordinator in school	After receiving decision	x	
	File reviews	Region staff completes	After receiving decision		x
Follow up	Consultants focus group	Done by IB staff	When opportunities present themselves such as at regional conferences		x
	School coordinator focus group	Done by IB staff			x

Conclusions

Developing a Quality Assurance Framework for the IB World Schools authorization process presented a challenging but also, we believe, ultimately rewarding undertaking. The specific challenges were threefold:

- The authorization process is, itself, already an exercise in Quality Assurance (i.e., it determines whether schools have adequately met the required IB standards and practices to become a member school). Consequently, establishing the QAF meant establishing quality assurance for an existing quality assurance process – a phenomenon that is

increasingly common, but not yet commonplace – which added a layer of complexity to the work.

- Moreover, given the multiple components of the authorization process and the number of players involved, successful execution of the QAF had to take into account and coordinate many moving parts. This challenge, however, was eased immeasurably by the helpful cooperation of IB staff from across the globe.
- Finally, because the new authorization process has been implemented progressively over the 2011 year, systems for managing information are still under development making it difficult to clearly situate all the pieces of the QAF.

Despite these challenges, the QAF benefited from a sound course of development, which included broad collaboration and grounding in both scholarly literature and the experiences of IB. Indeed, the process of exploration with internal staff and the regular feedback provided by IB staff helped to crystallize elements that will lead to an effective set of quality assurance practices for the Authorization process. The data collection instruments collectively combine an efficient approach with the necessary triangulation for the purposes of verification. And the framework itself derives from a combination of best practices in the field and specific IB needs and interests.

As such, the QAF promises to yield significant dividends to the IB. The collective instruments around the Authorization process will generate an enormous amount of data. In analyzing this data, IB will be able to determine meaningful relationships, correlations, and potential causalities among the various “moving parts” of the Authorization process. Such analyses will provide some very useful results for the Authorization process; namely, they will provide the IB with high quality information about the fairness, consistency, and equity of the authorization process, as well as feedback about areas that may require adjustment or refinement. Perhaps equally important, on the basis of such findings, the QAF itself and its uses may undergo modifications, so that it can flexibly grow with the needs of the IB, and contribute to IB’s continuous improvement.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Review of the Literature on Quality Assurance

Appendix B: Instruments

- 1) A School Survey
- 2) IB Educator Surveys
 - d. Reader's Survey
 - e. Consultant's Survey
 - f. Visitor's Survey
- 3) A Regional staff Survey
- 4) A Double Readers Protocol
- 5) Two File Review Protocols
- 6) Three Focus Group Protocols.

Appendix C: Investigation and QAF Development Memos

- 1) Site Visit Memo
- 2) Training Visit Memo
- 3) Interview Memo
- 4) Bethesda Meeting Memo

Appendix A: Review of the Literature on Quality Assurance

*Genesis of Quality Assurance*¹

The history of “quality assurance” has largely been written as a story about the production of goods and services. From the medieval era through the early nineteenth century, the guild system of craftsmen devised and enforced rigorous rules for product and service quality. With the onset of industrialization, inspection departments and product audits helped to control quality. In the early twentieth century, quality practices began to acknowledge *processes* as well as products. From that point, the language of “quality assurance” became popularized and closely identified in America both with Walter Shewart’s 1920s efforts – which laid the foundation for control charts and “SQC,” or statistical quality control – and W. Edward Deming’s subsequent work in promoting SQC to inspect as well as to enhance organizational processes of production. The 1970s marked a turning point in American quality assurance practices, when U.S. industry embraced Total Quality Management (TQM) in response to Japan’s high-quality competition, and began to focus not only on statistical quality control but also on “all organizational processes through the people who used them.” Though the TQM approach faded, the drive for quality in business was championed by diverse organizations, including the American Congress, which established the Baldrige National Quality Program and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 1987 and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which released a set of standards and guidelines relating to quality management (ISO 9000) that same year.² In this way, the terms “quality” and “quality assurance” permeated the discourse of business through the twentieth century (Mantysaaris, 1997).

By the 1980s, the “‘quality assurance’ orthodoxy” had broadened beyond manufacturing and business to influence other areas, such as government delivery of public service, healthcare, and education (Dahlberg, et al., 1999). It is worth noting that there is a long history of efforts over the twentieth century to ensure the quality of schooling, many of which borrowed from management approaches developed in the private sector. Yet such efforts (at least in America) have proceeded in terms of “efficiency,” “accountability,” and even accreditation, rather than quality assurance (Guthrie, 1978). Only since the 1980s has “quality assurance” gained a foothold in the educational lexicon, and then primarily in relation to higher education in Europe and Great Britain (Amaral& Joao Rosa, 2010; Alderman& Brown, 2005; etc.). From that point, however, QA in education has spread rapidly: the 1990s were forecast to be the “decade of quality” in higher education, while the 2000s were predicted to be the “decade of international quality” (Frazer, 1992; Woodhouse, 2000b – see Woodhouse, 2004).

Defining Quality

As with the title of Raymond Carver’s famous book, *What We Talk about When We Talk about Love*, what we talk about when we talk about “quality” conceals as much as it reveals. As recently as 2006, referring to higher education in particular, the Vice President of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) stated that “there is no globally agreed definition of

quality . . . it does not have a single purpose, a single method or a single operational definition” (Massaro, 2010, p. 20). Thus, one constant across the broad terrain covered by contemporary quality assurance practices lies in the contested nature of “quality” itself. As Reeves & Bednar (1994, p.419) assert, a “search for the definition of quality has yielded inconsistent results. Regardless of the time period or context in which quality is examined, the concept has had a multiple and often muddled definitions and has been used to describe a wide variety of phenomena.” As these authors point out, quality has been variously defined as:

- value (Abbott, 1955; Feigenbaum, 1951)
- conformance to specifications (Gilmore, 1974; Levitt, 1972)
- conformance to requirements (Crosby, 1979)
- “fitness for use,” meaning that the organization’s structure and activities are suited to its objectives (Juran, Gryna, & Bingham, 1974; Juran & Gryna, 1988; Woodhouse, 2003)
- loss avoidance (Taguchi, cited in Ross, 1989), and
- meeting and/or exceeding customers’ expectations (Gronroos, 1983; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).

As Reeves and Bednar point out (p. 427), there is no single “best” definition of quality; rather, there are strengths and weaknesses associated with each, such that the definition chosen depends upon the particular needs, time, and context to which “quality” is applied.

According to Calnin (2008), one important reason for the unstable meaning of quality has to do with “who is adjudicating” (Cowdroy, et. al., 2002; Cruickshank 2003; Jeliazkova & Westerheijden, 2001; Newton, 2002; Stensaker, 2008). As Calnin argues (2008), “multiple customer groups are served in the education sector, each with a vastly different perspective on what constitutes quality, and what constitutes relevance,” and, it might be added, a different interest and power in compelling quality in educational institutions (Scrabec, 2000; Watson, 2008). Consequently, each group of stakeholders may conceive of “quality” differently; additionally, individuals within a particular group of stakeholders may hold divergent views.

Taking into account the specified needs and aims of IB Global, the project at hand draws most profitably upon a combination of the following definitions of quality: 1) conformance to standards, meaning the degree to which the School Authorization Process operates as it was designed to operate and 2) excellence, or the degree to which the authorization process design actually works to achieve the intended outcomes.

Purposes of Quality Assurance

While Neave (1991) declared that “there is no agreement on the purpose of quality assurance, save only as a resource allocation device,” Billing (2004) dismisses that view as “oversimplified,” and argues on the basis of subsequent research that QA purposes are, in fact, pluralistic. Indeed, others (Stensaker, 2003; Vroeijenstijn, 1995) have parsed the plurality of QA purposes in education to find that such aims include:

- Ensuring accountability in the use of public funds;
- Improving the quality of education provided;
- Assisting higher education institutions to make improvements;
- Informing potential students and employers;
- Stimulating competitiveness within and between institutions;
- Determining the quality of new institutions;
- Assigning institutional status within an increasingly diverse educational landscape;
- Supporting the transfer of authority between state and institution, especially where the university gains increased autonomy;
- Assisting the mobility of students; and
- Making international comparisons.

Not only does the field contend with multiple and shifting definitions of quality, then, but also manifold aims, or purposes, for QA. As with differing definitions of quality, different purposes of quality assurance may be associated with different stakeholders, contexts, and needs. Yet while this variety exists, Billings (2004, p. 115) points out that “the purposes of external quality assurance appear to be variants of a mix of the same functions,” and such functions can be distilled to a few clear aims: 1) improving quality, 2) making information on quality and standards publicly available, 3) ensuring public accountability for standards and finances, and 4) contributing to the higher education sector’s planning process. From this, Billings (p. 115) concludes that there is actually a “considerable commonality” across the purposes of external QA systems, and that such shared purposes can be organized along a continuum “from the ‘softer’ (developmental) improvement/informational functions to the ‘harder’ (judgmental) legal/financial/ planning functions” (see also Kells, 1995; Wahlen, 1998).

From another perspective, however, the purposes of quality assurance do not so much fall along a spectrum as coalesce into two camps, which diverge on the key question of accountability vs. improvement: that is, are QA frameworks meant to “monitor” or to “enhance” performance? (Harman & Meek, 2000, p. 11; McCormack 2007, p. 486; see also Middlehurst & Woodhouse, 1995; Thune, 1996). In fact, accountability and improvement serve as the two ends of the spectrum of QA aims. These two purposes often align with different stakeholder groups as well, so that the push for accountability, regulation, and monitoring often tends to come from external sources, while improvement is usually considered to be an internal responsibility of individual institutions (Stanley & Patrick, 1998). Yet as Hofman et al (2010, p. 338) claim in regards to the sample of elementary schools they studied in the Netherlands between 2001 and 2006, “accountability without improvement is not working and . . . improvement without accountability includes actions without a clear direction,” thus building their argument that systems of QA should optimally provide for both measurement and performance enhancement.

