

From: Kim Bliss, IB Coordinator - Lincoln HS, Portland

Testimony in support of HB 4137:

I am writing to express my **support for House Bill 4137**, which proposes to allow students who successfully complete the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program in Oregon to have this qualification fulfill their high school graduation requirements. As an IB educator for over a decade and the current IB Diploma Program Coordinator at Lincoln High School I deeply value educational opportunities for all students, and I believe this bill holds tremendous promise for enhancing the educational landscape in our state. The IB Diploma Program is a rigorous, internationally recognized, two-year course of study.

High school students who successfully complete the IB Diploma Program are awarded an IB Diploma. Program requirements include:

- a rigorous course of study over their junior and senior years that includes college level preparatory courses from every academic discipline, including: English, Math, Social Science, Science, World Language and the Arts
- successful completion of IB Exams in these six subject areas, which are scored by outside evaluators, much like AP exams are scored by the College Board.
- the completion of a service project
- a 4000-word independent research paper in a subject and topic of their choosing.

The IB Diploma is recognized in over 70 countries by more than 2,000 universities. In my role as an IB Coordinator I have seen countless young people emerge from high school with their IB Diplomas as well-rounded individuals prepared to tackle the challenges of higher education and beyond. By recognizing the IB Diploma as equivalent to a regular high school diploma, HB 4137 would rightfully acknowledge the academic and personal growth achieved by IB students and **improve access** to this program for all Oregon Students.

During my time as an IB educator in public schools in Oregon, I have seen the IB Diploma Program consistently demonstrate a positive impact on students by fostering critical thinking skills, global awareness, and a commitment to community service.

One of the **key barriers** faced by students considering the IB Diploma Program is the **scheduling conflict** and **course overlap** between IB requirements and those of a traditional high school diploma. Students can be forced to make **difficult choices** between pursuing the IB Diploma and fulfilling their high school graduation requirements. This dilemma has led to instances where students opt out of the IB Diploma Program forgoing **the opportunity for a demanding, globally recognized credential**. Moreover, the recognition of the IB Diploma as equivalent to a regular high school diploma underscores the rigorous academic standards upheld by the IB. Importantly, the comprehensive nature of the IB curriculum **aligns seamlessly with the objectives of the Oregon Department of Education**.

In conclusion, I urge you to support House Bill 4137 and take a proactive stance in **advancing educational equity** and excellence in Oregon. There is no doubt in my mind that students who earn the IB Diploma are **equivalently prepared for success** beyond High School and this bill will make the IB Diploma Program both more accessible and inclusive, ensuring that all students have the **opportunity to thrive** academically and prepare for success in an increasingly interconnected world

Thank you for considering my views on this important matter. I trust that you will give careful consideration to the positive impact that HB 4137 can have on the educational experiences of students across Oregon.

Sincerely,

Kim Bliss

Portland Oregon