

**Minutes of the Meeting of the IB Heads Association of Northern India**  
***Theme: Cultivating Community***

Date: Saturday, July 30, 2022,

Time: 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

**Attendees**

Capt. Rohit Bajaj (President;  
Pan India and Chair, North),  
Pathways School Gurgaon

Mr. Atul Khanna (Executive  
Member, North),  
Strawberry Fields High  
School

Mrs. Manika Sharma, The  
Shri Ram School

Ms. Manisha Malhotra, The  
Shri Ram School

Mrs. Vanita Uppal, OBE  
The British School

Mrs. Sonya Mehta,  
Pathways World School  
Gurgaon

Dr. Alka Goel, Jayshree  
Periwal International  
School

Mrs. Sudha Goyal, Scottish  
High International School

Mrs. Jasbir Kaur, First steps  
School

Mrs. Rupa Chakravarty,  
Suncity School

Ms. Soma Singh, Delhi  
Public School International,  
Ghaziabad

Mrs. Sangeeta Mukherjee  
Roy, Delhi Public School  
Ghaziabad

Ms. Jayanti Majumdar,  
Delhi Public School  
Ghaziabad, Vasundhara

## Agenda:

1. Welcome by Strawberry Fields High School over tea and coffee followed by a Group photograph
2. Learning Collaboratory – Capt. Rohit Bajaj
3. IB Insights with University recognition – Mr. Mahesh Balakrishnan
4. IB evaluation and Q & A session – Mrs. Suman Sethi
5. Vision and strategy planning of the IB – Mrs. Vanita Uppal
6. School practices on Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Belonging – Mrs. Rupa Chakravarty

### Guiding questions:

- a. *How might school leaders evaluate how their school can integrate and prioritize DEI&B across every function*
- b. *How might faculty ensure that their classes foster a DEI&B-focused learning environment.*
- c. [Click the padlet link](#) to share your practices and next practices for the above guiding statements

7. Date and venue for the next regional meeting
8. Thoughts on the agenda for February 11, 2023, Pan India conference
9. Vote of thanks

## Minutes of the meeting:

### **1. Welcome address**

Capt. Bajaj convened the conference and welcomed all participants to the first meeting of the IB Heads Association of Northern India since December 2019, which is when it was held at the Pathways School Noida. He expressed his gratitude towards Mr. and Mrs. Khanna, and the Strawberry Fields High School (SFHS) team for organizing the play,

“The Siddhus of Upper Juhu” and the Heads dinner on July 29, 2022. He appreciated Mrs. Suman Sethi for her tremendous support and willingness to conduct the session. He urged participants to peruse the link regarding programme evaluation guidelines that was shared prior to the meeting. Capt. Bajaj also expressed his gratitude towards Mr. Mahesh Balakrishnan for making the time to be part of the meeting and share university-level updates regarding the recognition of IB programmes.

Capt. Bajaj took the opportunity to thank the previous Executive Committee of Northern India, comprising Mrs. Vanita Uppal, Mrs. Sudha Goyal, and the late Mr. Rakesh Kumar for establishing a collaborative culture on behalf of the current Executive Committee.

Capt. Bajaj shared that while there are ~58 IB schools in Northern India, only 18 heads had agreed to participate in today’s meeting and urged greater collaboration, dialogue, and participation among schools. He reminisced the camaraderie that was revived at the pan-India IB Heads meeting organized by the Jayshree Periwal International School, Jaipur. Since the pan-India meeting, the association has grown from 202 to 206 schools, a testament to our growing IB community.

Capt. Bajaj invited all members to introduce themselves to each other.

Before moving on to the agenda, Capt. Bajaj elaborated on the theme of the meeting, which is to cultivate the IB India community, reiterating that the purpose of this forum is to inspire and celebrate each other’s accomplishments, and evolve our learnings and our stories together.

Capt. Bajaj while elaborating on each agenda point, recognized Mrs. Vanita Uppal’s election to the IB Heads Council which was accompanied by a round of applause.