All of these definitional issues and clarification of goals matter, of course, because purpose is (or should be) closely correlated to design elements. As Calnin (2008) wisely posits, “decisions that are made about the function [i.e. purpose] of a QA system, and what constitutes quality in an educational setting, will impact substantially upon the design and emphasis of the QA

framework.” Even beyond the objective reality that different purposes may well require different approaches and yield different outcomes, many QA scholars seem to believe that the drive for accountability, compliance, and control, rather than the quest for improvement, has informed the majority of quality assurance efforts across the globe and, as a result, most QA efforts have not much contributed to the betterment of teaching and learning in educational institutions (Harvey & Newton, 2004).

Within the IB QA framework, we see an opportunity to, as Stanley and Patrick (1998, p. 54) say, create “an integrated quality assurance model that will serve the needs of both accountability and improvement” (see also Bogue & Saunders, 1992). Specifically, one thrust of the proposed framework focuses on collecting data to monitor the consistency with which steps of the existing IB school authorization process are carried out by involved parties, including schools, IB educators, and regional staff members. At the same time, a second major emphasis of data gathering concentrates on eliciting stakeholders’ perceptions regarding the usefulness and value of the process as designed. Together, these two lines of inquiry can help IB to assess the operation of its present system as well as to identify potential ways of improving the very design and, ultimately, outcomes of that system. The third strand of the IB QA framework makes the link to outcomes. It suggests relevant and promising analyses to be carried out on the data collected. Such analyses can provide a forum for considering the consistency and quality of the existing School Authorization process and define a starting point for examining the relationship of that process to the teaching, learning, and achievement of students in IB schools.

Forms, Models, and Elements of QA

When quality assurance is invoked, does it mean quality management, quality control, accreditation, accountability, or audit? Does it refer to all or none of these things? Does it indicate a particular set of methods – does it draw on self-evaluation, external peer review, indicators, or published ratings? Is the framework for judgments derived from the institution’s stated intentions or from government or agency norms? For our purposes here, we can agree that quality assurance encompasses a broad variety of monikers and activities aimed at ensuring the quality, broadly construed, of educational endeavors. Indeed, examples of quality assurance in higher education range from the Bologna process in Europe to reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in the United States to World Bank funding for quality assurance purposes in Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions (Szanto, 2005).

One very basic categorization of QA recognizes two main approaches: *self-regulating or internal*, on the one hand, and *externally regulated* on the other (Stanley and Patrick, 1998, p. 39). A rich body of scholarship defines and distinguishes one from the other (Newmann, King, & Rigdon 1997; Wilcox & Gray, 1996; Wastiau-Schluter, 2004). As Hofman et al. (2010, p. 336) summarize:

External accountability focuses on the maintenance of the standards of quality of a school by an external agency . . . The internal function of accountability is the

duty of a school, together with a range of actors that play a part in the school's policy-making [meaning the system that schools use "to determine, guard and optimize" their goals].

Within and across these two approaches, a number of QA models operate. Cheng and Tam (1997) document the existence of models based, respectively, on goals and specifications; resource-inputs; process; satisfaction; legitimacy; absence of problems; and organizational learning. Calnin (2008) lists commonly used models in education, such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Total Quality Education (TQE), the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), the Singapore Quality Award (SQA), the input-process-output (IPO) framework, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award model (MBNQA) and the School Excellence Model (SEM), all of which combine a variety of the approaches Cheng and Tam identify, but within single frameworks.

According to Hofman, Dijkstra, & Hofman (2008), quality assurance (which they refer to as "quality control") systems present varied forms, from those that focus only on assessing student outcomes to those that cover broader concerns, including school context, inputs, and the quality of educational processes in the classroom. The most sophisticated of these systems address both concerns of accountability and improvement, thus uniting performance assessment with feedback for improvements (Hofman, Dijkstra, & Hofman, 2005). As a consequence of increasing QA activity in education within nations, not to mention international QA efforts and networks, some common practices have evolved, such that four components operate across most QA models: a coordinating body that administers evaluations; an institutional self-evaluation; peer review/external evaluation; and a report or public disclosure of findings (Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1993; Stensaker, 2003; Westerheijden, Hulpiau & Waeytens, 2007). Yet as Brennan (1991, p. 221) makes evident, the existence of these four elements hardly constitutes a homogeneous model: the four components may be used in very different ways toward different ends, and the mere existence of common elements accounts not at all for different contexts, power distributions, and aims of QA systems (Stensaker, 2003; Kells, 1999; Neave, 1996).

One can see how these elements are deployed to different ends in various forms of quality assurance. David Woodhouse (2009) of the Australian Universities Quality Agency lends a bit of levity to his discussion of the confusion around commonly used forms of quality assurance:

Several words related to quality begin with the letter "A" [such as audit, accreditation, assessment]. In theory, they are distinct, but in practice they shade into one another. Also different people and organisations use them slightly differently.

A few of the most common terms may be differentiated along the following basic lines:

Accreditation determines whether an institution (or program) meets threshold quality criteria, which would certify to the public the existence of minimum educational standards. In

Woodhouse's (2009) parlance, accreditation asks, "Are you 'good' enough (in various ways) to be approved?" As practiced in the U.S., for instance, accreditation involves voluntary peer review carried out by non-governmental regional and specialized accrediting agencies (Stanley & Patrick, 1998). The process is criterion-referenced, meaning it compares observed performance against preset standards, which are usually determined by the accrediting agency. Accreditation draws on a combination of performance indicators, self-study, and peer review, and results in a report that makes a recommendation as to whether the institution meets the required standards or not (Dill & Massy, 1996). According to some researchers, accreditation "is about minimum quality certification"; and, as such, it is not sufficient for assuring the quality of teaching and learning in an institution, purposes that require "additional processes of assessment and academic audit" (Dill & Massy, 1996).

Audit (also referred to as quality audit or academic audit) performs a check on an institution's claims about itself, by looking at the extent to which the institution is achieving the goals it has set for itself (Woodhouse, 2009). An audit asks whether the institution's processes are effective in attaining its objectives. Generally, an audit is an externally driven peer review of internal quality-assurance, meaning that it "focuses on the processes that are believed to produce quality and the methods by which educators assure themselves that quality has been attained" (Dill & Massy, 1996). Audits employ a similar process to that of accreditation, including self-study or briefing material, a visit by outsiders, and the generation of a report, which is made public.

Important differences between accreditation and audit might include the source of measurement standards – externally defined standards in accreditation and internally defined objectives for audit – as well as the stronger link between accreditation and funding, the purported failure of accreditation to pay enough attention to academic standards, and the fact that audit findings are made public while accreditation findings are not (Alderman & Brown, 2005).

Related to audit is the tradition of school inspection or school review. Pioneered in K-12 schools, school inspection relies on external inspectors (experienced teachers) to observe classes and make judgments about the quality of teaching and learning based on evidence collected at the school (Wilson, 1995). Inspection is meant to guarantee that schools deliver a satisfactory level of educational quality to all citizens, but also, significantly, to stimulate schools to develop their own quality assurance systems, systems that will, in turn, lead to educational improvement (Ehren & Visscher, 2008).

Assessment asks, "how good are your outputs" (Woodhouse, 2009)? Assessment goes beyond accreditation to offer "graded judgments about academic quality levels rather than binary judgments relative to threshold standards" (Dill & Massy, 1996). The process may involve a combination of performance indicators, self-assessment, external peer review (including a site visit), and a published report (Stanley & Patrick, 1998; Dill & Massy, 1996).

Other popular forms of quality assurance are standards-based quality assurance, which

measures an institution's quality by way of students' achievement of common standards. This approach represents a shift in concern, from the quality of educational processes and students' learning experiences to the quality of educational outcomes (Jackson, 1998). Performance indicator systems refer to "externally driven quantitative performance indicator systems" that have emerged at the level of state or university systems of higher education. They serve to measure an institution's achievement of "institutional, system, or state goals," but "the relationship of the indicators to the learning environment and their usefulness in program improvement are questionable" (Stanley & Patrick, 1998).

The IB school authorization process incorporates the four elements in evidence across the previously discussed forms of QA, drawing on both external and internal quality assurance measures, to ensure that candidate schools have met the standards and demonstrated the practices required to become an IB school. Specifically, IB global represents the external "coordinating" entity that administers the authorization process. Through the candidacy application and application for authorization, a school engages in "self-assessment" of their status with regard to IB standards and practices. In addition to the feedback of readers and consultants, the authorization visit brings in the external perspectives of experienced IB educators to examine the school's implementation of IB standards and practices. Finally, authorization visit results – the school qualifies for IB membership or it does not – are shared with schools. In this way, the authorization process itself represents a framework of quality assessment, perhaps closest in spirit to accreditation, which is intended to ensure the quality of the IB brand in its member schools.

The current project essentially aims to assure the quality of a quality assurance process (the IB School Authorization process) in place. While a wide body of scholarship exists concerning quality assurance, studies that specifically examine the quality assurance of existing QA processes are far more limited. The precipitous spread of QA concerns within higher education has given rise to quality assurance agencies, which are responsible for managing and administering external QA processes in most countries throughout the world. By 1991, several such agencies banded together to form a network for "mutual support and assistance" called the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) (Woodhouse, 2004, p. 78). Yet with the growth in numbers of such organizations, the inevitable questions arose: who assesses the work of such agencies, and how? Specifically, "who checks the appropriateness of external procedures, who assures the quality of the agencies themselves" (Szanto, 2005, p. 183)? And, as Frazer (1997, p. 353) asks, "what arrangements are there for checking on the agency [in charge of quality assurance]? How should processes of the agencies be evaluated?" (See also Woodhouse, 2004; and Alderman & Brown, 2005). In the field, INQAAHE as well as the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) have begun to explore ways of ensuring an adequate review system for quality assurance agencies or bodies, including the establishment of mutual recognition between such agencies (Woodhouse, 2004; INQAAHE, 2003, 2005; ENQA, 2005).

