

## **HB 2052: Wearing of Native American Items of Cultural Significance at Public School Events Including High School Graduation**

**House Education Committee**

**February 2, 2021**

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Weber, Vice Chair Neron, and members of the committee, I am Toshiko Maurizio the Administrator for Multilingual Programs in the Beaverton School District. Under “Multilingual Programs” I oversee the Title III program serving emergent bilinguals, dual language programs, and the title VI American Indian/Alaska Native program. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2052.

From a former principal and now a district administrator perspective, I have witnessed the harm caused on Native students, particularly during graduation ceremonies. As we know, graduation is a time to celebrate the accomplishments of our students as they move into the next phase of their lives. It is a joyous occasion for both the students and their families. However, in the Beaverton School District, many of our Native American students and families are frustrated and upset by various high school policies that prevent them from wearing eagle feathers during this special event. The district does not have a clear policy that affirms Native religious freedom, therefore, individual school administrators have to create rules and policies on a case by case basis leaving Native families uncertain whether they are free to exercise their religious rights. Although our school board passed an [Indigenous People’s Day resolution](#), we have work to do in aligning our policies and practices so they are more inclusive.

We understand there are stages of identity development from a white, BIPOC, and multi-racial perspective. However, not allowing our Native students to wear eagle feathers, beaded caps, or other traditional regalia at graduation ceremonies diminishes Native students’ cultural identity and further perpetuates this idea of educational assimilation and conformity. The Act of Congress in 1978 states that “the law was enacted to return basic civil liberties to Native Americans...allow(ing) them to practice, protect and preserve their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religious rights, spiritual and cultural practices...and the possession and use of objects traditionally considered sacred by their respective cultures.” Therefore, HB2052 aligns with this Act and serves to protect Native religious, spiritual, and cultural freedom for our Native students and families.

The contents outlined in HB 2052 will advance equity for Oregon Native students. I urge your support of HB 2052.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Toshiko Mesa Maurizio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Toshiko Mesa Maurizio, Ed.D.  
Administrator for Multilingual Programs  
Beaverton School District