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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
District 34



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support of HB 4137

Senate Committee on Education

Tuesday, February 20th, 2024

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

For the record, my name is Lisa Reynolds, State Representative for Oregon HD 34.

I am honored to be a chief sponsor on HB 4137, the International Baccalaureate - better known as IB – parity bill. This bill passed unanimously out of both the House Committee on Education last week and unanimously off the House floor. This is a bicameral, bipartisan bill, and I'm grateful to Sen Dembrow as a co-sponsor. There is still time to sign on.

HB 4137 says that the legislature recognizes that students who meet the requirements of an IB diploma would also meet the requirements of an Oregon high school diploma. Usually, when I tell people this, their reaction is something along the lines of "What!? We don't already do that?" And that is exactly why we're here today.

IB is an academically rigorous program for high school students that covers the four major subject groups [Language Arts, Science, Math, Individuals & Societies], two years of an international language, and specialized courses that delve in asking and researching important questions in history, science and present day concerns.

Why do students choose IB? As stated: It's an academically rigorous curriculum with a focus on inquiry. AND, IB improves future educational outcomes. IB students who go on to college have a **4-year college graduation rate** of 74%, compared to the national average of 41%. Most universities, including Oregon's, look favorably on IB students in admissions decisions, and many offer college credit and substantial scholarships to IB students.

My kids, Jack and Hank, did the IB program at Lincoln High School in Portland—I saw firsthand how well it prepares kids for life beyond high school. And

So here's the problem: currently, some students at the 17 International Baccalaureate high schools in Oregon struggle to complete both the IB Diploma Program and the Oregon High School Diploma requirements, despite significant overlap. In some cases, students have been required to attend zero-periods, which take place before the typical start of the school day, or summer school. This presents a barrier, especially for students who have to work, care for a

family member, or who do not have reliable transportation outside of regular school hours. Some students forgo the IB diploma altogether.

The spirit of HB 4137 is to fully support IB students by minimizing additional requirements. Still, the state board of education and local school districts may fine tune these requirements to ensure our students are getting the best possible education. This bill comes on the heels of a 2022 ODE recommendation to do exactly this, and it is modeled after a successful law in Washington state. We've collaborated with our colleagues at ODE on this bill, who are here today to answer questions, and we have also been in touch with the relevant associations, none of whom have expressed concerns.

Please help us remove barriers faced by IB students - students who say yes to a rigorous curriculum that sets them on a path of lifelong learning.

I now want you to hear from the folks on the ground working on this issue, so I'll turn it over to Celeste Colasurdo, former IB coordinator at Southridge High School and mom to Pablo, a dear friend of my son Jack's.