Szanto (2005) offers not only an overview of these larger developments, but also suggests particular lessons for future evaluation of existing QA processes. He recommends that review

of existing QA processes examine 1) the QA process goals and actual attainment of them (in this case, the goals of IB authorization and whether they are achieved), 2) the organizational structure and composition of the agency (i.e., the IB organization and staff), and finally, 3) the operation and performance of the organization's QA process (the actual authorization process). In terms of purpose, Szanto speaks to the seeming stand off between accountability vs. improvement in QA, arguing that evaluations of QA should serve both purposes. And he asserts that successful evaluation of existing QA processes demands "a profound knowledge, understanding and consideration of the social-historical context" of the agency's (IB's) operation as well as deep understanding of the social and political contexts in which the QA process occurs – an interesting challenge for IB, which operates globally.

In carrying out an assessment of QA activities, Szanto (2005) advocates a combination of applied methods, including:

- Document analysis
- Interviews, meetings, and discussions with agency staff/various stakeholders
- Surveys among stakeholders
- Case studies and participating observation of QA activities.

If the agency is to be evaluated by outsiders, Szanto endorses a (familiar) four stage process: first, agreement between the agency and evaluator on the defined areas for evaluation; second, self-evaluation by the agency (along with other "input" documentation); a site visit – designed to practically check statements from the self-evaluation report and gather additional information about the operation and impact of the agency's activities – and, finally, an evaluation report addressing background, findings, conclusions and recommendations.

At the same time, Szanto acknowledges weaknesses in these methods: for example, he claims that self-evaluation requirements are often onerous for institutions subject to the QA process and that, despite the volume of material associated with it, self-evaluation material tends to be descriptive at the expense of in-depth analysis and evaluation. He also points to the role of site visitors and their need for training as a potential stumbling block. Finally, he believes that the composition of review panels – those in the position of reviewing evidence and making judgments about institutions or agencies – is problematic, in terms of creating the right match between outside perspectives and expertise on the one hand, and institutions or agencies undergoing evaluation on the other.

The most meaningful evaluation of existing QA activities, according to Szanto (2005, p. 191), relies on a "rich methodological arsenal . . . such as case studies and participating observation" in addition to more straightforward, quantitative means of fact gathering. Here, Szanto may be anticipating an issue that scholars have associated with existing quality assurance systems, wherein QA efforts seem only weakly linked to intended outcomes in teaching and learning (Stensaker 2008, p. 7; Westerheijden et al., 2006). That is to say that, so far, QA "seems more related to broader organizational change processes than those more specifically related to teaching and learning" (Stensaker, 2008, p. 10). The takeaway may be that because quality

issues are multifaceted, substantive evaluation of existing QA systems must move beyond quantitative measurement of “quasi-indicators” and a single-dimension focus on technical delivery issues, toward a more explicit, qualitative exploration of core agency aims and functions (analogously, teaching and learning in an educational institution). He suggests paying greater attention to case studies and qualitative studies; specifically, he champions the idea of a narrative approach to such studies, which could capture non-traditional and innovative ways of achieving what “quality” might look like in the exercise of the IB authorization process (Stensaker, 2008).

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Appendix B: QAF Instruments

SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please respond to the items below in relation to your experience with the IB School Authorization process

School name

School Code

CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
CANDIDACY PHASE						
It was easy to access all relevant materials that schools need to read before the application for candidacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Our questions were answered promptly by the IB Office staff (If SD, how long).	1	2	3	4	5	6
The IB documents were easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
IB documents necessary for the application for candidacy were easy to access.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It was easy to use the IB Docs platform.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The procedures for applying for candidacy were easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The possible outcome(s) of the process were clearly stated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I received the support I needed from IB during our school's candidacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Feedback provided to the school was useful.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Feedback was consistent with the school's expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The school's needs for support were met during the candidacy phase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The feedback was useful in helping the school address the issues associated with IB programme Standards and Practices.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The steps to be followed after the candidacy phase were easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6

CONSULTANCY						
Please estimate the amount of time your consultant spent offering advice remotely	<5 hours	5-10	10-15	15-20	>20	
The consultant visited the school for approximately:	less than two days; 2 days; more than 2 days					
If different from 2 days, pop up: Why?						
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
The IB recommendations for next steps were provided in a timely way.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The consultant was accessible for advice when needed (<i>up to two days and twenty hours</i>).	1	2	3	4	5	6
The consultant's recommendations as to how to meet IB Standards and practices were clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Part one of the consultant's report was clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Part two of the consultant's report was clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The consultant understood the school's strengths in relation to the programme requirements of S&P.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The consultant understood the school's challenges in relation to the programme requirements of S&P.	1	2	3	4	5	6
At the end of the consultation process, we felt prepared to complete <i>Application for Authorization</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6
Overall, our needs for support were met during the consultation process.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Did the school find it necessary to contact the regional office regarding the consultant? If so, what was the issue?	Y/N	If yes, what was the issue? _____				
APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION						
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
Accessing the necessary IB documents was easy.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The authorization materials were easy to complete.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The IB provided clear instruction as to what to do prior to the verification visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Feedback provided by the IB was adequate to make an informed decision about going ahead with the verification visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Did your school receive matters to be addressed (MTBA) from the reading of the <i>Application for authorization</i> ?	Y/N	If yes, the following Qs pop up				
• The MTBA were clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• MTBA were related directly to the IB Standards and Practices.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• We encountered significant barriers to address the identified matters				Y	N	
If yes, please list the three most significant barriers				1		
				2		
				3		
Overall, IB met our needs for support in the application for authorization process	1	2	3	4	5	6
If your needs were not met, please identify the areas in which IB did not provide adequate support:				1		
				2		
				3		
				4		
VERIFICATION VISIT						
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
Visit arrangements between IB and the school went smoothly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
There was adequate access to required IB professional development.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The visitors gained an understanding of the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opportunities were presented at the exit meeting for the school to question the accuracy of the findings.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The visitors presented accurate findings during the exit interview.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The visitors conducted themselves in a professional manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Overall, IB met our needs for support in the verification visit phase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
DECISION						
The decision letter was clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The recommendations were clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The recommendations were accurate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The recommendations will lead to improvements in my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The decision was delivered to the school in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	5	6
The MTBA, if any, were accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6
If no, why not?						
The school agrees with the authorization decision	Y N					
Please add any comments here in relation to any of the items above or any other comments in relation to the authorization process.						

READER QUESTIONNAIRE (APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY)

Directions: Please respond to the items below in relation to your reading of the application for candidacy.

School name

School Code

CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
ROLE OF THE READER						
• I was able to access all necessary documents for reviews of application for candidacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I completed the required forms related to my responsibilities as a reader.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I submitted all forms to IB within the agreed timeframe.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I believe that my report clearly explained what the school needed to do to become a candidate school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
IB SUPPORT						
• I received support from IB staff in performing my role as a reader of applications for candidacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I received the training necessary to serve as a reader of applications for candidacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• IB staff assisted me when I requested support in making difficult judgments (if needed).	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The IB forms for readers are clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The IB forms for readers are easy to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The IB Docs system was easy to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I was able to get help in the use of forms and IB Docs (if needed).	1	2	3	4	5	6
APPLICATION						
• The school's application made verification of the school's compliance with the S&P easy.	1	2	3	4	5	6

1. What additional support from IB would have been helpful to most effectively perform the reader role?
2. Was the process for reading the application for authorization as effective as it could have been?
 - a. If not, what could be improved?
3. How long did you spend reading the application? ____minutes
4. How long did you spend completing the feedback on the application? ____minutes

READER QUESTIONNAIRE (APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION)

Directions: Please respond to the items below in relation to your reading of the application for authorization.

School name

School Code

<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
ADHERENCE TO READER GUIDELINES						
• I was able to access all necessary documents for reviews of the application for authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I completed the required forms related to my responsibilities as a reader.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I submitted all forms to IB within the agreed timeframe.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I believe that my report clearly explained what the school needed to do to become an authorized school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
IB SUPPORT						
• I received support from IB staff in performing my role as a reader of applications for authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I received the training necessary to serve as a reader of applications for authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• IB staff assisted me when I requested support in making difficult judgments (if needed).	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The IB forms for readers are clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The IB forms for readers are easy to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The IB Docs system was easy to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I was able to get help in the use of forms and IB Docs (if needed).	1	2	3	4	5	6
APPLICATION						
• The school's application made verification of the school's compliance with the S&P easy	1	2	3	4	5	6

1. What additional support from IB would have been helpful to most effectively perform the reader role?
2. Was the process for reading the application for authorization as effective as it could have been?
 - a. If not, what could be improved?
3. How long did you spend reading the application? ____minutes
4. How long did you spend completing the feedback on the application? ____minutes

CONSULTANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please consider the responses below in relation to your consultancy with _____ school that was preparing for the IB application for authorization.

