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## Several points about the Complaint:

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### Civil rights complaint filed against DeKalb schools

By [Megan Matteucci](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

A parent has filed a federal civil rights complaint against the [DeKalb County](#) School System, alleging discrimination against black students.

The parent and In My Shoes-The National Parent Education Center filed the complaint Friday with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

"The complaint is under evaluation to determine if the allegations are appropriate for OCR investigation and resolution," said Jim Bradshaw, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Education.

The complaint alleges DeKalb's International Baccalaureate program for middle school students, which is for high-achievers, is geared toward white children, Bradshaw told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution on Wednesday.

"Specifically, the complaint alleges that during the 2009-2010 school year, only one middle school, located in the northern section of the [DeKalb County](#) School System, has an IB program," Bradshaw said, "and, that the predominantly non-African-American students who live in that school's attendance area were given first priority to the IB program."

The Department of Education said it hopes to evaluate the allegations by the end of the month.

School board chairman Tom Bowen and district spokesman Dale Davis said they had not received notice of the complaint.

"DeKalb is one of the most – if not the most – diverse school system in the state of Georgia," Bowen said. "We work hard to make sure none of our policies are discriminatory in any shape, form, or fashion because we want to make sure we provide equal access to quality education for all of our students."

The district offers the international baccalaureate program at only one of its 20 middle schools -- Shamrock Middle School, which is the northern end of the county. The complaint argues that the school caters to white students.

Georgia Department of Education enrollment figures for the current school year show that 50 percent of Shamrock Middle's students are black, 21 percent are white, 13 percent are Hispanic and 11 percent are Asian.

Under board policy, DeKalb gives first preference to students who are in Shamrock's attendance zone and then offers the remaining seats to other students through a lottery. Parents of students outside the attendance area must provide their own transportation.

“It’s clear cut racial discrimination,” said Phyllis Austin, founder and CEO of [In My Shoes-The National Parent Education Center](#). “Because they don’t have any programs on south end, they should get equal access. They didn’t even put this child in the lottery. They just said you live out of zone and you can’t go there.”

The non-profit center, which works with parents across the country, filed the complaint on behalf of the DeKalb parent. Austin declined to release the complaint or identify the parent, saying the parents want to protect the identity of the child.

Bowen said the district did not select the schools with the program based on location, but the principals of those schools had expressed interest in the program. He said the district had planned to add the program to two more schools, but it was put on hold because of budget problems. The school system is facing an \$88 million shortfall.

The parent filed an appeal with the school board last year, and the appeal was denied, Austin said.

“The state board of education looked at it and said the child was allowed to attend the school that meets the educational needs of the child,” said Austin, a former DeKalb and Atlanta teacher. “But the educational needs of this student are not available at their local school.”

Since the district accepts federal funds, it is obligated to provide equal services to all children, Austin said.

“It’s unbelievable that it’s 2010 and we actually have to rely on the Office of Civil Rights to get access to great education programs,” Austin said.

Board member Eugene Walker said he was unaware of the complaint but does not believe the district discriminates by race.

“Clearly we had a history of discrimination at one time, but we spent many years working to correct that and I think we have made great progress,” he told the AJC.

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### **Several points about the Complaint:**

1) IB is a high quality educational program. What the IB program does is far greater than how it is described in the article. The IB program expedites and strengthens cognitive development in the forebrain, which is responsible for logical rational reasoning and thought processes. The High School AP Program can be comparable to the cognitive development aspect of the IB program. However, on the elementary and middle school levels, there are no comparable programs, not even Gifted.

The school and its teachers go through rigorous training and reviewing for the IB Program. Therefore, teacher quality increases.

It is common knowledge in the educational arena that dropout decreases and success increases when quality of education increases. For more information and where these programs are located in your area visit [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org) . For the difference between Adequate, Quality and High Quality Educational Indicators, [click here...](#)

- 2) The IB Program is not under the State's Gifted program status. It is a different program regulated by I.B.O.
- 3) The IB Program at Shamrock Middle is a program within Shamrock. The demographics for Shamrock MS, which are quoted in AJC, are not the demographics for the IB Program. In recent years, Shamrock has been a receiving school under NCLB. This contributed to the increase black population in Shamrock MS. Students in Shamrock under NCLB are not eligible for preferential treatment (below). They live out of zone.
- 4) Eligibility for the Primary and Middle School IB programs is preferential based on where the child lives. Home attendance zone students get preferential treatment. There is no fair and equal opportunity as required under NCLB Title 1.
- 5) There are a total of 7 IB programs in Dekalb County 6 (3 Primary, 1 Middle and 2 High Schools) on the North Side of the County and 1 (High School) on the South Side of the County.
- 6) According to the Spokesperson for DCSS, one can conclude that this program was funded by DCSS, i.e. taxpayers. Therefore, there must be equitable opportunity to access the program for all students according to Title 1.