

March 18, 2021

Oregon House Education Committee
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2412, -2 Amendments

Chair Alonso Leon and Members of the House Education Committee,

I'm writing today to urge your support and adoption of the -2 amendments to HB 2412. This amendment includes funding for five different college access programs that were funded in the Governors Recommend Budget. These five programs provide valuable access and supports for low-income and historically underserved students and help them to achieve their post-secondary goals.

One such program, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), has had a large impact on my life. Over the course of my 4 years in AVID, I have learned valuable skills that will help me throughout college and life, make meaningful relationships, and, most importantly, found a sense of self-confidence that has helped me to achieve major goals.

Prior to my time in AVID, I had only known what I had seen. I have two drug addict parents who struggle daily, and I have been raised by my elderly grandparents in a low income household. For my entire life, I have witnessed people that I love fall victim to that same type of lifestyle, and I had only assumed that there was no other future for me. I had never even imagined myself going to college, let alone achieving what I have today. AVID has given me the adequate resources and support to realize that I am capable of whatever I put my energy, hard work, and determination into.

Today, I have a resume full of achievements that I can accredit to AVID and the self worth I have gained in this community. I am SAHS's first 3 time National Speech and Debate Tournament Qualifier. I am the first from my school to become an NSDA Academic All-American. I am a member of the National Honor Society, a 4.0 student, and an AP student. I am the first from my school to be accepted into an Ivy League University. This fall, I will be attending Yale University with a full ride through the QuestBridge National College Match. None of this would have been possible without AVID.

I am fully confident that without AVID, I would likely be facing the same future as my parents and loved ones. AVID and similar programs give students the resources, support, and hope that is so essential to success.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rena Howard
South Albany High School Student
4 year AVID student