

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

My IB education transformed my life as I became the first in my family to go to college.

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Amy Hernandez Turcios graduated from the IB Diploma Programme (DP) at Highland High School in California, USA. She continued her undergraduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and began her career as an investment banking analyst. She is now an MBA candidate at Harvard Business School.

How did you reach where you are today?

As I reflect on where I come from, where I have been, and where I want to go, I think about passion, determination, and grit. Passion to do what makes you happy and fulfilled. Determination to overcome obstacles to achieve your dreams. Grit to say "I can" when circumstances make it difficult to succeed. These tenets have allowed me to beat the odds to become an educated and empowered Latina leader who is passionate about helping her community.

Why did you originally decide to pursue an IB diploma?

Growing up, I lived in an immigrant and low-income community. As such, my in-district high school lacked fundamental resources. I researched other high schools in the city and came across a high school with an IB Diploma Programme. I investigated what this programme was and what it offered and after my exploration, I knew this academically rigorous program was exactly what I needed to be challenged. I was able to get accepted into the DP and am so thankful for that opportunity today.

I was able to graduate as the valedictorian and my strong high school performance allowed me to win a full-ride scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, an Ivy League institution. My IB education transformed my life as I became the first in my family to go to college. Years later, I would also become the first in my family to attend graduate school.

Which of your IB teachers inspired you most?

My first IB elective was economics, a subject I did not know anything about. Even though I started off with knowing zero, it soon became my favorite subject. My teacher, Ms Alves made the material so relevant and interesting. She took concepts and showed us how they were applicable in the real world. I had always had an

interest in business generally but learning about business through the lens of economics solidified my interest and inspired me to apply to an undergraduate business school (Wharton). I was able to leverage many of the fundamentals I learned in my IB Economics class during college.

What advice do you have for current students?

I leave you with three pieces of advice that have been instrumental to my journey: 1) education is everything, 2) anything is possible and there's beauty in the struggle, 3) "Haz ruido donde vayas" ("make noise wherever you go", a quote my dad always told me growing up).