School name

School Code

<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
CONSULTANCY – BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE						
• I understand the IB mission.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I understand the IB philosophy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I understand the relevant programme (DP, MYP, PYP).	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I understand the programme-specific requirements for authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I am familiar with the IB documents that support the school in understanding the programme and its requirements.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I know where to find IB documented information in response to schools' questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PREPARATION FOR CONSULTANCY						
• I read key documents (<i>Application for candidacy, Feedback on Application for Candidacy</i> , etc.) to familiarize myself with the school to be supported.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I identified practices at the school that needed further attention before beginning the consultancy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I contacted the school before officially beginning the consultation process.	1	2	3	4	5	6
CONSULTANCY ACTIVITIES						
• The IB coordinator was my main point of contact at the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I posed questions and verified information stated in the candidacy documents submitted by the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I developed an appropriate and supportive relationship with the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I ensured to the best of my ability that the school understood the authorization process.	1	2	3	4	5	6

<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
• I ensured to the best of my ability that the school understood the programme requirements and practices necessary at time of authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I ensured to the best of my ability that the school understood the consultant's role.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I helped the school to work on the action plan.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I spent twenty hours per year consulting with the school by phone and/or email	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I confirmed that the school had maintained the requirements for candidacy during the consultation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I made sure to refer to IB documents when providing answers to the school's questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
CONSULTATION VISIT						
• I notified the IB of the date of the consultation visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I collaborated with the IB coordinator to prepare an agenda for the consultation visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I organized the visit according to IB policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• During my visit to the school, I fully responded to their questions about the school authorization process.	1	2	3	4	5	6
ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES						
• I used the Consultant report template to record feedback on the school's progress.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I submitted a final copy of the <i>End of Consultation Update</i> to the IB.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I advised the school on its readiness to complete and submit the <i>Application for Authorization</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I advised the IB of the school's readiness to submit the <i>Application for Authorization</i> ..	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I ensured that all consultation tasks were fulfilled prior to the end of the consultation process.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The consultation ended before the school submitted its application for authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
SUPPORT FROM IB						

CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
• I had access to the IB <i>Guidelines to the Consultation Process</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I felt adequately prepared to handle the situations encountered with the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I felt that the <i>Guidelines to the Consultation Process</i> aided me in effectively carrying out the consultation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• IB training aided me in effectively carrying out the consultation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I received support from the IB staff that I needed to perform my role.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I was able to obtain guidance from the IB staff when dealing with complex situations (if needed).	1	2	3	4	5	6
USE OF IB RESOURCES						
• I was able to access all needed documents for the consultation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The Wiki was a useful place to exchange views (IBA only).	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The Consultant report template was easy to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The Consultant report template was well designed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The Consultant report templates were useful tools in guiding the process.						
• I kept a record of contacts with the school	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The IB Docs system was easy to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I was able to get help (if needed) in using templates and IB Docs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
USEFULNESS TO THE SCHOOL						
• The consultation process enabled me to gain an effective understanding of programme implantation at the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• I was able to use the consultation process to assist the school in aligning its standards and practices with those of IB.	1	2	3	4	5	6
• The consultation process enabled me to support the school as it prepared for authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6

1. What additional support from IB would have been helpful to most effectively perform the consultant role?
2. Was the consultation process as effective as it could have been?
 - a. If not, what could be improved?

SITE VISITOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please respond to the items below in relation to your participation in a verification visit as a part of _____ school's authorization process.

School name

School Code

CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES						
I carried out my role in accordance with IB guidelines.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The <i>Application for Authorization</i> , readers' feedback, and consultant's reports were available to me in time to prepare for the visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I read the <i>Application for Authorization</i> , readers' feedback, and consultant's reports prior to visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I was given access to the <i>IB guidelines for site visitors</i> before the site visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Our visiting team used the template provided by the IB to produce a report containing commendations, recommendations, and/or MTBA.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The conversation in the exit interview matched the written report's findings.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The visit followed IB guidelines.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The software to produce the report was easy to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6
TEAM LEADER						
The team leader designed an effective agenda for the site visit, in collaboration with the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The team leader gave clear instructions to the visiting team.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The team leader gave clear explanations to school personnel.	1	2	3	4	5	6
As a member of the visiting team, I understood the role of the team leader.	1	2	3	4	5	6
SUPPORT FROM IB						
IB training aided me in effectively carrying out the verification visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I felt adequately prepared to handle the situations I encountered during the visit with the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I had the support I needed from IB Staff to conduct the visit effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	6

<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
I was able to obtain all necessary documents from the IB.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Were the logistics of your visit handled well?	Y/N					
If, no, why not?						
EXIT MEETING						
The exit interview provided the opportunity to present the findings of the visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The school had the opportunity to clarify and respond to the findings of the visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The exit interview progressed in a professional manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
During the exit interview, findings were communicated in an objective manner without value judgments.	1	2	3	4	5	6
During the exit meeting, the visiting team communicated findings only and did not mention commendations, recommendations and MTBA.	1	2	3	4	5	6
EFFECTIVENESS OF VISIT						
The team worked effectively together to plan and undertake the visit.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Our visiting team worked together to insure that our judgments were aligned with each other and with IB guidelines.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The process allowed visitors to understand the school sufficiently to make a recommendation regarding authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The visit protocol allowed visitors to gain adequate understanding of the school and to identify practices and programme requirements for commendation, recommendation, and MTBA.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The recommendations we provided were linked to the <i>Programme Standards and Practices</i> and were appropriate for the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The commendations we provided were linked to the <i>Programme Standards and Practices</i> and were appropriate for the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The verification visit appeared to be of value to the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6

1. What other support(s) from IB would have been helpful to most effectively perform your role as a visitor?
2. Were there any issues in the process of conducting the verification visit that kept it from being as effective as it might have been? If so, how could it be improved?
3. Please reflect upon the exit meeting. Was the exit meeting easy to conduct? If not, explain why.
 - a. Do you have any suggestions to make the exit meeting more effective?

IB REGIONAL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please answer the following questions in reference to ONE specific school that has recently (define) been authorized.

School Name School code

APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY						
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
1. Did you have contact with the school prior to the school's application for candidacy.	Y/N					
2. To the best of your knowledge, did any other IB staff member have contact with the school prior to the school's application for candidacy.	Y/N (If so, who had contact with the school?)					
3. Was it clear to the school whom to contact for support in the IB Regional office?	Y/N					
4. A fully trained reader was assigned to read the application for candidacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The school appeared to be clear on what they need to do to be eligible for authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The reader's judgments about the school's meeting the requirements for candidacy were accurate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Training prepared the reader of the candidacy application well for the role.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The reader deferred to IB staff when making difficult judgment calls.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The reader adhered to the IB guidelines for readers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. The reader communicated with the IB staff as needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Not difficult at all	Not difficult	Neutral	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	NA
11. What was the difficulty level in guiding the school through the candidacy phase?	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. What was the difficulty level in assigning a reader?	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. What was the level of difficulty in working with the reader in terms of accuracy?	1	2	3	4	5	6

14. What was the level of difficulty in working with the reader in terms of timeliness?	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. How difficult was the decision to grant candidacy?	1	2	3	4	5	6
If it was a difficult decision, please explain why.						

CONSULTATION PROCESS						
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
1. The consultant was qualified for the school assigned.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The consultant communicated with the IB staff as needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The consultant was well versed in IB standards and practices	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The consultant performed his/her role as expected under IB guidelines.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The consultant was able to access all needed documents for consultation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Training offered to the consultant prepared him/her well for the role.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The consultant's understanding of the school aligned with that of the IB staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The consultant obtained guidance from IB Staff in dealing with complex situations (if needed).	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The school knew how to contact the IB Regional office during the consultancy phase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. The Reader correctly completed and submitted the appropriate feedback form.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. The judgments made by the consultant were based on evidence related to the Standards and Practices.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. The consultant provided guidance to IB on whether the school was ready to submit the application for authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6

<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Not difficult at all	Not difficult	Neutral	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	NA
1. What was the difficulty level in guiding the school through the consultation phase?	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. What was the difficulty level in assigning a consultant?	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. What was the level of difficulty in working with the consultant?	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION						
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
1. The school received support in arriving at the decision to apply for authorization (if needed).	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The reader of the application for authorization was assigned based on IB criteria.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The reader correctly completed the form.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The judgments made by the reader were aligned with those considered correct by IB staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Training given to the reader appears to have prepared him/her well for the role.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The reader deferred to IB staff when making difficult judgment calls.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The reader adhered to the IB guidelines for readers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The reader communicated with the IB staff as needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The school knew how to contact the IB Regional office during the application for authorization phase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Not difficult at all	Not difficult	Neutral	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	NA

4. What was the difficulty level in guiding the school through the application for authorization phase?	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. What was the difficulty level in assigning a reader?	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. What was the level of difficulty in working with the reader in terms of accuracy?	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. What was the level of difficulty in working with the reader in terms of timeliness?	1	2	3	4	5	6

VERIFICATION VISIT						
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
1. The team leader was assigned according to IB criteria.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The team members were assigned according to IB criteria.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The visiting team adhered to the IB travel policy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The judgments made by the visiting team are aligned with those considered correct by IB Staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Training given to visitors appeared to have prepared them well for their role.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The school knew how to contact the IB Regional office during the verification visit phase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Not difficult at all	Not difficult	Neutral	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	NA
7. What was the difficulty level in guiding the school through the verification visit stage?	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. What was the difficulty level in identifying and assigning visitors?	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. What was the difficulty level in obtaining and finalizing the verification visit report?	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. What was the difficulty level with resolving problems that occurred during the verification visit?	1	2	3	4	5	6

DECISION						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
1. There was alignment of reader findings, visit team findings, and the final decision to authorize (or to continue as a candidate school).	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The school appeared to understand the decision made.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The school knew how to contact the IB Regional office during the verification visit phase.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE BEST ANSWER</i>	Not difficult at all	Not difficult	Neutral	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	NA
11. How difficult was it to make a final decision on authorization?	1	2	3	4	5	6
If it was a difficult decision, please explain why.						

Please add any comments here in relation to any of the items above or any other comments in relation to the authorization process.

SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION FILE REVIEW CHECKLIST

How the process works: The files of schools that have completed the authorization process during the past year are randomly selected to be reviewed. The purpose is to make sure that the school authorization process is conducted consistently, fairly and with high quality.

