

Oregon's dropout rate hits all-time low at 4.1%

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Redmond HS rate is only 1.2%, Bend-La Pine schools overall average 2.3%

The Oregon Department of Education announced this week that Oregon's statewide dropout rate for the 2005-06 school year was 4.1%, down from last year's 4.2%. The 4.1% dropout rate is the lowest rate the state has reported since statewide reporting began in 1991. Dropout rates for white students decreased slightly, while the dropout rates for Asian, African American, Hispanic, and Native American students showed increases.

Regionally, Bend-La Pine and Redmond schools fare much better than the national rate, and both districts improved over rates reported last year.

"I believe the decrease in dropout rates indicate we are doing a better job at identifying those students who need credit recovery or alternative placements," states Keith Hanson, Curriculum Director of Redmond schools, whose dropout rate decreased 3.0%. "The two programs experiencing great success in those areas are the SB300 course opportunities with Central Oregon Community College and our Virtual Prescriptive Learning (VPL) program. VPL provides avenues for students to recover credits not earned in the traditional classroom setting."

"The decrease in our dropout rate is just another indicator that Redmond High's goal of graduating all students and having all students meet or exceed the state standards by 2010 is on the right track," comments Jon Bullock, Redmond High School Principal. "We need to continue to maintain a relentless focus on improving student achievement and school culture."

The five Bend-La Pine Schools high schools average dropout rate of 2.3% in 2005-06, down from 2.6% in 2004-05, is significantly lower than the state dropout average of 4.1%. Additionally, the ODE study says Bend, Mountain View and Summit high schools showed dropout rates of 1.5% or less during the 2005-06 school year.

“Thanks to our community’s commitment to education and our focus on student achievement, we are seeing more and more successes for our students,” Superintendent Doug Nelson says. “Staying in school and graduating creates endless opportunities for students.”

Nelson also recognizes the Schools alternative learning options “from Marshall High School to the Oregon Virtual School and Second Chance” 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 learning environments” some students prefer the traditional schools while others may prefer to learn in a less “conventional” setting,” Nelson said.

Oregon defines a dropout as a student in grades 9-12 who withdraws from school without receiving a high school diploma, GED, modified diploma, or transferring to another school.

“While the dropout rate is headed in the right direction, we can’t be satisfied as a state until Oregon’s dropout rate hits zero, and the graduation rate is 100%,” Castillo said “It is clear from today’s report that we need to focus our efforts on reducing dropout rates and increasing graduation rates for poor and minority students.

Graduating from high school is fundamental to success in the workforce or in college.â€•

Dropout Rates 2005-06

Total 4.1% (-0.1%)

White 3.3% (-0.2%)

Asian 2.7% (.5%)

African American 6.4% (.4%)

Hispanic 8.4% (.3%)

Native American 6.6% (1.0%)

“Historically, Oregon’s dropout rate has fluctuated with ups and downs in the economy. As the economy improved and the unemployment rate went down, the dropout rate went up,” Castillo said. “The good news in today’s report is that it appears that overall rates have remained low even as Oregon’s economy has improved.

That means Oregon is making progress in the fight to help students stay in high school, rather than leave school for employment.”

Even with the slight increases in dropout rates for minority students, they continue to be significantly lower than the high dropout rates of the mid-1990s. The Hispanic rate in 1994-95 was 17.9%. The African American rate in 1995-96 was 13.0%. The Native American rate in 1998-99 was 11.2%. The 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 eight years, suggesting that these are significant factors that affect a student’s ability to stay in school.

The 2005-06 graduation rate remained at 81.7%, the same as it was in 2004-05. The graduation rate for white students rose slightly, while graduation rates for the other ethnicities all decreased.

Graduation Rates 2005-06

Total 81.7% (same as in 2004-05)

White 85.2% (0.1%)

Asian 88.3% (-2.0%)

African American 69.3% (-.1%)

Hispanic 63.6% (-.3%)

Native American 68.6% (-4.1%)

Oregon graduation rate formula for a given school year:

Number of Regular Diplomas (CIM – certificate of initial mastery – and Non-CIM) [Number of Regular Diplomas (CIM and Non-CIM)] [Number of Dropouts in Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12*]

*This is a one-year approximation of four years of dropouts for one class, beginning in grade nine and ending in grade 12. Oregon does not currently have the ability to produce graduation rates using cohort data, following the same class from 9th through 12 grades. However, cohort data will be available in 2007-08, once four years of student-level data has been collected. At that time, actual graduation rates will be calculated, using cohort data for each class.

As required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, Oregon now provides dropout and graduation rates by Gender, Economic Disadvantage, Limited English Proficient, Special Education, and Talented & Gifted (TAG).

School-by-school rates are available online.

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