2. Capt. Bajaj welcomed Mr. Mahesh Balakrishnan, IB Development and Recognition Manager, and invited him to share university related IB updates. Mr. Balakrishnan welcomed participants to the meeting and hoped that DP results were satisfactory. Regarding the Primary Years Programme, he shared that early-years schools wishing to implement the PYP in a standalone manner as Early Years PYP can express interest from October to the development team. For the MYP, he elaborated that the IB is now devising the India percentage equivalent transcript for the May'23 or May'24 session, depending on when the process will be complete and is looking promising, this has been a long standing ask of Schools in India. For DP and CP, he mentioned that the IB is growing their equivalence statement and that India, and the UK have signed an MOU for mutual recognition; conversations with Kings College and others have already been initiated for this matter. Mr. Balakrishnan solicited any connects if the IB Heads have for university connections to facilitate university-admission and recognition processes, such as the predicted grade statements recognition. He further elaborated that the IB has now instituted a Global Recognition team for global recognition and is working to partner with 35 top institutions in India for the same. To promote recognition of the IB DP among universities, he encouraged schools to reach out with specific university-recognition requests.

Moving on, Mr. Balakrishnan mentioned that the IB portal will be closed for candidacy applications between August 1 and September 27, post which any new applications can be made. He also shared that the IB, in collaboration with schools in India, have reached the end of the NCERT subject-mapping exercise, the results of which will be shared with Heads in due course. Capt. Bajaj pitched in to explain the timeline of the process which is nearing completion.

Mr. Balakrishnan hoped that IB students take advantage of the CUET, and it should likely be advantageous to IB students to gain admission in National Institutes.

Mr. Balakrishnan explained the IB is currently in the process of exploring the e-assessment option for the DP and is piloting the open-book testing methodology. To this, Mrs. Chakravarty responded that the IB can probably learn from the past experiences of the Cambridge board and the Indian national curriculum, CBSE, to create an effective system.

Capt. Bajaj replied that while the open-book format might be directly applicable to the sciences and Math, it will be interesting to see how it will be adapted to other subjects as well.

Mrs. Malhotra inquired about the ease of the MYP e-assessment to which Capt. Bajaj replied that this year onwards language acquisition has become part of the on-screen testing. The e-assessment has become a lot more user-friendly, and the school was not challenged with technical glitches. The IB was very prompt in responding to any queries with respect to the e-assessments. He further mentioned that the alternate tasks were made available to the students who had Covid or related health issues.

Capt. Bajaj thanked Mr. Balakrishnan for his virtual presence.

### **3. Learning Collaboratory**

Expanding upon the purpose of the Learning Collaboratory, Capt. Bajaj mentioned the urgent need to amplify collaboration among heads via the centralized WhatsApp group and the Northern India groups. He requested inputs from participants about what else they would like the Executive Committee to organize in terms of enhancing mutually beneficial academic relationships. To facilitate learning from each other, he suggested starting with a “Heads’ Mind Mission” for interested heads to virtually meet once in 30 days to have conversations on different areas of development eg school’s strategy, guiding statements, managing traffic in the Delhi/NCR region, amongst others. Anyone interested is welcome to connect.

Simultaneously, he also solicited volunteers to host the next regional meeting scheduled to be held in December 2022. Mrs. Sudha Goyal volunteered to host the event in the absence of any other offer; however, Mrs. Sonya Mehta graciously offered to host the meeting at the Pathways World School Gurgaon. Everyone agreed for a December regional meeting in Pathways World School Gurgaon and the date of the next regional meeting was decided as December 09, 2022. Mrs. Uppal also recommended organizing a planning group for the annual conference.

4. Capt. Bajaj welcomed Mrs. Suman Sethi to the meeting and appreciated the warmth and arrangements of the SFHS team while organizing the meeting. He requested her to share on the programme evaluation process.

Elaborating on the process, Mrs. Sethi informed members that the 2020 standards and practices will now be used for the purpose of programme evaluation, which has now shifted to the developmental approach to encourage schools to not just complete their documentation before evaluation is due but throughout the lifecycle as well. She spoke about the Programme Development Plan template that the schools may use. She recommended having just one narrow focus which should align with the school's strategy. Considering the school's future over the next 4-5 years would be helpful in completing the PDP and emphasized prioritizing plans that have students' interests at the center. For schools that have multiple programs, it was mentioned that the focus of the PDP for each program could be different or same throughout the school. Emphasizing the need to focus on a small number of aspects for each year's PDP, she highlighted working on 4-8 practices and at least 2 areas of framework among purpose, culture, learning and environment. She mentioned that schools should have a rationale as to why have they chosen this focus, for instance, developing international mindedness and thinking about the stakeholders involved, methodology for achieving this objective and how they will reach their focus or delivery area, including operational requirements.