How to pick files to review: Two times a year, 10 files should be picked for review.

Who should review the files: The reviewers will be staff members of the IB Research Office or their designees.

How this form should be used: Fill out one form for each school file reviewed.

School: _____ School code: _____

Location: _____

Date of authorization: _____

Date of review (today's date): _____

Reviewer: _____

Checklist items:

Following an expression of interest in becoming an IB school....

_____ the school received an informational call from the IB within x days.

_____ the school received instructions on how to become a candidate school within x days.

_____ the school was listed in IB docs [or IBIS?] within x days.

Following the school's submission of Application for Candidacy....

_____ a reader was assigned within x days.

_____ the school received a response letter within x days, using the IB template.

_____ a consultant was assigned within x days.

_____ the school received feedback on application for candidacy part II within x days.

In regards to the consultation process

_____ The consultant provided 20 hours of remote consultation.

_____ There is a written report of the consultation visit.

_____ There is a record of the completion of the consultation.

_____ The consultation process was completed before the school submitted the application for authorization.

Following the school's submission of the application for authorization....

_____ the school received a feedback on the application within x days, using the IB template.

_____ a verification visit was scheduled within x days.

_____ a school authorization report was made available to the school within x days.

_____ a verification visit was conducted within x days.

_____ a decision on authorization was made within x days.

Issues of concern: _____

NON-COMPLETING SCHOOLS CHECKLIST

How this process works: The files of candidate schools that were **not** authorized within 4 years are reviewed to understand reasons that they did not complete the authorization process. The purpose is to make sure that the school authorization process is conducted consistently, fairly and with high quality.

How to pick files to review: Two times a year, x files should be picked for review of schools that were accepted for candidacy but never became authorized IB schools.

Who should review the files: The reviewers will be staff members of the IB Research Office or their designees.

How this form should be used: Fill out one form for each school file reviewed.

School: _____ School code: _____

Location: _____

Date candidacy was granted: _____

Date of review (today's date): _____

Reviewer: _____

Stages of the authorization process completed (check all that apply)

- _____ Candidacy
- _____ Consultation
- _____ Application for authorization
- _____ Verification visit
- _____ Decision
- _____ Other _____

Reasons that the process did not result in authorization:

Checklist items:

_____ It is clear to the reviewer why the authorization was not granted.

_____ There was alignment between the findings of the verification team and the final decision on authorization.

_____ The school was provided with clear information on why the authorization was not granted.

_____ The school was provided with clear information on what steps should be taken to become eligible to be an IB World school.

_____ Resolving the MTBA was/is within the control of the school. If not, please explain:

Issues of concern: _____

DOUBLE READERS PROTOCOL

How the process works: This process may be used with either *Request for Candidacy* and/or the *Application for Authorization*. On a regular basis, a Request and an Application are identified in advance and two readers are assigned to read the same documents. Their responses are then compared. The purpose is to ensure that the reader response is consistent, fair and of a high quality.

How to pick files to review: x times a year, x reports are selected for double reading.

Who should review the files: The person responsible for checking the work of the readers will be a staff member of the IB Research Office or their designee.

How this form should be used: The reviewer should complete one form for each pair of readers' documents reviewed.

School: _____

Location: _____

Date of request and/or application: _____

Name of Reader 1: _____

Name of Reader 2: _____

Name of Reviewer: _____

Date of review: _____

Checklist items:

For Request for Candidacy, there are twelve requirements for candidacy. [Some must be *in place* for candidacy to be recognized and some may need attention once candidacy has been approved.]

- Examine all practices and programme requirements for candidacy, for consistency. Each is marked Yes, No or NA.
- Each assessment includes a three-colour coded response (blue, yellow and green). Check for consistency.

- In particular, where an application requirement has not been met, check for consistency in the explanation.
- Examine statements of explanation which should be phrased in a formative style.
- Check that the uploaded letter is consistent with the above assessment of requirements.

For the Application for Authorization

In a similar way, applications should be checked for consistency.

- Ensure consistency with those areas marked as matters to be addressed.

NB – I don't have a copy of the Readers' Guide to Application for Authorization (but assume it will be similar in style to the Candidacy response).

IB School Authorization QA Follow Up Consultant Focus Group Protocol

The consultant focus groups would be held with IB Educators who played the role of consultant during the school authorization process at one or more schools during the prior year. The purpose would be to gain insights into the role of the consultant during the school authorization process. Specific goals are as follows:

1. To better understand the role of the consultant in the school authorization process with an eye to making the consultancy as useful, fair, and equitable as possible.
2. To better understand the conditions at schools that make it more/less likely that they will be authorized.
3. To better understand the standards and practices (S & P) that are most likely to be difficult to meet in the school authorization process.
4. To better understand ways that IB supports or hinders an effective school authorization consultancy.

The focus groups are designed to be carried out with groups of consultants at regular meetings and conferences, or on a conference call. The only criteria for participation is service as a consultant in the past year. Those invited to participate should be asked to set aside an hour for the conversation.

These focus groups are not designed to provide generalizable findings about the IB consultancy. Rather, they are designed to provide useful insights into how the school authorization process works as a whole, with a focus on the consultancy.

FOCUS GROUP

Introduce yourself as participants arrive and let them know you will talk about the purpose of the focus group once everyone has arrived.

When the group has assembled, begin with the following:

- My name is _____ and I'm a researcher with *IB Global Services*. We are doing a series of focus groups to better understand how the consultancy works in the context of the IB school authorization process. We're especially interested in thinking about how to make the process as useful, fair, and equitable as possible.
- A focus group such as this typically involves getting a group of people together and asking them about their attitudes towards something. Questions are asked and participants are encouraged to interact with and react to the comments of other group members.
- You were selected to participate in this focus group because you've served as a consultant during a school authorization process for IB in the last year. The purpose of this focus group is to better understand your experiences and your thoughts.

- If it is OK with everyone, we typically tape record focus group interviews because it is difficult to write down everything. But if at any time you want me to stop recording just let me know. These interview tapes will only be used by the *IB Research Department*. We will produce a report that may use quotes from this focus group but will not identify any one in particular. Is this OK? [*If so, proceed; if anyone prefers not to participate, give them time to leave.*]

Start recording; ask each participant to go around and say: a) their first name, b) where and when they served as a consultant in the past year, c) how many school authorization consultancies they have done over time.

Ask the following questions. Encourage a free flow of discussion about each one before moving on to the next. Help all participants to join the conversation.

1. What do you consider to be the right or best role for a consultant to play in the school authorization process?
2. What activities in your most recent consultancy made the most difference in helping the school to progress through the school authorization process?
3. What were the biggest challenges when it came to helping this school meet the IB standards and practices?
 - a. In terms of conditions in the school?
 - b. In terms of the role of the consultant?
 - c. Others?
4. For those who have done more than one consultancy: How much variability is there in the way you work with different schools engaged in the school authorization process?
5. Did you feel well prepared to meet the needs of the school that you worked with in your most recent school authorization consultancy? Why or why not?
6. What was the most useful support that you received from the IB regional office during your most recent consultancy?
 - a. Are there any kinds of support you would have liked to receive – but didn't?
7. What else is important for IB Global Services to know about the role of the consultant during the school authorization process?

At the end of the hour, bring the conversation to a comfortable conclusion. Thank everyone for their time and their thoughtful comments.

IB School Authorization QA Follow Up
School Focus Group Protocol

November 2011

DRAFT

The school focus groups would be held with coordinators who had been closely involved in their school's application and authorization process. The purpose would be to gain feedback from schools about the process. Specific goals are as follows:

1. To better understand the experiences of the school's coordinator and other personnel in the authorization process.
2. To identify strengths in the process and areas for further refinement.
3. To gain deeper reflections about the process from the school's perspective.
4. To better understand ways in which the IB can support schools in the process.
5. To better understand the conditions at schools that make it more/less likely that they will be authorized.
6. To better understand the standards and practices that are most likely to be difficult to meet in the school authorization process.
7. To better understand ways that IB supports or hinders an effective school authorization consultancy.

The focus groups are designed to be carried out with groups of school coordinators at regular meetings and conferences, or on a conference call. Those invited to participate should be asked to set aside an hour for the conversation.

These focus groups are not designed to provide generalizable findings about the IB authorization process. Rather, they are designed to provide insights into the school authorization process in general, and the feedback from the school's perspective in particular.

FOCUS GROUP

Introduce yourself as participants arrive and let them know you will talk about the purpose of the focus group once everyone has arrived.

When the group has assembled, begin with the following:

- My name is _____ and I'm a researcher with *IB Global Services*. We are doing a series of focus groups to better feedback from schools about the IB school authorization process. We're especially interested in thinking about how to make the process as useful, fair, and equitable as possible.

- A focus group such as this typically involves getting a group of people together and asking them about their attitudes towards something. Questions are asked and participants are encouraged to interact with and react to the comments of other group members.
- You were selected to participate in this focus group because your school has recently completed the school authorization process for IB. The purpose of this focus group is to better understand your experiences and your thoughts.
- If it is OK with everyone, we typically tape record focus group interviews because it is difficult to write down everything. But if at any time you want me to stop recording just let me know. These interview tapes will only be used by the *IB Research Department*. We will produce a report that may use quotes from this focus group but will not identify any one in particular. Is this OK? *[If so, proceed; if anyone prefers not to participate, give them time to leave.]*

Start recording; ask each participant to go around and say: a) their first name, b) the name of their school, and c) their role in the school (eg, principal, IB coordinator etc).

Ask the following questions. Encourage a free flow of discussion about each one before moving on to the next. Help all participants to join the conversation.

