

## International Baccalaureate Bill HB 4137 Written Testimony

My name is Sierra Burke, a proud graduate of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program from Southridge in 2017. I am writing to express my strong support for Bill HB 4137, which seeks to enable students who have completed an IB program to fulfill high school diploma requirements.

Embarking on the IB journey, I had aspirations of exploring the world and gaining diverse perspectives. Little did I know, the program would not only fulfill those dreams but also serve as the bedrock of my identity today. The IB experience urged us to challenge ourselves, embrace conflicting perspectives, and critically analyze the world around us. Now, at 24, I am proud to have lived in multiple countries and learned two new languages—all made possible by the knowledge and resilience instilled in me by the IB program.

Because I needed to fulfill Oregon graduation requirements, my IB schedule did not fit normal class hours. For an entire year, I sacrificed my lunch breaks to attend IB music theory during that time. This demanding schedule not only meant sacrificing the only break of my day, but also hindered opportunities for bonding with my peers. I remember many of the students in my class shared the ambition to graduate with IB, yet hesitated due to the rigorous schedule conflicts it presented. Some had no choice but to take classes such as health and PE at the local community college, and ultimately opted out of pursuing the diploma.

The current graduation requirements pose a significant barrier for many students seeking access to the IB program. As an alumna who understands the importance of IB and also the near impossible hurdles students must overcome, I emphasize the importance of Bill HB 4137. By allowing students to fulfill high school diploma requirements through their IB achievements, it paves the way for a more inclusive and forward-thinking educational landscape in Oregon.

I urge you to lend your support to this bill, acknowledging the invaluable growth and learning that the IB program nurtures in students like myself.