

Hello IHS parents and families (*Si desea traducir este mensaje, haga [clic aqui](#)*),

Well, here we are--in that magical, quiet moment before a brand new school year begins. For teachers, it always feels like a calm in the midst of a storm--after weeks of professional development, staff meetings, decorating classrooms, going over class lists, making seating charts, creating lesson plans, and for many of us, getting our own children ready for the first day of school, we have a quiet moment before the whirlwind of the first day of school. Teachers feel the same way most students feel on the night before the first day of school--a mix of nervousness and excitement about what this new school year will bring. **Remember that our 9th graders will begin tomorrow, Wednesday, September 6th**--please refer to your host school's communication for the exact schedule for your student. **Our 10th-12th graders will begin on Thursday, September 7th at 8:30 with their 1st period class**. We are so excited to see the students back in our classrooms again!

I want to give you a little insight into the work IHS teachers have been doing these past few weeks. In addition to our district-led professional development focused on universal designs for learning and literary instruction, IHS teachers spent copious amounts of time working in small teams to plan our lessons and align our curriculum as much as possible. The goal is that IHS students are learning about a common topic, geographic region, or period of history across all of their IHS classes so that cross-curricular connections can be made and students learn from multiple perspectives and angles. In addition, IHS is building and creating curriculum for (4) new courses this year. Our junior and senior Seminar courses are now robust, IB-focused core classes within the school day intended to support IB work and help students research and write their Extended Essays and complete their CAS (community service) hours. Our 10th grade team has taken on the new Oregon state requirement to teach Civics by creating a year-long Civics course, as well as a companion Narratives and Perspectives course that will take the place of our previous World History class.

Here is a quick update from our grade level PLC leaders about how each grade is starting off the year:

9th grade: The 9th grade IHS team of teachers is looking forward to helping 9th graders get organized and acquainted with all things IHS! Teachers will be helping students set up planners, learn how to organize their Google Drive, get an introduction to Canvas, meet their librarians and take a library tour, meet our educational assistants and learn about the services available to them, learn about our Book Love program, what it means to be an IB Learner, and understand the IB and IHS mission statements. Our first unit Global Literature will explore: What does it mean to be a global citizen? How do empathy and respect play key roles in becoming a responsible global citizen? In Global Health the first unit will explore: What is necessary to live a long, disease-free life? Can you measure happiness? In Global Geography, the first unit will explore: What is Geography? What are the physical and cultural characteristics of places and regions, and how have they changed through time? We are excited to welcome the newest members of our IHS student community!

10th grade: This year the IHS 10th grade team is launching two new social studies classes (Civics & Engagement and Narratives & Perspectives) and a revamped literature course. All three courses will begin by addressing common themes related to identity and citizenship. Social studies is working closely on a Rights & Responsibilities unit with a focus on the foundations of societies, governments, and the rights of teenagers in school. Literature begins with a citizen poetry unit with authors from around the world, and from there will move into the reading of *Persepolis*. We are all excited to build a better and engaging 10th grade year!

11th grade: IHS Juniors have four courses this year, with the inclusion of Junior Seminar (lovingly called “Junior Core”) within the academic day. Junior Core students will begin the year questioning the very nature of knowledge itself and using that critical thinking to start identifying potential research topics for their Extended Essays. In IB Economics, Juniors will examine the economic lens of the world, with a particular focus on the ways in which human behavior, values, choice, resources, and mathematics intersect. IB Literature and History of the Americas courses will invite students to question, “What even is history?” and “How can literary arts explore and express aspects of identity, culture, and individuality?” Both courses will begin investigating these questions through an Indigenous, Native American, and First Nations focus, before and after The Columbian Exchange.

12th Grade: We look forward to welcoming our seniors back to their final year of high school! This year, we will focus on the 20th and 21st century worlds in our study of history and literature. History will begin the year with the question, What did the world look like in 1919? Literature will begin with a study of the personal essay, as students write personal essays for college and scholarship applications. Meanwhile, in Theory of Knowledge we will ask who we are, what we know and how we know it. In Seminar, students will find support for their personal essay work and conference with teachers about how to revise extended essays. We cannot wait to see our students and start the year together!

One final thought: as I participated in meetings these past few weeks, it struck me that in every discussion, I heard some variation of this question: ***What is best for our students?*** When we discussed homework load, rigor in the curriculum, textbook adoption, curriculum gaps, safety protocols, and a million other details that need to be addressed each school year, I heard our teachers come back, time and again, to that very simple question: ***What is best for our students?*** I say this to you all as a reminder that your student's teachers are genuinely trying to do what is best for your kid. We will certainly make some mistakes, and there will be times when you might not agree with a decision, but please always remember that we love your kids, and we're genuinely trying to do our best for them. We're all in this together!

As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. Here we go!

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