1. What was the primary motivation for your school to explore authorization to teach one or more of the IB programmes?
2. Do you feel that your school received good/sufficient information about the IB in your early stages of consideration? Did you receive prompt responses to your questions?
3. Once you decided to pursue candidacy, what were the main issues which needed to be addressed by your school?
4. What were the biggest challenges your school faced in relation to meeting the IB standards and practices?
5. Do you feel that you had adequate support and advice during each stage of the application and authorization process from the regional office?
6. In particular, would you comment on the quality of the following:
 - a. The consultant
 - b. The school visit and visiting team
 - c. The clarity of advice and direction for matters to be addressed
7. What was the most useful support that you received from the IB regional office during your authorization process?

- d. Are there any kinds of support you would have liked to receive – but didn't?
- 8. In terms of the overall process of authorization, what recommendations or advice would you offer to the IB?
- 9. What advice would you provide to a school which came to you for advice about applying for authorization for an IB programme?
- 10. At this stage, what would you describe as the outcomes (benefits and challenges) for your school arising from your authorization to teach an IB programme?

At the end of the hour, bring the conversation to a comfortable conclusion. Thank everyone for their time and their thoughtful comments.

APPENDIX C. Memos on Background Research

Appendix C1: Memo: IB Evaluation Visit

Submitted by: Bethany L. Rogers

Note from EB: The site visit followed the protocol of the IB Americas regional office which is different from that of the other regions. It should be noted that this was an evaluation visit rather than a school authorization visit.

Pre-Visit Preparation:

Six weeks preceding the February 17-18 evaluation visit to Farmington Woods Elementary School in Cary, North Carolina, an email was sent from Erich Schmidt on behalf of IBA PYP to the three evaluation team members. The email contained not only logistical information about the visit, but attachments to be read before the visit, including:

- PYP School Guide to Programme Evaluation
- PYP Guidelines for Visiting Teams
- Programme Standards and Practices
- Evaluation Report Writing Tips
- Evaluation Report Template

In addition, team members were granted access to the school's self-study documents by way of a protected portal and asked to carefully review the documents and "note potential areas for discussion or observation." Finally, the visiting team was encouraged to meet on the night before the visit to "review visit procedures, discuss observations . . . [and] identify discussion items."

The night before the site visit, team members gathered for dinner at the hotel. The composition of the team offered a diverse set of educational perspectives and backgrounds: the team leader, Beverly, was a recently retired teacher educator, who was working to establish a teacher award program at her university; Pamela was principal of a K-8 school with both PYP and MYP; and Ginta, currently in the States directing a Latvian pre-school program, had taught in the early childhood grades at an IB International School in Europe for twelve years. The principal, Pamela, had been a member of the IB authorization team that visited Farmington Woods in [2003?]

The team discussed what questions would be asked in the following day's meetings and, in particular, whether there should be a set menu of questions to ensure consistency across the meetings. (This was resolved to the extent that the team did not have a set menu, but spoke generally about the kinds of issues they would address). The team also talked about how they planned to carry out the classroom visits, especially since Farmington Woods is a large school, with up to six classes on a single grade level. Here, the team leader expressed gratitude that the team numbered three people; in recent previous visits, she had worked with only two team members. Team members exhibited familiarity with the school's self-study documents, referring to them frequently, as they considered whether there were particular areas or issues they needed to focus on during the visit.

Site Visit

The first day of the evaluation visit (February 17) was divided into five half-hour meetings conducted with groups of teachers (i.e., grade levels, specialist teachers – i.e., art, music, etc., and special education teachers), two and a half hours of classroom visiting time, an hour long meeting with school administrative leaders, a lunch meeting with parents, and, finally, a meeting with the Wake County superintendent and district personnel. The team was at the school from 7:45-4:30 p.m., after which they regrouped at the hotel to discuss observations and insights, focus their questions and information gathering for the following day, and begin to frame their report. At 8:45 p.m., the team retired from their discussions.

The next day (February 18), the team met with three grade level teams and the support staff for a half hour each; they also spent two hours visiting classrooms and had lunch with students in the media center. They caucused for an hour following all of their observations and interviews, and then met with the Principal, Assistant Principal, and IB Coordinator for a half hour exit interview before departing.

Instructor Meetings

The team spoke with all five grade level teams, special education teachers, and specialist teachers. While each meeting was scheduled for 30 minutes, some ran longer. The team leader initiated each of these meetings with the same process and question: after each team member had re-introduced themselves, the team leader asked for each teacher to share their name, years teaching at the school, and last IB training experience. She then asked them to talk about what they had learned from the self-study. After this, the inquiries went in different directions in the various teacher meetings. Important common topics, however, included:

- How are teachers bringing students' questions into their planning of the units of inquiry?
- How are teachers balancing state and district requirements with the transdisciplinary IB units?
- How are the teams using their common planning time?
- Have teachers developed PYP partners in other countries?
- How are teachers involving families' different cultures in students' learning?
- How are teachers preparing students for student-led conferences?
- Has the OCC website been a useful resource for curriculum planning?
- How are teachers using summative assessment for the units of inquiry?
- How are teachers integrating globalism into the curriculum?

Additionally, specialists and grade level teachers were asked about how often they met together, what connections they were seeing between classroom instruction and specialists' instruction, and what IB threads ran through both.

Administrators Meeting (Principal, Asst. Principal, and PYP Coordinator)

Following a staff “meet and greet” which took place in the library/media center and involved a brief performance by the school’s 4th grade bell choir, the team commenced a meeting with the Principal, Assistant Principal, and PYP Coordinator.

Administrators showed a short video that Farmington Woods students had created to showcase their school in the district magnet recruiting process, after which the team leader asked, “What would you like us to ask – what would you like to tell us about the achievements of the last years?” The school people seemed a little unsure of how to respond to the question, perhaps because it was so open.

Beverly then addressed the Principal directly, asking her to talk about the process of the school study and, especially, how information was solicited from parents and used in the self-study document. She aimed to get at how the school is using its families – what are they doing to bring families in, and how are they both learning from the families and ensuring the families learn from them? She followed up with a question about the number of languages spoken in the school.

Pamela picked up the thread of questioning, beginning with the numbers of ESOL or ELLs (kids transitioning from a home language to speaking English at school) the school serves. She then inquired about how the school balances its IB vision with state requirements and standards, and whether the district imposes any kind of prescriptive curriculum such as SFA. She went on to ask about how the district and state assess the school – what measurements are schools held to – and whether the school, as a school of distinction, was held to the same requirements as other schools in the district. Finally, Pamela wanted to hear what variables or disaggregate categories the school had to address for AYP.

Beverly and Pamela both posed questions about resources, given current and predicted economic constraints: the team pressed the issues of the magnet budget (and whether the school had received a federal magnet assistance grant), professional development dollars, and the district’s continued commitment to supporting the IB program (with the understanding that some of these questions would be revisited in their conversation with the superintendent and district personnel). The third team member, Ginta, asked for details about recent professional development and training opportunities afforded the faculty.

Shifting the conversation to instructional matters, Beverly asked about administrators’ satisfaction with the faculty’s transdisciplinary units. Ginta wanted to know how the school reported on student performance in the units of inquiry, and Pamela asked how the school conveyed information to parents about the unit planner for their child’s class. Finally, Ginta asked what progress the school had made since completing the self study and identifying areas for improvement.

Following the administrators meeting, the team discussed areas about which they wanted more information, including the POI (Programme of Inquiry), whether planners were posted on the web; the ways that planners were being used, whether the school identified

and served gifted and talented, what processes existed for new teacher orientation, and what criteria existed for students in the magnet lottery.

Superintendent and District Personnel Meeting

The team used this meeting to ask two key questions: first, they wanted clarification about how the magnet status affected the IB program and, second, they wanted to hear how the district, despite the climate of budget constraints, was committed to IB and its focus on continual professional growth.

Classroom Observations

The team prioritized visiting all classrooms, which meant they spent very little time in each. They focused on locating evidence of IB, primarily in the form of posters that listed the transdisciplinary skills, the concepts, the IB attitudes, and the learner profile. Additionally, the team wanted to see a unit of inquiry bulletin board and evidence of student questions (i.e., post-its with student-generated questions). Team members also perused student portfolios and engaged students in brief conversation about their activities.

Parent/Student Lunch Meetings

The team met with parents over lunch on the first day, and with students on the second day. Team members split up, so that each sat with a group of parents or students, and held informal conversation to gather additional information from these stakeholders' perspectives.

Team Discussions

While the group conversed throughout the visit, they began to discuss in earnest their evidence and remaining areas of interest, and build their case for the report, at the close of the first day. They used evidence collected in interviews and observations to measure the school against the PYP standards, reviewing each standard and noting the degree to which they felt the school met the standard as well as identifying areas for further exploration.

Several important issues emerged:

- The team leader expressed dissatisfaction with the new evaluation form, which required choosing from drop down boxes instead of composing free form commentary. Complaints included a sense that the process was moving away from substance and into number crunching, as well as dismay that there was no opportunity to explain rating choices or incorporate idiosyncratic comments.
- Team members did not seem to possess a shared understanding of what merited a commendation or recommendation – the process of identifying whether the school had met or exceeded a particular standard proceeded along largely subjective lines, and the assignment of commendations, especially, was seen as a kind of substitute for the opportunity to offer more subjective or nuanced feedback via the evaluation form.
- Team members did not always interpret the individual standards in the same way, setting up some uncertainty about what the standard demanded and whether the school met or exceeded it.

Closing

I did not witness the final interview (with school staff) or team meeting, but all indications suggested that the exit interview with administrators would be extremely positive, as the team had been duly impressed with what they had seen.

