

# The Battle Of Boards; How To Make The Right Choice



While traditionally most school students in India have studied under the aegis of CBSE, ICSE or various state boards,

lately we see a sizeable presence of IGCSE and IB programs offered by International Boards. If you are making the choice of a school for your child, the choice of the board will be an important determinant. If you find the choice overwhelming, here is information that will come in handy.

Before we get into the relative merits of each of these boards, let us deep dive into what these newer boards are.

## **IGCSE & IB Boards**

### **1. IGCSE**

IGCSE has been established by the University of Cambridge International

examinations. It is well recognized worldwide for its emphasis on student-centric education. Essentially, it is taught as a two-year course for students in Grades 9 and 10.

**Some of the different assessment methods used include:**

<sup>1</sup>Practical Exercises

<sup>2</sup>Project work

<sup>3</sup>Oral & listening tests

<sup>4</sup>Written examinations

<sup>5</sup>Post IGCSE, students have the option to go for A/AS levels or IBDP

**IB**

The IB programs were founded by The International Baccalaureate Organization, a non-profit educational organization, headquartered in Geneva.

It runs three programs:

1. Primary Years Program from Kindergarten to Grade 5
2. Middle Years Program from Grades 6 to Grade 10
3. The Diploma Program for Grades 11 and 12

## **RELATIVE MERITS OF EACH BOARD**

While all the boards both offer quality education, the major point of difference lies in their overall approach & pedagogy.

To begin with, it is important to know that IB defines strict infrastructure requirements and teaching methodology. What this means is that IB is a more “standard product” and there are fewer variations between two schools. CBSE, Cambridge, on the other hand are largely examination boards and define minimum infrastructure requirements and teacher student ratios. These boards do not enforce teaching methodology, making it largely school dependent. So, choice of school becomes extremely important. Let us look at some of the unique features of each board in some detail:

## **CBSE**

<sup>1</sup>It has a large number of schools affiliated to it and is known to offer a comprehensive curriculum.

<sup>2</sup>It has a well-defined syllabus with moderate levels of syllabus difficulty.

<sup>3</sup>It is particularly known for its extensive science and mathematics syllabus and its conventional teaching methods. If a student is aiming at pursuing a career in Engineering or Medicine, CBSE is especially preferable as the syllabi & pattern of the Indian entrance examinations is aligned to the CBSE curriculum.

<sup>4</sup>It is therefore known for its highly competitive exam focus.

<sup>5</sup>In terms of subject choice flexibility, it can be ranked moderate since it tends to follow structured patterns.

Besides its large presence in India, it is also well accepted internationally and therefore is not a deterrent for students who wish to pursue higher education overseas.

## **IB**

IB board is known to focus on practical and application based learning. The approach clearly is more expansive.

<sup>1</sup>The syllabus isn't well defined, and in terms of syllabus difficulty it is rated high.

<sup>2</sup>It offers high subject flexibility. IB offers the choice of 6 subject groups where the student needs to choose one subject from each group.

<sup>3</sup>It has a low competitive exam focus points In terms of acceptability, while it is preferred internationally, in the Indian context acceptability is not at par. IB grade points are converted, putting the students in a disadvantageous position.

## **IGCSE**

<sup>1</sup>It is known for its well-defined syllabus with high level of syllabus difficulty



<sup>2</sup>Offers high subject flexibility. Students can even drop the language in grade 12. It offers more than 70 different disciplines for the child to choose from.

<sup>3</sup>It offers high subject flexibility. IB offers the choice of 6 subject groups where the student needs to choose one subject from each group.

<sup>4</sup>It has a low competitive exam focus.

On account of its international recognition the board works well for students who aim to pursue higher education abroad. In the Indian context, however, acceptability is not at par.

Clearly each of these boards comes with their own strengths. In making the choice of board, students need to see how well they fit in with their individual objectives. In addition, some of the other aspects to consider include:

There are far more CBSE schools spread across the country. The choice available to students in terms of CBSE schools is therefore far greater. Particularly if you have a transferable job, it works extremely well. A number of progressive CBSE schools are emerging as the right choice of students looking for both academic rigor and all-round development.

In terms of fee, CBSE schools are far more affordable. Typically the fee for schools with International Boards is double or even more as compared to CBSE schools.

So go ahead and make the right choice that works for your ward. Irrespective of the board, of course, it is the sincere work put in by the child that will be the biggest marker of success!