In terms of execution, it was mentioned she encouraged schools to reflect on the ongoing journey and consider what they have learned from the process, which is more important rather than just the outcomes.

Ms. Sethi mentioned that for a newly authorized school, the PDP could be on the recommendations shared during the authorization. Each year, schools should review policies, curriculum, and documentation so that they are always ready for evaluation; the primary aim, however, is that policies should reach the classroom in terms of unit plans. Ms. Sethi explained the entire evaluation process (detailed explanation of this evidence can be found in Appendix 1

of the Guide to Programme Evaluation. Program leaders check against that documentation standard and will send the report to the World School Managers. In case of any findings, not meeting a requirement, the world school manager will provide 2 weeks to address the same. An action plan is only required if a school is not able to address any requirement of the programme within a period of 2 weeks.

For the second stage of the evaluation, which includes the PDP and SSQ, schools are required to select one PDP that they wish feedback from the IB and the SSQ is completed as per the format.

She emphasized that the PDP demonstrates where a school currently is and where it intends to progress towards.

At the evaluation visit, no further documents are required unless there is a need by the evaluation team. There will be reflective conversations for 2-3 days. The Evaluation Report will highlight areas of strength and areas of improvement duly discussed with the visiting team and the school. Mrs. Sethi specified that schools can share their PDP from time to time with the IB and that she is happy to be part of the conversations and looks forward to receiving a copy of the minutes. (Please review the program evaluation link which was shared with everyone [https://intbac-my.sharepoint.com/:v/q/personal/suman\\_sethi\\_ibo\\_org/EXdb9qY-N29LqWIBTSNlxo0BAGtw0uzcnpAly7O27cNoQ?e=6FEfaj](https://intbac-my.sharepoint.com/:v/q/personal/suman_sethi_ibo_org/EXdb9qY-N29LqWIBTSNlxo0BAGtw0uzcnpAly7O27cNoQ?e=6FEfaj) )

Mrs. Uppal applauded the IB for having taken the pressure off and focus away from compliance towards progress made on developmental aspects.

5. Capt. Bajaj thanked Mrs. Sethi for her insights. Addressing the members, he emphasized the need for increased collaboration and mentorship among newly authorized and experienced schools, which are at different stages of their journey in the programme implementation. While the current EC is making efforts to reach out to the new schools, he welcomed other members' help to make the association more inclusive. Mrs. Mehta suggested that if the schools want mentorship, they may approach different schools and buddy-up as this method respects the agency of all schools.

Capt. Bajaj agreed and elaborated that currently, the survey includes data of 29 with their strength and areas of improvement. He mentioned that the link to that survey shared previously by Mr. Abhimanyu Basu will be re-shared with the minutes of this meeting and urged all 58 Northern Indian schools to fill it up. He emphasized the need for knowledge sharing among teachers and collaborative programs among students. In case any members are not on the Northern India Whatsapp group, he requested them to reach out. [North India list of schools.xlsx](#)

## **6. Updates from the IB Heads Council**

Mrs. Vanita Uppal shared insights from her face-to-face IB Heads Council meeting at the Hague, which was convened by the IB Director

Mrs. Vanita Uppal shared insights from her face-to-face IB Heads Council meeting at the Hague. She informed members that there will be an official communication of the deliberations of the meeting by the IBO. Speaking highly about the diverse and experienced members of the IB Heads Council which included a few newcomers like herself, Ms Uppal commented on the easy camaraderie, the warm welcome and open and candid conversations. The Chair is a head of school from Mexico and was very keen that we all use our hearts and minds for the benefit of IB schools worldwide. The Director General shared an inspiring presentation where he talked about his personal vision and vision for the IB. Mrs. Uppal suggested it would be helpful to share the key elements of discussions at the Heads Council with Heads across the world. She was delighted to report that this suggestion was immediately accepted and that the IB will share a summary of the IB Heads Council meeting.