Implications for QA

Areas for Potential Variation

- Variable interpretation of PYP standards
- Different understandings of commendation/recommendation requirements
- Unscripted questions for teacher meetings
- Unscripted questions for stakeholder meetings (i.e., variable questions for district personnel, parents, and students)
- Classroom observations: what priorities guide classroom observation? What events/evidence are visitors looking for?
- Composition/number of team members

Appendix C2: IB training on the new School Authorization and Evaluation Process
January 30-31, 2011
Bethesda, MD
Elisabeth Barnett

Quote from Ralph Cline: Peyton Wolcott is a blogger. She writes, I have not been able to find evidence of any school that has ever been denied authorization by IB, as long as their checks are good.

Overview of the training

The training was run primarily by the three Global Services program people, representing the PYP, MYP and DP programs. It was overseen by Ralph Cline. Participants were all with the IB organization. About half were employees of IB; others were “IB Educators,” i.e., site visitors, consultants, workshop leaders, and online trainers. All of the regions were represented.

Per their opening presentation-----

The intent of the training is:

- collaborative building of a training model
- appreciation of practices happening currently across the IB world (identification of best practices?)
- open communication based on understanding and respect.

The training will not provide:

- definite answers to all questions (professional judgment will still be needed)
- presentation of aspects that are the purview of the regions (overall approach and content are the purview of the global office; training, timelines, logistics are managed at the regional level)
- all forms and guidelines; they’re still a work in progress.

Session on what needs to be “In Place” at the time of authorization

At the time of authorization, there can be no Matters to Be Addressed (MTBA) or lack of non-negotiable program elements. Many of these are common across programs; some are different.

The major concern is that there be consistency in the process across programs and regions. There should be little room for individual approaches (except in the consultancy).

After authorization, schools can do whatever they want. They will be checked 4-5 years later through the evaluation process.

In the new process there is increasing emphasis with compliance with IB PD expectations. Heads of school must attend IB PD.

The vision for the future is to place importance on the school's action plan—IB hopes to encourage continuous improvement via ongoing work on the action plan. [the action plan is part of the application]

Discussion topic: What must schools do to demonstrate that the MTBA are resolved?

Series of sessions on stages of the process

Candidacy—

- It should be easy to become a candidate school; only major problems would disqualify a school.
- Applications are completed online. Responses are in data base.
- Readers read and evaluate the applications. Readers may not be IB staff.
- Responses (letter) to applications are automatically generated using items from the readers' form. Regional office reviews, approves and sends to school.
- If there are low quality pieces of the application, these will be mentioned in the letter and addressed by the consultant.

Consultancy—

- A consultant is assigned to each candidate school. They provide 20 hours of phone consultation and 1 2-day site visit per year.
- The consultant is not an IB staff; regional IB staff play a coordinating role.
- Consultant helps school to sort out what needs to be done by when; possibly does some modeling; asks the right questions. All advice must be based on IB documents.
- A guide for consultants is under development (mostly done).
- The consultant writes a final report based on a template. This goes to the regional office for review and then to the school.

Request for authorization—

- This application must be prepared by the school without input from the consultant.
- This is read by a reader who is not an IB staff member.
- If there are MTBA, these should be addressed before the visits. If they're serious, the visit may be postponed.
- Course outlines should be reviewed by subject matter specialists [concern was expressed about finding people to do this]

Authorization visit—

- Intended only to verify what is in the application
- A report is written by the team using a template; it includes commendations, recommendations and MTBA.
- Findings are the basis for all of these. Findings come from reader and visiting team.

- There's an interesting tension between consistency and adaptation to local conditions. When is it OK to address a need in a different way?
- The exit interview is of great concern. Visitors should not offer advice or praise. New aspects of the exit interview:
 - o more formal occasion,
 - o reference to standards and practices,
 - o team highlighted only certain practices,
 - o no commendations,
 - o take notes of things the school doesn't agree with.

Summary

This was a great introduction to the process and it was helpful to meet varied people who attended the training.

There is a very high emphasis on consistency which means reducing the opportunities for:

- professional judgment
- individual communication styles
- any school to get more help than anyone else regardless of need and location
- IB staff to interact with schools.

Appendix C3: Bethesda Meetings Interview Data

Submitted by: Bethany Rogers

NCREST researchers participated in a series of meetings at the IB offices in Bethesda, MD on February 23-25, 2011, in efforts to gather stakeholder information and plan for the development of a Quality Assurance Framework for the IB School Authorization process. As a critical part of our data gathering, we conducted interviews with four IB employees who represented a variety of regions and roles within the organization. We undertook the interviews in order to help us to:

- Understand more deeply the specific roles played by those involved in the school authorization process;
- Learn about what obstacles to a high quality, consistent, and fair process might exist, according to interviewees;
- Identify the indicators of quality, consistency, and fairness interviewees would consider useful;
- Appreciate logistical considerations in different regions and programmes that could influence the design of the QA process.

The following insights are derived from a synthesis of these interviews, and are organized to address two key questions: In what specific areas of the authorization process are quality, consistency, and fairness, most vulnerable? And second, what forms of data did interviewees identify as potentially most useful to their ability to improve performance and service delivery in the authorization process?

I. What specific aspects of the authorization process pose the greatest risk to quality, consistency, and fairness?

1. Across our conversations, interviewees identified the heavy reliance on “external” parties (who have a variety of experience and training) across several different roles in the process as the single greatest risk to consistency and quality in school authorization. Specific concerns within this category included:
 - a. *Variability around consultants:*
 - i. Selection criteria for consultants and criteria for matching them to schools is not the same across regions
 - ii. Consultant availability varies by region
 - iii. The hours consultants spend in school vary (despite requirement to spend twenty hours)
 - iv. Consultants’ knowledge bases differ
 - v. Consultants’ fidelity to their role varies (i.e., getting the relationship right with the school, so they are acting in the capacity of a consultant and not a trainer).
 - b. *Inconsistencies around school visits:*
 - i. There isn’t a common agenda for school visits
 - ii. The number of and selection criteria for visitors vary
 - iii. The length of visits across schools and regions are inconsistent

- iv. There is no clear shared protocol for visiting team meetings
 - v. The exit meetings differ across schools and regions
 - vi. There is no shared common protocol of questions to ask in meetings with school stakeholders during visits
 - vii. The criteria for awarding commendations varies across visitors
2. Interviewees also identified important aspects of training (for both IB educators and schools) that present risks to quality, consistency, and fairness:
- a. In the training, scaling up, and retraining of consultants (and visitors) there is a danger of inconsistent messages (from IB to consultants, and from consultants to schools).
 - b. While efforts have been made to keep consistency by using the same trainers, the amount of training and retraining that has to occur in a region matters. If there is more volume, it will be much more difficult to control than in a smaller region. And there are differences both in regions' desire to keep current employees and retrain them as well as in their capacity to retrain everyone.
 - c. Aspects of training for which regions are responsible, as well as deadlines and fees, differ by region.
 - d. Volume and uneven demand from schools for different levels of PD during the process may translate into unfair conditions when some schools' teachers get the training they need and others don't; moreover, the availability of workshop leaders varies across regions
3. Additional areas of meaningful variation
- a. The *different volume of school activity across different regions* presents a number of challenges to making the process consistent; for instance, even though each region's checks of written reports (from readers, consultants, visitors) will follow the same procedure, this activity may be more intensive in regions that have fewer schools simply because they will have more time/staff to devote to it.
 - b. *Differing lengths of candidacy*, and variable interest in and incentives provided across regions to streamline length of candidacy, may create inequities.
 - c. Multiple actors playing different roles across the process increase the *risk of presenting an inconsistent message*.

Finally, while interviewees identified many common areas of potential variation, one interviewee did offer a note of caution around the press for consistency. As she pointed out, providing feedback to schools – in the forms of reports – is meant to help them prepare a successful application, and while more standardization offers less chance for variability, it may also result in less relevant and particular feedback for schools to work with.

II. What forms of data could best improve performance and service delivery in the authorization process?

Interviewees identified several forms of data from various sources that they believed would help them to do their jobs better. Such data included:

1. Schools' perspective about their experience of the process. Such data might be collected by way of surveys or questionnaires and would measure:
 - a. Experience with the authorization visit
 - i. How do schools feel about the new process?
 - ii. What messages did they get from the reader, consultant, and visitors, and were those messages consistent?
 - iii. How would schools describe their experience with the reader, consultant, and visitors? For example:
 1. Was consultant helpful? Where was the consultant important and why?
 2. Logistics: When did consultants first approach the school? How many hours did they devote?
 - iv. How did this process compare to school leaders' previous experiences with authorization and/or evaluation with IB?
 - b. Assessment of services provided to schools by regional offices/external educators
 - i. Was regional office correspondence with schools timely and clear?
 - ii. Was the school-based contact person supported by the regional office?
 - iii. Were schools invoiced properly?
 - c. Assessment of written reports and feedback provided to schools by IB Educators
 - i. How useful did schools find the written feedback and reports provided throughout the process?
 1. Was feedback sufficient?
 2. Were reports provided in a timely way?
 - ii. Did this change at different points in the process?
 - iii. Did different groups (i.e., school coordinator, school leader, teachers) have different perspectives on the usefulness of this information (and the process altogether)?
2. Feedback from the readers, consultants, and visitors about their roles
 - a. Regarding IB support for readers, consultants, and visitors:
 - i. How much do they rely on IB documents and training?
 1. For example, do consultants feel that they received enough training regarding the program and overall process, as well as the regional process, to have the tools they need to do their job? Was the consultant manual helpful? What do they need to feel supported in the consultation process?

