

Bend-La Pine Schools 2004-05 Dropout Rates Lower than State Averages

by Bend Weekly News Sources

More Bend-La Pine Schools high school students stayed in school in 2004-05 than their peers statewide, according to information released by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) this week. The ODE study shows that the five Bend-La Pine Schools high schools average dropout rate of 2.6% is significantly lower than the state dropout average of 4.2%. Superintendent Doug Nelson says that lowering the dropout rate has been a community effort. "We have been working closely with our teachers, students and families to keep kids in school and provide them with the tools they need to succeed," he says. "Together, we are ensuring that more and more students earn their diploma and have a successful school experience at the Bend-La Pine Schools." Nelson also recognizes the Schools alternative learning options - "from Marshall High School to the Oregon Virtual School -" for providing a path to success for students who are seeking an alternative way to earn their diploma. "We acknowledge that students flourish in a variety of different learning environments - some students prefer the traditional schools while others may prefer to learn in a less conventional setting," Nelson said. Oregon state law defines a dropout as a student in grades 9-12 who withdraws from school without receiving a high school diploma, GED certificate, modified diploma, or transferring to another school. According to the ODE, a total of 7,318 students dropped out of high school statewide during 2004-05, down from 7,864 dropouts in 2003-04. They say that most frequently cited reasons for leaving school were "too far behind in credits to catch up," "lack of parental support for education," and "working more than 15 hours per week." These reasons have been consistent during the last seven years of reporting, suggesting that these are significant factors that affect a student's ability to stay in school.

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