Providing further updates from the meeting Ms Uppal highlighted a few:

- there is a renewed massive focus on wellbeing and the IB is piloting a well-being project. The results of the surveys and research are being used to curate a wellbeing project with resilience at the center.



- plan for professional Development Channels, the IB is considering possibilities for micro credentials to provide for ongoing PD
- Student voice and agency – the IB is actively working on developing new ways to incorporate and validate it. The IB is also working on measuring the impact on students as schools are pivotal to societal growth.
- Different models of the Heads conference were tabled, and inputs of Heads was taken.
- Maintaining integrity of IB examinations through some changes
- Role of the Heads Council – members were asked to disabuse myths about what one does when they are on the Heads Council as members are not to think of themselves as advocates/activists of their region, rather thought-leaders of the world.

Concluding her segment, Mrs. Uppal reiterated that the Heads Council meeting was conducted very professionally, with pre-reads, and agendas shared prior to the meeting. She appreciated the IB executive team for curating an excellent two days and for their dynamic professionalism.

Initiating a discussion about the recognition of the pan-India IB Heads Association, she mentioned that the association will not be recognized until the structure is modified to become inclusive to include IB coordinators and educators that is all stakeholders in the IB. Talking about the history of the association, she mentioned that it was launched to address a very different need of the nascent IB community, which was to bring together Heads of schools for deeper, more meaningful connections. Speaking of the advantages of becoming a recognized association, she mentioned there will be many and it would require the membership to take a decision to move forward in this regard.

Opening the floor for discussion, she invited members to deliberate. While Mrs. Goyal proposed having two associations, one for Heads and an inclusive one, Capt. Bajaj enquired how these two organizations could be synergized.

Members agreed that it is important to work towards recognition by the IB as it is the next progressive step in the journey of the association.

Mrs. Mehta proposed adding this to our agenda point for the informal meet-up in Hyderabad and the next regional meeting.

### ***7. School practices on Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Belonging***

Mrs. Chakravarty initiated her discussion by questioning, “How many of you have felt that you don’t belong here?”

Defining diversity, equity, and inclusion, she invited members to deliberate on why belonging at work was important. Extending this discussion to classroom formats, she encouraged members to share their best practices on differentiating the classroom content along with classroom format and arrangement to ensure maximum learning opportunities.

Mrs. Uppal shared that at The British School, although students belong to 66 countries, the school is not diverse automatically because there are so many nationalities. Diversity must be appreciated through design and not by accident. She emphasised the need to appreciate and develop intercultural competency, which is not limited to just celebrating international day or cuisines. She questioned members about how they ensure that induction of new staff and responded that she herself leads the training and sets up coffee-chats with new recruits to ensure accessibility. She referenced the works of Diana Osage to learn more about inculcating the value of inclusivity.

Mrs. Sudha Goyal mentioned that at her school, to allow for camaraderie among students, they celebrate “Monkey Business” through which new and older students dance together to break the initial ice.

Mrs. Soma Singh appreciated the Monkey Business concept and shared that at her school, for new staff members, they use a staff-buddy system, which is supplemented by open-door policies and emails are sent out to all staff for introductions.

Mrs. Chakravarty also mentioned that new staff orientations are held at her office.

All insights were greatly appreciated by members, who were encouraged to complete the Padlet link for documented strategies; this link can be accessed later as well.

Capt. Bajaj spoke about the understanding of diversity as recognising and accepting differences, equity about being fair, inclusion about having a voice, and belonging is about the voice being heard. He spoke about the practices within admissions, career placement, orientations, and alumni engagements while for the faculty he spoke about recruitment, mentorship programmes, on boarding, promotions, tenures, professional development and exit interviews. He also mentioned about diversity in learning plans of the school and designing the unit plans.

8. Next, Capt. Bajaj sought thoughts for the next pan-India meeting agenda, which could be deliberated upon in Hyderabad on August 24, during the informal meet-up. He also suggested deliberating upon India's contribution to the IB at a global level via recognition of the pan-India association.
9. Concluding the meeting, on behalf of all members present, Capt. Bajaj thanked Mr. Khanna and the SFHS team for hosting the meeting of the IB Heads Association of Northern India.