- ii. What do they think of the requirements for their role (i.e., the report format the reader must use, the protocol for site visits, etc.) and the process as a whole?
 - b. Regarding IBEs' experiences with the schools
 - i. Were they able to gain access?
 - ii. Did the timeline go according to schedule?
 - iii. Did they receive sufficient information from schools?
 - iv. Was the action plan useful?
- 3. Checks on the performance of readers, consultants, visitors, and the regional office
 - a. Did readers, consultants, and visitors follow prescribed processes?
 - b. What is the process the regional office follows for invoicing schools? Is it consistent? Is it effective? And is it followed?
- 4. Data about the outcomes in relationship to the process
 - a. Is there consistency in why schools were authorized (or not), and is candidacy being delayed or denied for consistent reasons?
 - b. How well are schools meeting particular standards at authorization and subsequent evaluation points?
 - c. Are there particular practices that are regularly highlighted with commendations, recommendations, or identified as matters to be addressed? *(i.e., if over fifty visits, all visited schools have a recommendation for the same standard, that provides valuable information).*
 - d. Can outcomes be correlated with feedback provided on the application? *(Theoretically, if the consultancy went well, then the authorization should go smoothly).*
 - e. Can links be made between the information received in the application for candidacy, the work the consultant does, the information provided in the application for authorization, and the outcome of the verification visit, somehow using the same documents along the way?

Additional comments that did not fit into these categories but also seemed important include the following:

- Several interviewees indicated that they would benefit from summary reports rather than too much detailed data.
- More than one interviewee liked the idea of a school audit (as long as clear criteria is developed) or visits from outside observers to provide a check on the process.
- Some concern was expressed regarding the gathering of data during the authorization process: it was believed that schools might be pressured and feel there are "right" answers they need to give in order to support their authorization.
- Finally, there was discrepancy about the degree to which the QA will need to account for comparability of data across regions – that is, if it is measuring the same process, to what degree will the QA accommodate variables (such as office culture, for instance) that may make a difference?

Appendix C4: IB Project, Bethesda Meeting Notes (February 23-25, 2011)

Submitted by: Bethany Rogers

Overview:

NCREST researchers Elisabeth Barnett and Bethany Rogers participated in a series of meetings at the IB offices in Bethesda, MD on February 23-25, 2011. This summary focuses on meeting discussions over the three-day period (excluding the interviews conducted during this time). The meeting agenda for the first day (Feb. 23) focused conversations on three major areas: the professional development QAF; an update from Global School Services regarding the new school authorization process; and potential structuring of the QAF. The second day (Feb. 24) was devoted primarily to conducting four interviews (see interview memo for details), with a brief period in the afternoon for revisiting the authorization process map. Finally, the third and last day of meetings allowed for a presentation regarding IB Docs, a customized data collection system, and collective planning for next steps.

Present:

In addition to the NCREST researchers and another external researcher, Gerard Calnin, the meetings were attended by IB's Michael Dean (from the Research and Schools division) and Ralph Cline (Director of Schools Services, IB Global), as well as by a rotating cast from the IB research staff, including Justin Sanders, Gee Kim, Rob Lasinski, and Yi-Chun Chen. Invited guests included Heleen Tims, Pallavi Chandra, Siva Kumari, Stan Burgogyne, and Anthony Tait. Heleen Tims, Gloria McDowell, Marta Rodger, and Luzmaria Gutierrez also participated as interviewees.

February 23, 2011

PD QA

Following brief introductions, the day began with a discussion of the PD QAF, as an example of what IB has done to date with QAF. (Though it was anticipated that the school authorization QAF would be quite different, in terms of quantity and labor intensity, from the PD one). Important context included the idea that the PD structure parallels other IB functions, insofar as Global is responsible for developing materials, leader training, and workshop architecture, while Regional offices take charge of planning, preparation, and on-site logistics. The QA is meant to provide data for both teams – specifically, IB intends for the QAF to help them accurately measure and evaluate outcomes, as a means of improving their services.

IB staff provided an overview of the PD process, as well as an introduction to the four instruments (field rep instrument, leader self-evaluation, session observer, and participant feedback) currently used in the PD QAF, the data they collect, and the ways that IB has used the data. IB staff reiterated the aim of the PD QAF as ensuring the adherence to IB's standards and practices, rather than measure whether changes occur in schools as a result of PD. They also identified challenges associated with the process, including massive amounts of data, multiple languages across IB schools and regions, skewed data, the variety of PD types requiring assessment, as well as the ongoing refinement of tools and the innovation and diversification of PD.

Global School Services Update

Heleen Tims and Ralph Cline led this session, which offered information about the new global school authorization and evaluation processes (which is relevant, since the QAF will be pegged to the new process). Heleen provided a general timeline for implementation and went on to describe the key changes the new process represents, including:

- online submission of all documents;
- introduction of consultancies in the non-Americas;
- verification vs. authorization visit
- changes in requirements for PD for school people before verification visit;
- no authorization with MTBA [what is that?];
- regional office responsibility for determining [?]

(At this point, very little in the application is actually verified – IB operates on the basis of trust in what the schools submit).

Heleen and Ralph together outlined the new process, describing what is involved in each of the major stages of Consideration, Request for Candidacy, Candidate Phase, Application for Authorization, Verification Visit, and Evaluation Visits. (They addressed not only the actions, but also the school-produced and IB-produced documents, that accompany these stages).

According to Ralph, the goal in developing a QAF for the new process is to increase comparability and fairness across schools and regions. He maintained that reliability and comparability are IB's chief concerns, rather than quality or results, and that consistency in the treatment of schools is the first priority in helping the organization move toward the direction of fairness. Mike added that this is an initial phase, which operates on the assumption that if schools do the program, there will be good results, and that the program can be better assessed if there are standard processes in place.

Structuring the QAF

The last part of the day was dedicated to a discussion of where in the new authorization process QA might come into play. The group identified the following opportunities for QA in two stages of the new authorization process:

CANDIDACY:

- Consistency of readers' reading – how often does the IB staff agree/disagree with readers? Do different readers use the same form in different ways?
 - o Use sampling system to check agreement
 - o Check alignment with IB values
- Management issues regarding timelines, service delivery:
 - o Ask schools
 - o Gather administrative data from Aptek/IB docs

CONSULTATION:

- What are criteria for consultant assignments to schools?

- What are criteria for consultants?
- Do consultants follow the prescribed procedures?
 - o When do they visit, for how many hours, etc.
- Are they happy with their training?
- Are the schools happy with the consultant?
- How does the authorization decision correlate with the consultant's work?
- How is the work on the action plan verified?

February 24, 2011

Most of this day was taken up with interviews. The group began by revisiting the interview protocols, to see if changes were warranted given the conversations of the previous day. Ralph suggested that the charge of the interviews should be to get interviewees to identify what they wanted quality assurance to teach them about what they do – in other words, how could the QA help them to do their jobs. He also said that he expected that global and regional employees would have different perspectives on what they perceived as weaknesses in terms of consistency.

Before the interviews commenced, Ralph gave brief background on each interviewee, and situated them by their roles within the IB organizational hierarchy.

Following the interviews, the group had just enough time to briefly revisit and complete discussion of the process map, begun the previous day. [See EB mapping notes?]

February 25, 2011

On the final day of the meeting, which was scheduled to end at noon, the group participated in a brief recap of the previous two days' conversation, which gave Elisabeth an opportunity to request clarification on several issues, such as the staff in relation to workload across regions, how reader compensation is determined across regions, whether there are printed guidelines for readers, the rules governing the consultancy, the location of IBEN within the larger organizational framework, the distinction of training vs. retraining, and whether complaints about different processes have been documented in any systematic way to date.

The recap was followed by Pallavi Chandra's presentation, which familiarized the group with the IB docs system that would be used to manage users, roles, and documents, as well as to generate reports, and manage messaging and notifications between schools and regional offices. Several key issues emerged regarding the IB docs system with potential implications for QA. Specifically, because IB docs does not and is not planned to "talk" to IBIS, which is IB's existing database, all of the IB docs info will need to be exported and uploaded into IBIS, which creates a huge risk for error. The group posed a number of questions (which were not fully answered) that will influence the design of the QA, such as will this information be uploaded as documents, or as data, in cells? Which documents would be uploaded? And what information would be loaded as data?

Pallavi told the group that the software is currently able to generate two reports, which address, first, interested schools by date, country, and program, and second, candidate

schools by date, country, and program. Soon to be added will be a third report on authorized schools. Questions here probed what fields exist, what kind of information is included in supporting documents, and whether IB docs consists of three databases (for interested, candidate, and authorized schools) or one database into which all submissions will go. Another critically important issue that went unresolved was whether the code given an interested/candidate school is the same as it will be in IBIS, so that information can be tracked from the inception of the process through the school's tenure as an IB institution.

Next Steps/Wrapping Up

Participants discussed plans for the next steps of work and meetings. The group addressed some lingering questions, such as what might be the best time (during the process) to ask questions of schools and what kinds of questions to ask. (Both Mike and Gerard emphasized the need to ask only those questions that will yield information that can't be gleaned or isn't already provided some other way. Mike suggested two very short questionnaires, one at the beginning of the process, the other to be administered later).

Mike agreed to contact the group later regarding meetings with the Asia-Pacific folks still to be interviewed, as well as with a synthesis of what will be covered in IB docs. Ralph mentioned the existence of a satisfaction survey, which Elisabeth requested. The group set a mutually convenient date to talk next, and the meeting broke just after noon.

SUMMARY OF THE PHASES AND RELATED DOCS

Process	School produced docs	IB produced docs
Consideration phase	School information form	
Request for candidacy	Application for candidacy	• Reader report- 2 parts • Letter to school
Consultation (formative)		• Consultants report- builds on the reader report • Version of report goes to school
Request for authorization (summative)	Application for authorization*	• Reader report (compilation) • Letter to school • Visiting team report (builds on reader report) • Report to the school
Evaluation	Self study	• Readers feedback • Evaluation visit report

*DP and MYP includes detailed descriptions of all the courses that will be offered; read by subject matter expert

¹Except where otherwise noted, historical chronology of Quality Assurance derives from <http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/history-of-quality/overview/overview.html>.

² See the ISO website: http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_9000_essentials